

Title	Air-Stable and Reusable Cobalt Phosphide Nanoalloy Catalyst for Selective Hydrogenation of Furfural Derivatives
Author(s)	Ishikawa, Hiroya; Sheng, Min; Nakata, Ayako et al.
Citation	ACS Catalysis. 2021, 11(2), p. 750-757
Version Type	АМ
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### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

# Air-stable and Reusable Cobalt Phosphide Nanoalloy Catalyst for Selective Hydrogenation of Furfural Derivatives

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#### **Table of Contents**

#### 1. General experimental details

2. Characterization

Figure S1. XRD spectrum of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P.

Figure S2. Size distribution histograms (length and width) of the nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P.

Figure S3. EDX analysis of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P in the green squares.

**Figure S4.** EXAFS fitting curves in k-space and R-space of Co foil, bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P, nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P, and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

Figure S5. Co 2p XPS spectra of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

Figure S6. TEM images of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> before and after reaction.

**Figure S7.** Co *K*-edge XANES spectra of nano- $Co_2P/Al_2O_3$  and used nano- $Co_2P/Al_2O_3$  with Co foil and  $Co_3O_4$  as references.

**Figure S8.** Fourier transforms of the  $k^3$ -weighted EXAFS spectra of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P exposed to air with bulk-Co<sub>2</sub>P and Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> as references.

Figure S9. FT-IR spectrum of CO adsorbed on nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P.

**Table S1.** Curve-fitting results of Co *K*-edge EXAFS for Co foil, bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P, nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P, and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

Table S2. The elemental analysis of fresh and used nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> by ICP-AES.

#### 3. Hot filtration experiment

**Scheme S1.** Hot filtration experiment of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> in hydrogenation of HMF to BHMF.

4. Effect of solvent

**Table S3.** Effect of reaction solvents on the hydrogenation of furfural derivatives using nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

#### 5. DFT calculation

Figure S10. Unit cell of Co<sub>2</sub>P.

Figure S11. Optimized structures of furfural molecule adsorbed to Co<sub>2</sub>P (0001) surface.

Table S4. Adsorption energy of cis-furfural to Co<sub>2</sub>P (0001) surface.

**Table S5.** Bond lengths of isolated and adsorbed furfural.

**Table S6.** Electronic charge differences of furan and CHO in adsorbed furfural from isolated furfural.

#### 6. Product identification

References

#### 1. General experimental details

All precursors and solvents were used as received, without further purification. CoCl<sub>2</sub>·6H<sub>2</sub>O, and 1-octadecene (technical grade 90%) were purchased from the Nacalai Tesque, INC. and Sigma-Aldrich, respectively. Hexadecylamine and triphenyl phosphite were purchased from Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. Acetone, chloroform, *n*-hexane, methanol, 2-propanol, 1,4-dioxane, and NaOH were purchased from FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation. Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> was obtained from Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. Hydroxyapatite was purchased from FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation. ZrO<sub>2</sub> (JRC ZRO-8) and MgO (JRC-MGO-3 1000A) were provided by the Catalysis Society of Japan as reference catalysts. Bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P was purchased from Mitsuwa Chemicals. 5-Hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) was purchased from FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation. Furfural, 5-methylfurfural and 5-acetoxymethylfurfural were used as received, without further purification. Furfural and 5-methylfurfural were purchased from Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. HMF and 5-acetoxymethylfurfural were used as received, without further purification. Furfural and 5-methylfurfural were purchased from Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. HMF and 5-acetoxymethylfurfural were used as received, without further purification. Furfural and 5-methylfurfural were purchased from Tokyo Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. HMF and 5-acetoxymethylfurfural were used as received, without further purification. Furfural and 5-methylfurfural were purfied by distillation before use.

Inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES) was performed using a Perkin Elmer Optima 8300 instrument. <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectra were recorded using a JEOL JNM-ESC400 spectrometer and chemical shifts ( $\delta$ ) are reported in ppm relative to tetramethylsilane. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) observations were carried out using a FEI Tecnai G2 20ST instrument operated at 200 kV. Scanning transmission electron microscopy (STEM) images with elemental maps were collected using a FEI Titan Cubed G2 60-300 instrument operated at 300 kV and equipped with Super-X energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) detector. Elemental mapping based on quantification analysis of EDX spectra was carried out using Esprit. Co K-edge X-ray absorption spectra were recorded at room temperature at the BL01B1 and BL14B2 lines, using a Si (111) monochromator at SPring-8, Japan Synchrotron Radiation Research Institute (JASRI), Harima, Japan. Data analysis was performed using the xTunes software [S1]. XRD (X-ray diffraction) studies were conducted on a Philips X'Pert-MPD diffractometer with Cu-Ka radiation (45 kV, 40 mA). Fourier-transform infrared (FT-IR) spectra were recorded using a JASCO FT-IR 4100 spectrometer equipped with a mercury cadmium telluride detector at a spectral resolution of 4 cm<sup>-1</sup> with 128 scans accumulated. A thin disk was prepared by pressing the sample powder (pure nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> or 3 wt% nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P in KBr) onto a stainless-steel grid. The sample disk was then placed inside an IR cell with  $CaF_2$ windows to enable thermal treatment in a controlled atmosphere. The sample pellet was treated under vacuum (< 1 mmHg) at 130 °C for 1 h, after which the probe molecule was introduced to the sample disk and evacuated at room temperature. X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) analysis was performed on a Kratos AXIS 165 X-ray photoelectron spectrometer equipped with a monochromatic Al X-ray source. The spectra were obtained at a pass energy of 80.0 eV with an Al K $\alpha$  X-ray source operating at 12 mA and 15 kV. The working pressure in the analysis chamber was less than  $5.0 \times 10^{-9}$  mmHg. The C 1s peak at a binding energy of 284.5 eV was used as the internal reference.

#### 2. Characterization



**Figure S1.** XRD spectrum of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P. The reference pattern of Co<sub>2</sub>P is from references S2 and S3 (JCPDS No. 32-0306).



Figure S2. Size distribution histograms (length and width) of the nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P.



Figure S3. EDX analysis of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P in the green squares.



**Figure S4.** EXAFS fitting curves in k-space (left panel) and R-space (right panel) of (a) Co foil, (b) bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P, (c) nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P, and (d) nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.



Figure S5. Co 2p XPS spectra of (a) nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P and (b) nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.



Figure S6. TEM images of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> before (left) and after reaction (right).



**Figure S7.** Co *K*-edge XANES spectra of nano- $Co_2P/Al_2O_3$  and used nano- $Co_2P/Al_2O_3$  with Co foil and  $Co_3O_4$  as references.



**Figure S8.** Fourier transforms of the  $k^3$ -weighted EXAFS spectra of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P exposed to air with bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P and Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> as references.



Figure S9. FT-IR spectrum of CO adsorbed on nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P.

sample	shell $CN^a$ r (		$r(\text{\AA})^b$	D.W. <sup><i>c</i></sup>	R factor (%)	
Co foil	Co foil Co–Co		2.49±0.01	$0.007 \pm 0.002$	2.6	
bulk Co <sub>2</sub> P	Со-Р	2.0±0.1	2.24±0.03	$0.005 \pm 0.002$	9.4	
	Со-Со	4.0±0.2	2.56±0.02	0.010±0.003	9.4	
nano-Co <sub>2</sub> P	Со-Р	1.8±0.1	2.23±0.02	0.003±0.002	12.5	
	Со-Со	3.5±0.2	2.56±0.02	0.009±0.003	12.3	
nano-Co <sub>2</sub> P/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Со-Р	2.1±0.2	2.20±0.03	0.005±0.003	10.3	
	Со-Со	3.3±0.2	2.56±0.02	0.009±0.004	10.3	

**Table S1.** Curve-fitting results of Co *K*-edge EXAFS for Co foil, bulk Co<sub>2</sub>P, nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P, and nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>a</sup>Coordination number. <sup>b</sup>Bond distance. <sup>c</sup>Debye–Waller factor.

	wt%					
	Со	Р				
nano-Co <sub>2</sub> P/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	1.96	0.68				
used nano-Co <sub>2</sub> P/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	2.04	0.74				

Table S2. The elemental analysis of fresh and used nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> by ICP-AES.

