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## Polyethylene glycol (PEG-400): An efficient one-pot green synthesis and anti-viral activity of novel $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates

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### ABSTRACT

An efficient and eco-friendly protocol has been accomplished for a series of novel  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates by a one-pot, three-component system *via* Kabachnik-Fields reaction of 4,4'-methylenedianiline, a variety of aryl/heteroaryl aldehydes and diphenylphosphite employing polyethylene glycol (PEG-400) as a green solvent at 80 °C. All products were obtained in good to excellent yields (80–95%). The identity of the new synthesized compounds was confirmed by IR, <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C, and <sup>31</sup>P NMR, LC-MS and elemental analysis. *In vivo* anti-viral activity was evaluated against tobacco mosaic virus (TMV). Compounds **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** exhibited the highest anti-viral activities against tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) when compared with the standard drug ningnanmycin.

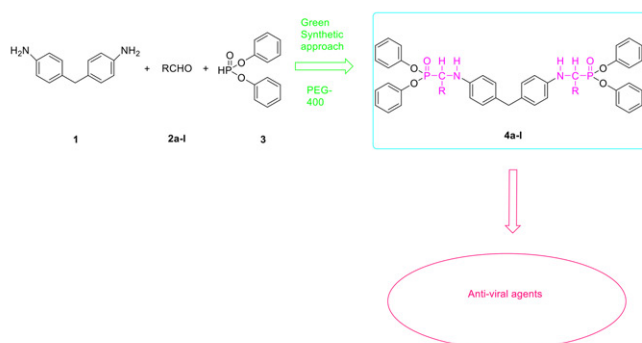
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### GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT








### Introduction

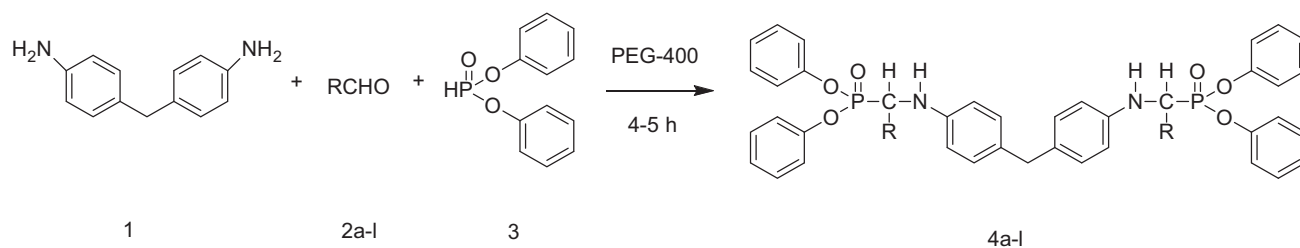
Viral plant diseases can be found worldwide and are a serious hazard to modern agriculture. Although plant viruses are genetically rather simple, they are difficult to prevent or control and have devastating impact on crop growth. Thus plant virus is a type of plant disease, known as 'plant cancer'. During recent years, the influence of climate anomalies and the areas of crops affected by plant virus disease are increasing, resulting in tremendous economic losses in the world. The tobacco mosaic virus (TMV), one of the most important classes of common viral diseases occurring in plants, is a rod-shaped virus composed of single-stranded RNA encapsulated in a coat protein capsid. This virus seriously affects the quality, quantity, yield of tobacco and causes large economic losses. A few anti-viral agents are currently available in reality, and

almost no treatment can control TMV effectively. As a consequence, development of novel, highly efficient, environmental benign new anti-viral agents through chemical synthesis has become the vital area of research for elimination and/or prevention of attack by TMV. Ningnanmycin can inhibit virus replication effectively and suppress virus symptoms.

