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New anti-inflammatory natural products from Pittosporum illicioides *var. illicioides*

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Pittosporum illicioides var. *illicioides* is an evergreen shrub, distributed throughout China and Taiwan. Phthalides, carotenoids, tritepenoid saponins, sesquiterpene glycosides, and their derivatives are widely distributed in plants of the genus *Pittosporum*. Many of these compounds exhibit diverse biological activities, including antimicrobial and cytotoxic activities. In our studies on the anti-inflammatory constituents of Formosan plants, many species have been screened for *in vitro* anti-inflammatory activity, and *P. illicioides* var. *illicioides* has been found to be an active species. Phytochemical investigation of the stem of this plant has led to the isolation of three new phthalide derivatives, (*S*)-3-ethyl-5,7-dihydroxy-6-methoxyphthalide (**1**), (*R*)-3-ethyl-7-hydroxy-5,6-dimethoxyphthalide (**2**), and (*R*)-3-ethyl-4,7-dimethoxyphthalide (**3**), and six known compounds (**4-9**). The structures of new compounds (**1**-**3**) were determined through spectroscopic and MS analyses. Among the isolated compounds, (*S*)-3-ethyl-5,7-dihydroxy-6-methoxyphthalide (**1**) and (*R*)-3-ethyl-7-hydroxy-5,6-dimethoxyphthalide (**2**) inhibited fMLP/CB-induced elastase release with IC_{50} values of 1.70± 0.24 and 1.02 ± 0.36 μg/mL, respectively.