#### 3. Hot filtration experiment

Scheme S1. Hot filtration experiment of nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> in hydrogenation of HMF to BHMF.



Reaction conditions: nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (75 mg), HMF (0.25 mmol), water (3 mL), H<sub>2</sub> (4 MPa), 130 °C. Conversion was determined by GC-MS using an internal standard technique. Red spheres (•): Without filtration of the catalyst. Blue diamonds(•): With removal of the catalyst by hot filtration after 1 h.

#### 4. Effect of solvent

**Table S3.** Effect of reaction solvents on the hydrogenation of furfural derivatives using nano- $Co_2P/Al_2O_3$ .<sup>*a*</sup>

	R O nano-	$\frac{Co_2P/AI_2O_3}{H_2}$	R O	ОН
entry	substrate	solvent	conv. <sup>b</sup> (%)	sel. <sup>b</sup> (%)
1	0	H <sub>2</sub> O	76	71
2		MeOH	85	99
3		1,4-dioxane	29	93
4	0	H <sub>2</sub> O	90	77
5	0 //	MeOH	91	99
6		1,4-dioxane	36	92
7 <sup>c</sup>	~_0	H <sub>2</sub> O	54	>99
8 <sup>c</sup>	HO	MeOH	31	89
9 <sup>c</sup>		1,4-dioxane	5	80
10 <sup>d</sup>		H <sub>2</sub> O	>99 <sup>e</sup>	<1 <sup><i>e,f</i></sup>
11 <sup><i>d</i></sup>	AcO 0	MeOH	>99 <sup>e</sup>	<1 <sup>e,f</sup>
12 <sup>d</sup>		1,4-dioxane	>99 <sup>e</sup>	82 <sup>e</sup>

<sup>*a*</sup>Reaction conditions: nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (6.7 mol%), substrate (0.25 mmol), solvent (3 mL), H<sub>2</sub> (4 MPa), 130 °C, 2 h. <sup>*b*</sup>Determined by GC-MS using an internal standard technique. <sup>*c*</sup>nano-Co<sub>2</sub>P/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (10 mol%), 1 h. <sup>*d*</sup>H<sub>2</sub> (5 MPa), 150 °C, 12 h. <sup>*e*</sup>Determined by <sup>1</sup>H NMR using an internal standard technique. <sup>*f*</sup>BHMF was detected as the main product.

#### 5. DFT calculation

#### Computational details

Density functional theory (DFT) calculations were performed using the CONQUEST program [S4, S5]. The Perdew, Burke and Ernzerhof (PBE) exchange-correlation functional [S6] was used with a norm-conserving pseudopotential and real-space pseudo atomic orbital (PAO) basis functions [S7]. We used the double-zeta plus polarization (DZP) type PAOs. The ranges of two s, two d and a p PAOs for Co were {(7.8, 6.1), (4.5, 2.1) and (7.8)} bohr, those of two s, two p and a d PAOs for P, C, N and O were {(5.2, 4.0), (6.5, 4.6) and (6.5)}, {(4.6, 3.4), (5.7, 3.7) and (5.7)}, {(4.1, 2.9), (5.0, 3.1) and (5.0)} and {(3.7, 2.5), (4.6, 2.6) and (4.6)} bohr, and those of two s and a p PAOs for H were {(5.5, 4.0) and (5.5)}. The basis set superposition errors (BSSEs) were corrected by the counterpoise method [S8]. The dispersion energies were considered by using the DFT-D2 method [S9].

