

# The Azadirachtin Story

*Steven V. Ley*

*Department of Chemistry, University of Cambridge  
Lensfield Road, Cambridge, CB2 1EW, UK  
Email: svl1000@cam.ac.uk*

Azadirachtin is a complex natural product that has been at the centre of structural, biological and synthetic studies ever since its isolation from the Indian neem tree *Azadirachta indica* in 1968. Despite enormous efforts within the synthetic community its synthesis has, until now, resisted all attempts. This is undoubtedly due to its complex molecular architecture and propensity for rearrangement under acidic, basic and photochemical conditions. Following many years of endeavour, the first synthesis of azadirachtin has now been realized by a highly convergent approach, which utilizes a Claisen rearrangement and a radical cyclization as key steps.