



## SURVIVOR STORIES

Cancer survivors talk about medicines from nature and the importance of conserving global natural areas.



**CAROLYN LANGLIE-LESNIK**

**Appendiceal cancer survivor**

I am an 8 year survivor of a rare cancer. A chemotherapy drug I was given after my cancer surgery was one that had just been approved in 2001, Irinotecan, derived from an Asian tree. Of the active ingredients in today's cancer-fighting drugs, 25 percent are derived from the plants in rainforests, yet only 1 percent of rainforest plants have been tested by scientists. The National Cancer Institute has identified 3000 plants that are active against cancer cells. Our rainforests could disappear in 40 years if we don't conserve them. We need to conserve our natural resources. With cancer as the second leading cause of death in our nation, our lives could depend on it.

**ANGELA PATTERSON**

**Breast cancer survivor**

I was 36 weeks pregnant when diagnosed with Stage II breast cancer in 2006. My son was born 10 days later, and I started chemotherapy when he was only 2 1/2 weeks old. Taxol was part of my chemotherapy cocktail. Originally made with a compound from the Pacific yew tree, this lifesaving drug is now synthetically produced. People like me with triple negative breast cancer have fewer treatment options available, so chemotherapy drugs like Taxol are crucial. Flash forward several years, and so far so good. My little boy is healthy, and so am I. Every day is a gift, and my appreciation for life never fades.



**“People like me with triple negative breast cancer have fewer treatment options available, so chemotherapy drugs like Taxol are crucial.”**



**One-quarter of all prescription drugs are based on such natural sources as rainforest plants and marine sponges. Storehouses of potential new medicinal compounds are lost forever as species and habitats are destroyed.**

**ISABELLE MORIN**

**Childhood leukemia survivor**

Teri Morin, mother of Isabelle:

“My daughter, Isabelle, was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia at the age of 3. She was treated for three years at St. Jude Children’s Research Center in Memphis, Tennessee. Isabelle directly benefited from a plant in the rainforest. The rosy periwinkle plant is used for the cancer-fighting drug treatment known as Vincristine. Research has proven rainforests are rich in natural sources that benefit our health and can save lives. In the case of my daughter, Isabelle would not have survived had researchers not discovered the rosy periwinkle before it became extinct. Therefore, the rainforest must be protected from logging and other forms of destruction in order to preserve the medicinal benefits and unique values of its plants. As a mother, I plead with the Congress and President Obama to please take action to preserve the rainforest and continue to save lives around the world.”



**DEBBIE TRUJILLO**

**Breast cancer survivor**

I once read that adversities are God’s universities. As a breast cancer survivor, I have experienced adversity and have lived to learn from it. Life is precious, all life. I will not take another day for granted any more than the air I breathe or the plants and water which blanket our earth. It took a crisis, cancer, to open my eyes, but I’m hoping to teach others the importance of conservation before they have to depend on it as a source of treatment. One of the chemotherapy drugs I was given, Taxol, was derived from tree bark, and many other people have been and will be treated with other natural drugs. If we do not protect nature, it will not survive to heal us or amaze us in the future. We cannot let that happen.



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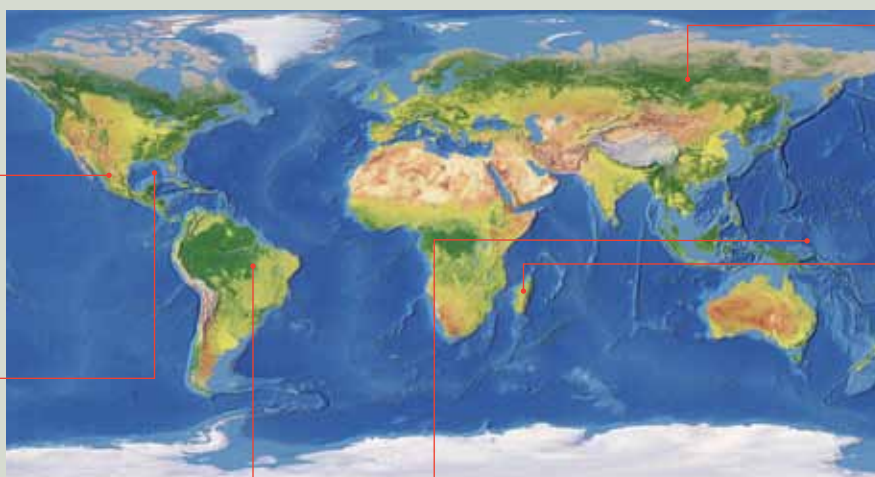
**PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS FROM GLOBAL NATURAL AREAS**

**Northern Mexico and southwestern U.S.**

**Exenatide** was originally derived from the saliva of the Gila monster, a venomous lizard from Mexico and the southwestern U.S. It is used to treat diabetes. Mexico’s northern deserts are threatened by cattle grazing, agriculture, excessive groundwater pumping, urban development, mining, water diversion and dam building, and introduced species.

**Caribbean Sea**

The Caribbean sea squirt is the source of **Trabectedin**, an anticancer agent licensed for future sale. Caribbean sea ecosystems are threatened by pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction and climate change.



**Brazil**

**Captopril**, from Brazilian pit viper venom, is used to treat hypertension and congestive heart failure. The vipers live in coastal forests, which are threatened by widespread deforestation.

**Central Asia**

**Topotecan, Irinotecan, and Camptosar or CPT-11** are chemotherapy agent derived from the Asian *Camptotheca* tree. Rampant deforestation is decimating Asia’s forests. 80 percent of these countries’ forests have already been lost.

**Madagascar**

**Vincristine and Vinblastine**, are chemotherapy compounds isolated from the Madagascar rosy periwinkle. Intensive deforestation is rapidly destroying Madagascar’s wild lands.

**Pacific Ocean coral reefs near Indonesia, Marshall Islands, Fiji**

**Ziconotide**, a compound from the cone snail, is a powerful analgesic used by patients in severe chronic pain. These cone snails live around Pacific Ocean coral reefs near Indonesia, the Marshall Islands, and Fiji, and in the Indian Ocean near Madagascar. Coral reefs are in rapid decline due to destructive fishing practices and marine pollution. Nearly one-third of the world’s corals are already destroyed or damaged, and climate change is a major threat to remaining corals.