Abstract
Laurel (Laurus nobilis L.) is an evergreen tree cultivated in many warm regions of the world, particularly in the Mediterranean countries. The dried leaves and their steam distilled oil possess a spicy flavor and are extensively used in flavoring many food products. The essential oil was obtained from 200 g of leaves by hydrodistillation for 3 h in a Clevengertype apparatus, yielding 0.2 %. The chemical composition of leaf oil from laurel grown in Colombia was studied by GC-MS using a HP-5MS fused silica column. In total, one hundred and twelve volatile compounds, representing 95 % of the total composition, were identified in the leaf oil. Of them, 47 are reported for the first time in laurel. It is interesting to note the presence of many aromatic esters which were not found in previous papers. The most abundant components found in the leaf oil were 1,8-cineole (22.0 %), linalool (16.4 %), a-terpinyl acetate (11.1 %) and b-caryophyllene (9.0 %). The Colombian laurel oil has some similarities with the composition of other laurel oils and could be used as a substitute of those imported.

Keywords
Laurel, Laurus nobilis, leaf oil, 1,8-cineole, linalool, a-terpinyl acetate, b-caryophyllene.