As shown in Figure S10, the unit cell of  $Co_2P$  consists of two layers, six Co atoms in the pyramidal site (P-site) and two P atoms in the first layer and six Co atoms in the tetrahedral site (T-site) and four P atoms in the second layer [S10]. The periodic boundary condition with  $8\times8\times1$  grid was used for the surface system. For the surface calculation, we used a supercell slab consisting of eight layers (about 12 Å thickness) with a vacuum gap (about 15 Å). A cis-furfural molecule was put on  $Co_2P$  (0001) surface with the width of  $11.5\times10.0$  Å<sup>2</sup>.

#### Adsorption of furfural to Co<sub>2</sub>P (0001) surface

There are many possible adsorption sites of furfural to the Co<sub>2</sub>P (0001) T-site surface. The optimized structures of furfural at the sites are shown in Figure S11. The structures t1\_h-b, t3\_bo and t2\_h-b(2) are shown as the representatives of groups A, B and C in the manuscript because their adsorption energies are the closest to the mean adsorption energy of the groups. The adsorption energies,  $\Delta E = E(\text{Co}_2\text{P-furfural}) - E(\text{Co}_2\text{P}) - E(\text{furfural})$  are summarized in Table S4. The bond lengths of isolated furfural and their changes by the adsorption are given in Table S5. The change of the electron distribution before and after the adsorption were investigated by Mulliken population analysis [S11].



Figure S10. Unit cell of Co<sub>2</sub>P.



**Figure S11.** Optimized structures of furfural molecule adsorbed to  $Co_2P$  (0001) surface. Groups A, B and C are the structures in which both the C=O bond and the furan ring were adsorbed parallelly to the surface, O in C=O and a C-O bond in the furan ring were adsorbed to the surface, and only C=O was strongly adsorbed to the surface, respectively. The labels "x\_y-z" corresponds to the initial structure: x corresponds to the adsorption parallelly (t1), diagonally (t2) and perpendicularly (t3) to the surface, y and z correspond to the position of O atoms in CHO and furan ring, o = on-top, b = bridge, h = hollow sites of Co triangle. oC means C atom in CHO is on-top of Co atom.

	Adsoprtion structure								
Group A	t1_b-b	t1_b-o	t1_b-oC	t1_h-b	t1_h-o	t1_o-b	t2_b-b	t2_h-b	
	-76.1	-48.0	-57.5	-74.8	-57.6	-76.1	-75.4	-75.8	-67.7
Group B	t1_0-0	t2_b-o	t2_b-oC	t2_o-b	t3_b-o	t3_h-h	t3_h-o		
	-37.4	-40.2	-50.2	-52.7	-41.9	-36.9	-37.7		-42.4
Group C	t2_b-b (2)	t2_b-oC(2)	t2_h-b(2)	t2_h-o	t2_h-o(2)	t2_o-b(2)	t2_o-o	t2_o-o(2)	
	-36.6	-37.0	-35.6	-38.5	-38.5	-27.3	-30.9	-27.5	-32.2
	t3_b-o(2)	t3_h-b	t3_o-b	t3_0-0					
	-26.0	-27.5	-31.1	-30.4					

**Table S4.** Adsorption energy of furfural to  $Co_2P$  (0001) surface (kcal/mol) The labels of the adsorption structure correspond to those in Figure S11.

**Table S5.** Bond lengths of the isolated furfural molecule and the bond-length differences from the isolated molecule for the adsorption structures in groups A, B, and C (Å). The labels of the adsorption structure correspond to those in Figure S11.

