

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Properties of Organic Compounds

Hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and a number of other elements also bond strongly to carbon, and a tremendous variety of compounds can result. In the early days of chemistry such compounds were obtained from plants or animals rather than being synthesized by chemists, and so they came to be known as organic compounds. This distinguished them from the inorganic compounds available from nonliving portions of the earth's surface. Today literally millions of carbon compounds can be synthesized in laboratories, and so this historical distinction is no longer valid. Nevertheless, the study of carbon compounds is still referred to as organic chemistry.

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