

Lesson 6
READ THIS STORY #2, Basic

Kudzu

Have you heard of kudzu? It's sometimes called "The Green Menace." Kudzu is an Asian vine with shiny green leaves and purple blossoms.

It was originally planted in the U.S a century ago in locales where soil erosion was a problem. It seemed to be a perfect solution until people discovered that the plant is virtually unstoppable. It grows rapidly and smothers everything in its path. It even winds around trees. It can invade a gully or crevasse. It even thrives in glacial moraines. This pernicious plant is a survivor!

In this country, kudzu has only been used as fodder for cattle. But in 1977, a book was published detailing other possibilities. The book did not become a best-seller, but it offered some interesting ideas. Imagine snacking on French-fried kudzu leaves instead of potato chips! Jelly can be made from its purple blossoms. The roots can be dried and made into a powder to thicken soup. The author suggested that kudzu tea could have a medicinal use. Creative people can even use the vines to weave wreaths, baskets, and furniture.

Perhaps kudzu is not such a nuisance after all.