



Cool Stuff on Kudzu includes the title “An extract of the Chinese herbal root Kudzu reduces alcohol drinking by heavy drinkers in a naturalistic setting,” by S.E. Lukas, et al in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research* 29(5):756-762 (May 2005) (www.alcoholism-cer.com). The authors state that “extracts of kudzu containing a variety of isoflavones have been shown to reduce alcohol drinking in rats and hamsters.” When “heavy” alcohol drinkers were treated with a placebo or a kudzu extract for 7 days, then given an opportunity to drink their preferred brand of beer in “a naturalistic laboratory setting,” it was found that the kudzu treatment resulted in a significant reduction in the number of beers consumed and an increase in the time to consume each beer. There were no reported side effects of the kudzu treatment.

Meanwhile, Jack Callahan of Callahan’s Kudzu Management LLC reports on a recently patented device to prevent kudzu vines (*Pueraria montana*) from climbing guy-wires and similar structures in utility right-of-ways. Studies found that kudzu will only stand unsupported to a height of approximately three and one-half feet, and it will not climb a structure with a diameter greater than eight inches or a total perimeter of more than 24 inches, almost irrespective of shape. A success rate of over ninety five percent was achieved during testing of prototype devices. Reported in the proceedings of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council’s Seventh Annual Conference, *Invasive Plants: Arming to Defend and Win*, May 3-5, 2005. Abstracts from the meeting can be found at www.se-eppc.org

In “Kudzu (*Pueraria montana*): History, physiology, and ecology combine to make a major ecosystem threat” (*Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences* 23(5):401-413 (2004)), authors I.N. Forseth and A.F. Innis report that over 85 million kudzu seedlings were provided to landowners by government agencies in the southeast in the first half of the 20th century. “In 1953, kudzu was removed from the list of approved plants for erosion control, in 1970 it was officially labeled a weed, and in 1997 it was placed on the Federal Obnoxious [sic] Weed List.”

And, finally, in Mr. Channing Cope’s 1949 book, *Front Porch Farmer*, he states, “It is a wonderful thing to make land live again.” Mr. Cope’s chapter on kudzu is titled “The Miracle Vine” and he calls kudzu “the champion” against erosion. He writes, “For some reason, possibly the fact that the miracle vine will run up on trees and telephone wires and will take over yards and empty lots in city areas, there has arisen a great prejudice against kudzu.” Garden club members who told him they loathed kudzu were referred to as “lovely but shortsighted women.” He closes the chapter with a poem, “*Song of the Kudzu Vine*,” by Ollie Reeves, poet laureate of Georgia at the time. The final stanza reads,

*Happy the farmer, happy the day
 Gathering Kudzu, tossing the hay,
 Come join the chorus, help us to sing,
 Down with erosion, “Kudzu is king!”*

compiled by Karen Brown, Ed.