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Title:

Comments: New scientific research is showing just how much we don't know about the secrets inside of old growth forests. What we do know is that if we allow the last vestiges of old growth forests to be lost we will never find out what we have destroyed. The work of mycologists like Paul Stamets in these old growth forests are uncovering potential solutions diseases and environmental problems that our industrial economy created. Destruction of old growth forests will deny us the chance of using the abilities of organisms found only in old growth forests. One example is the fungus Agarikon (Fomitopsis officinalis) found in the old growth forests of the Olympic Peninsula in the Pacific Northwest. Extracts from the culture of this conk produced compounds very active against two pox viruses; vaccinia pox and cowpox viruses. Stamets is working with the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRID) to combat potentially weaponized viruses. Less than 5% of our old growth forests survive today in the aftermath of 150 years of logging. Until an assessment can be made of all the mycomedical remedies available in the ancient forests, these forests must remain protected from logging, mining and other development that might be destructive to the remaining wealth of bio knowledge they contain. The survival of future generations may be at stake.