Organophosphorus compounds are biologically active molecules and are widely applied in the areas of industrial, agricultural, organic, bioorganic and medicinal chemistry as well as in nanotechnology, owing to their unique physico-chemical and biological properties.<sup>[1]</sup> Their utility as reagents and potential synthons in organic synthesis is also gaining increased attention.<sup>[2]</sup> The  $\alpha$ -aminophosphonate moiety is a versatile and novel pharmacophore due to the broad spectrum of biological activities exhibited by

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**Scheme 1.** Synthesis of  $\alpha$ -Diaminophosphonates (**4a-l**).

compounds bearing this structural unit.  $\alpha$ -Aminophosphonates are an important class of compounds, which have a reduced level of toxicity and great ability to substitute naturally occurring  $\alpha$ -amino acids (mimetics). Therefore they show great potential applications in living organisms. As a result, they are effective aminopeptidase inhibitors<sup>[3]</sup> or anti-viral agents.  $\alpha$ -Aminophosphonates and their derivatives are interesting synthetic targets because of their significant applications in agriculture as plant growth regulators,<sup>[4]</sup> herbicides,<sup>[5]</sup> pesticides,<sup>[6]</sup> fungicides,<sup>[4]</sup> in medicine as anti-cancer agents,<sup>[7]</sup> enzyme inhibitors,<sup>[8]</sup> peptide mimics,<sup>[9]</sup> peptidases and proteinases,<sup>[10]</sup> and antibiotics.<sup>[11]</sup> They can also suppress the growth of various tumors and viruses.<sup>[12]</sup>

An large number of synthetic methods for the synthesis of  $\alpha$ -aminophosphonates have been reported *via* Pudovik reaction, Mannich type and Kabachnik-Fields reaction. A one-pot, three-component reaction of amines, aldehydes or ketones, and dialkyl, or diaryl phosphonates *via* Kabachnik-Fields (phospha-Mannich) reaction<sup>[13]</sup> is a straight forward and widely applied methods for the construction of carbon-phosphorus bonds. In a few previous reports, this reaction was accomplished in straight-forward, one-pot procedures without any catalysts.<sup>[14]</sup> Kabachnik-Fields reaction can be performed by acidic or basic catalysts, microwave irradiation, or by heating.<sup>[15]</sup> A variety of Lewis acid catalysts, such as  $\text{FeCl}_3$ ,<sup>[16]</sup>  $\text{LaCl}_3$ ,<sup>[17]</sup>  $\text{CeCl}_3 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ,<sup>[18]</sup>  $\text{BiCl}_3$ ,<sup>[19]</sup>  $\text{InCl}_3$ ,<sup>[20]</sup>  $\text{LiClO}_4$ ,<sup>[21]</sup>  $\text{In}(\text{OTf})_3$ ,<sup>[22]</sup>  $\text{Al}(\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4)_3$ ,<sup>[23]</sup>  $\text{TaCl}_5\text{-SiO}_2$ <sup>[24]</sup> and solid acids (montmorillonite KSF, silica sulfuric acid, Amberlyst-15, and Amberlite-IR 120)<sup>[25]</sup> have been used. Base catalysts were also used such as potassium fluoride on alumina,<sup>[26]</sup> lithium diisopropylamide (LDA)<sup>[27]</sup> and 1,8-diazabicycloundec-7-ene (DBU).<sup>[28]</sup> However, these methodologies endure from certain disadvantages such as use of prolonged reaction times, unsatisfactory product yields, lack of generality, toxic organic solvents, stoichiometric amounts of catalysts, harsh reaction conditions, expensive and moisture sensitive catalysts. Consequently, the development of a more efficient, eco-friendly synthetic protocol which is simple and cost-effective remains an ever-challenging objective both in academia and industrial research. The most significant principles of green chemistry are atom economy, less usage or no wastage of solvents, and usage of green solvents. The usage of a noticeably benign and inexpensive solvent like polyethylene glycol (PEG) could consequently yield noteworthy “green” chemistry benefits. PEG has been explored as a novel, powerful, eco-friendly reaction medium for several organic

Entry	R
<b>4a</b>	3-pyridinyl
<b>4b</b>	3-thiophenyl
<b>4c</b>	2-furanyl
<b>4d</b>	4-NO <sub>2</sub> -C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>
<b>4e</b>	3-pyrrolyl
<b>4f</b>	4-F-C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>
<b>4g</b>	4-pyridinyl
<b>4h</b>	3-furanyl
<b>4i</b>	4-Cl-C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>
<b>4j</b>	2-thiophenyl
<b>4k</b>	3-indolyl
<b>4l</b>	3-Br-C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>4</sub>

transformations due to its interesting properties such as nontoxicity, inexpensive, readily recyclable, safe, natural, non-flammable, biocompatibility, and biodegradable. This background encouraged us to employ PEG as reaction medium and surprisingly, it worked successfully without use of any organic solvent and catalyst.