	Adsoprtion structure								Mean value	
		isolated mo	olecule							
C=O	C=O	1.234								
	C-C (1)	1.469								
Furan	C-0	1.379								
	O-C	1.362								
	C=C (1)	1.392								
	C-C (2)	1.433								
	C=C (2)	1.399								
Group A		t1_b-b	t1_b-o	t1_b-oC	t1_h-b	t1_h-o	t1_o-b	t2_b-b	t2_h-b	
C=O	C=O	0.137	0.097	0.087	0.138	0.098	0.136	0.139	0.138	0.121
	C-C (1)	-0.022	0.010	-0.026	-0.021	-0.011	-0.024	-0.022	-0.025	-0.018
Furan	C-0	-0.002	0.009	0.020	-0.002	0.017	-0.002	-0.001	-0.002	0.005
	O-C	0.054	0.112	0.097	0.058	0.073	0.054	0.055	0.056	0.070
	C=C (1)	0.043	0.101	0.125	0.042	0.087	0.047	0.048	0.046	0.067
	C-C (2)	0.068	0.098	0.043	0.068	0.099	0.066	0.066	0.063	0.071
	C=C (2)	0.081	0.114	0.053	0.081	0.125	0.077	0.081	0.076	0.086
Group P		t1 0 0	+2 h o2	the hor	t) o h	t2 h o	+2 h h	+2 h o		
СНО	C-0	0.061	0.110	0.171	0.071	0.055	0.140	0 108		0.104
СПО	C = 0	0.001	0.119	0.171	0.071	0.033	0.140	0.108		0.104
Furan	C = C (I)	-0.032	0.008	0.019	0.009	-0.043	-0.070	-0.003		-0.028
Fulan	0-0	0.027	0.024	-0.011	0.030	0.017	0.017	0.028		0.020
	C = C(1)	0.074	-0.009	-0.013	-0.007	0.007	0.105	0.005		0.03/
	C = C(1)	-0.037	0.005	-0.013	0.037	-0.024	-0.045	-0.027		-0.009
	C = C(2)	0.035	-0.001	0.031	0.057	0.019	0.043	0.027		-0.007
	C=C (2)	0.055	0.001	0.041	0.050	0.017	0.040	0.051		0.055
Group C		t2_b-b (2)	t2_b-oC(2)	t2_h-b(2)	t2_h-o	t2_h-o(2)	t2_o-b(2)	t2_o-o	t2_o-o(2)	
СНО	C=O	0.142	0.140	0.170	0.111	0.114	0.090	0.098	0.089	0.093
	C-C (1)	-0.002	-0.004	0.020	0.024	0.028	0.029	0.005	0.012	-0.001
Furan	C-O	0.008	-0.006	0.025	0.012	0.021	0.027	0.001	0.023	0.014
	O-C	0.017	0.008	0.021	0.011	0.014	0.036	0.014	0.036	0.019
	C=C (1)	-0.007	-0.003	-0.012	-0.001	-0.002	-0.013	-0.002	-0.011	-0.004
	C-C (2)	0.006	0.005	0.008	0.002	0.004	0.013	0.002	0.009	0.002
	C=C (2)	0.000	0.004	-0.005	0.006	-0.002	-0.014	0.003	-0.012	0.001
		t3_b-o(2)	t3_h-b	t3_o-b	t3_o-o					
CHO	C=O	0.048	0.038	0.040	0.036					
	C-C (1)	-0.032	-0.032	-0.032	-0.031					
Furan	C-0	0.006	0.012	0.022	0.020					
	O-C	0.006	0.015	0.025	0.026					
	C=C (1)	0.004	0.000	-0.001	-0.004					
	C-C (2)	-0.005	-0.005	-0.007	-0.006					
	C=C (2)	0.009	0.007	0.008	0.007					

**Table S6.** Electronic charge differences of furan and CHO in adsorbed furfural molecules from isolated furfural molecules. Changes of O atoms are also given. Negative value means that the base gets electrons. The labels of the adsorption structure correspond to those in Figure S11.

