



Florida yew



Plant Botanical Name:

Taxus floridana

USBG Plant Location:

Conservatory

Conservatory Room Location:

Southern Exposure

Plant Threat Level:

Endangered

Florida yew is one of the rarest trees in the world and occurs only in forested bluffs and ravines scattered along a 15-mile section on one side of the Apalachee National Monument in Gadsden and Liberty counties. Many of the plants are found on privately owned land, and are vulnerable to destruction because endangered species laws prohibit the removal of endangered plants on private property. Like Pacific yew (*T. brevifolia*), the bark of Florida yew contains the promising cancer-fighting compound taxol. Scientists from Florida State University in Tallahassee were the first to synthesize taxol and the same year, scientists from Montana State University discovered that taxol is produced naturally in the bark of yew trees. Taxol has been proven useful in treating breast cancer, ovarian cancer, some kinds of leukemia and certain kidney diseases. The pharmaceutical uses of plants are an important reason for plant conservation efforts.

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