In this involvement and in continuation of our ongoing research efforts for environmentally benign protocol for various organic transformations,<sup>[29]</sup> we herein report the use of 4,4'-methylenedianiline and PEG in an efficient one-pot, three-component green synthesis and *in vivo* anti-viral activity of  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates (Scheme 1). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first report on *in vivo* anti-viral activity and on the synthesis of  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates employing 4,4'-methylenedianiline and PEG-400.

## Results and discussion

In the current investigation,  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates (**4a-l**) were synthesized by a one-pot, three-component protocol *via* Kabachnik-Fields reaction of 4,4'-dimethylenedianiline (**1**), a variety of substituted aryl/heteroaryl aldehydes (**2a-l**) and diphenylphosphite (**3**) using PEG-400 as a solvent at 80 °C during 4–5 h (Scheme 1) in good to excellent yields (80–95%).

To optimize the reaction conditions, the reaction of 4,4'-dimethylenedianiline (**1a**), 3-pyridine aldehyde (**2a**) and diphenylphosphite (**3**) were considered. The effect of various solvents on the reaction was examined and the results are outlined in Table S1. Among all the solvents screened, the best results were found when the reaction was carried out using PEG-400, which gave excellent yield (93%) of **4a** (Table S2, entry 5; Supplementary Material). In case of the reactions with other solvents such as ethanol, tetrahydrofuran (THF), toluene, and acetonitrile (MeCN), the times of reaction increased and comparatively poor yields were obtained (Table S2, entries 1–4; Supplementary Materials).

Inspired by the above accomplishments, we further explored the reaction with several aldehydes and diphenylphosphite in PEG-400 to afford  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates. The results are summarized in Table S1 (Supplementary Materials).

All the chemical structures of the newly synthesized compounds (**4a-l**) were confirmed by spectral and elemental analysis data. The characteristic IR spectra showed typical stretching absorptions in the region 3472–3239  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for NH, 1289–1210  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for P=O, and 765–740  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for P-C<sub>(aliphatic)</sub>, which confirms the functional groups for the title compounds.<sup>[30]</sup> <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra displayed for the aromatic protons a complex pattern in the chemical shift range  $\delta$  6.30–8.56. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR signal of the methine proton (PCH) was observed as a doublet in the range  $\delta$  5.76–5.85 ( $J = 11.0$ – $16.2$  Hz) owing to its coupling with phosphorus. The NHCH proton exhibited a doublet<sup>[31]</sup> in the range  $\delta$  4.30–5.45 ( $J = 4.2$ – $9.0$  Hz) due to its coupling with the neighboring proton. The <sup>31</sup>P NMR chemical shifts appeared in the region  $\delta$  20.4–27.3 confirming the presence of a phosphonate group<sup>[32]</sup> in the synthesized compounds. Furthermore, the <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra of the title compounds show signals in the predicted regions.<sup>[33]</sup> The mass spectral data confirm the identity of the new compounds in accordance with their respective molecular formulae.

