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Wet bark of a Pacific yew tree (Taxus brevifolia) in Union, Washington, USA (vertical dimension ~15 centimeters). Wild Pacific yew thrives in the damp coastal forests of northwestern North America, with thin bark ranging in color from rose to auburn. The anticancer agent paclitaxel was originally derived from yew trees. Such complex and useful compounds are just one of the many outputs from plant metabolic networks, as analyzed in the special issue beginning on page 1657.

Photo: Don Paulson, www.donpaulson.com

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