	Adsoprtion structure								Mean value
Group A	t1_b-b	t1_b-o	t1_b-oC	t1_h-b	t1_h-o	t1_o-b	t2_b-b	t2_h-b	
furan	-0.06	0.08	0.00	-0.07	0.09	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.02
O in furan	-0.07	-0.10	-0.13	-0.07	-0.09	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.08
СНО	-0.10	-0.08	-0.05	-0.09	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	-0.09
O in CHO	-0.19	-0.11	-0.10	-0.19	-0.11	-0.19	-0.19	-0.19	-0.16
total	-0.16	0.00	-0.05	-0.16	-0.01	-0.16	-0.16	-0.16	-0.11
Group B	t1_o-o	t2_b-o2	t2_b-oC	t2_o-b	t3_b-o	t3_h-h	t3_h-o		
furan	-0.13	-0.07	0.00	-0.05	-0.12	-0.14	-0.10		-0.09
O in furan	-0.12	0.01	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05		-0.04
СНО	-0.05	-0.11	-0.21	-0.09	-0.03	-0.23	-0.18		-0.13
O in CHO	0.01	-0.02	-0.07	-0.05	0.03	-0.13	-0.07		-0.04
total	-0.11	-0.01	-0.08	-0.03	-0.03	-0.18	-0.12		-0.08
Group C	t2_b-b2	t2_b-oC2	t2_h-b2	t2_h-o	t2_h-o2	t2_o-b2	t2_o-o	t2_o-o2	
furan	-0.03	0.01	-0.05	-0.03	-0.04	-0.08	-0.02	-0.07	-0.04
O in furan	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.05	0.02	-0.01	0.00
СНО	-0.21	-0.22	-0.20	-0.11	-0.11	-0.09	-0.12	-0.09	-0.10
O in CHO	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.06	-0.01
total	-0.06	-0.04	-0.08	-0.05	-0.05	-0.10	-0.03	-0.07	-0.01
	t3_b-o2	t3_h-b	t3_o-b	t3_o-o					
furan	-0.01	-0.03	-0.05	-0.05					
O in furan	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.00					
СНО	-0.03	0.00	0.00	0.02					
O in CHO	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.07					
total	0.06	0.12	0.07	0.07					

#### 6. Product identification

Table 1 and Scheme 2

#### Bis(2,5-hydroxymethyl)furan (BHMF) [S12]

CAS registry No. [1883-75-6]. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO, 400 MHz):  $\delta = 6.18$  (s, 2H), 5.13 (t, J = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 4.35 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 4H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO, 100 MHz):  $\delta = 154.7$ , 107.3, 55.7.

Scheme 1(a)

#### Furfuryl alcohol [S13]

CAS registry No. [98-00-0]. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz):  $\delta = 7.40$  (d, J = 1.5 Hz, 1H), 6.35–6.33

(m, 1H), 6.29 (d, J = 3.2 Hz, 1H), 4.61 (s, 2H), 1.79 (brs, 1H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 100 MHz):  $\delta = 154.0, 142.7, 110.3, 107.7, 57.5.$ 

Scheme 1 (b)

#### 5-Methylfurfuryl alcohol [S14]

CAS registry No. [3857-25-8]. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz):  $\delta = 6.16$  (d, J = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 5.91– 5.90 (m, 1H), 4.54 (s, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 100 MHz):  $\delta = 152.4$ , 152.3, 108.7, 106.2, 57.5, 13.5.

Scheme 1 (c)

#### 2,5-Furandimethanol monoacetate [S15]

CAS registry No. [89630-82-0]. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz):  $\delta = 6.35$  (d, J = 3.4 Hz, 1H), 6.26 (d, J = 2.7 Hz, 1H) , 5.03 (s, 2H), 4.63 (s, 2H), 2.08 (s, 3H). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 100 MHz):  $\delta = 170.6$ , 154.8, 149.5, 111.4, 108.5, 58.1, 57.5, 20.8.

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