### Anti-viral activity

*In vivo* anti-viral activity of all the compounds (**4a-l**) were screened against TMV, and ningnanmycin was used as a standard. Table S3 (Supplementary Materials) represents the result of *in vivo* inactivation rate, protective effect, and curative effects of  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates (**4a-l**) against TMV. Compounds **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** showed the highest inactivation of infection (inhibition rate) at  $84.2 \pm 0.9$ ,  $83.6 \pm 0.7$ ,  $82.8 \pm 0.5$ , and  $84.5 \pm 1.4$ , respectively. The infection protective effects of **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** were determined at  $58.2 \pm 0.7$ ,  $58.4 \pm 0.4$ ,  $58.1 \pm 0.4$ , and  $58.6 \pm 0.7$ , and the infection curative effects of **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** were observed at  $57.7 \pm 0.7$ ,  $56.1 \pm 0.5$ ,  $56.5 \pm 1.4$  and  $56.8 \pm 0.7$ , respectively (Table S3). Chlorophyll is the photosynthetic component of plants which is responsible for photosynthesis, which is the most basic life process of green plants. The extent of viral infection in plants leads to proliferation, expansion and destruction of the chloroplast, and these factors are retarding the production of chlorophyll, which consequently leads to leaf chlorosis and mosaic. It reduces the photosynthetic pigment in TMV infected leaves. The host's resistance of TMV infected leaves is enhanced when these leaves are treated with anti-viral agents. Moreover, the efficacy of the potent title compounds **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** on the chlorophyll content in tobacco mosaic leaves was examined and the results are given in Table S4 (Supplementary Material). The results obtained show that, after treating the TMV inoculated leaves with compounds **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k**, the chlorophyll content in virus gradually increased during 1–5 days and reached the highest value on the 5th day. Among them, compounds **4b** and **4k** exhibited better effectiveness, when compared with compounds **4c** and **4j**. It is evident that **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k**

destroy the virus of the tobacco, increasing hosts resistance toward diseases and significantly enhance the chlorophyll content.

### Experimental

All chemicals and solvents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich and used without further purification. Melting points were determined in open capillaries with Guna digital melting point apparatus expressed in °C and are uncorrected. All products were purified by column chromatography on silica gel of 60–120 mesh. The infrared (IR) spectra were recorded as KBr pellets on a Perkin-Elmer FT-IR 1000 spectrophotometer. <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C and <sup>31</sup>P NMR spectra were recorded as solutions in CDCl<sub>3</sub> with a Varian 400 MHz spectrometer operating at 400 MHz for <sup>1</sup>H, 100 MHz for <sup>13</sup>C, and 300 MHz for <sup>31</sup>P. The <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C chemical shifts are given in ppm using tetramethylsilane (TMS) as an internal standard and <sup>31</sup>P NMR chemical shifts are referred to 85% H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>. Chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ) are given in parts per million (ppm) and coupling constants ( $J$ ) in Hertz (Hz). ESI mass spectra were recorded with an LCMS-2010A Shimadzu spectrometer and elemental analysis was performed with a Thermo Finnigan instrument. Abbreviations used for <sup>1</sup>H NMR signals are: s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet and m = multiplet. The Supplementary Materials contains sample <sup>1</sup>H, <sup>13</sup>C <sup>31</sup>P NMR and mass spectra for products **4d** and **4i** (Figures S1–S8).

### General procedure for the synthesis of $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates (**4a-l**)

A mixture of 4,4'-methylenedianiline **1** (0.001 mol), the aryl/heteroaryl aldehyde **2a-l** (0.002 mol), diphenylphosphite **3** (0.002 mol) and PEG-400 (10 mL) was allowed to react in a 50 mL round-bottomed flask for 4–5 h at 80 °C (Scheme 1). The progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC (hexane:ethyl acetate, 7:3). After completion of the reaction, the crude mixture was worked up in ice-cold water. The product, that separated out, was filtered and the filtrate was evaporated to remove water, leaving PEG behind. This crude product was further purified by column chromatography on silica gel (60–120 mesh) using hexane: ethyl acetate (7:3) as a mobile phase to afford the analytically pure  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates (**4a-l**) in good to excellent yields.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, a green, mild, and efficient one-pot protocol for the synthesis of novel  $\alpha$ -diaminophosphonates in good to excellent yields (80–95%) has been established. The compounds **4b**, **4c**, **4j** and **4k** showed most potent *in vivo* anti-viral activity against tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) as compared with the standard drug ningnanmycin. The notable advantages of this current method are shorter reaction times, excellent yields of the products, mild experimental conditions, inexpensive solvent, simple work-up procedure, biodegradable nontoxic solvent, reusable green solvent and

potentially valuable new anti-viral organophosphorus compounds.

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## Disclosure statement

There are no potential conflict of interest disclosed by the authors.

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