

This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Chemistry			
Catalyst-based, site-selective oxidation of methyl carbons in hydroxy- γ -methyl or keto- γ -methyl structures for natural product synthesis	A catalyst specific for an oxygen-methyl structure could help streamline the synthesis of therapeutic saponins and other natural products. In molecules containing a hydroxy- γ -methyl or keto- γ -methyl structure, the catalyst selectively oxidized the methyl carbon to an alcohol to yield new derivatives of the antitumor and antiviral agent oleanolic acid and other saponin and terpenoid structures. Future studies could include optimizing the reaction to increase yields. SciBX 5(11); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.293 Published online March 15, 2012	Patent and licensing status unavailable	Simmons, E.M. & Hartwig, J.F. <i>Nature</i> ; published online Feb. 29, 2012; doi:10.1038/nature10785 Contact: John F. Hartwig, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. e-mail: jhartwig@berkeley.edu