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## **Kudzu**

**Lead: It can grow a hundred feet in the summer. It is the subject of poetry and song. It can be seen all over the southland billowing out of fields onto highways, an advancing tide of near unstoppable abundance. Kudzu covers Dixie like the dew.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Kudzu originated in the Orient and was brought to the United States by the Japanese as an ornamental plant in their exhibition at the Philadelphia Centennial**

**Celebration in 1876. It was taken south where its thick mat of vegetation provided welcome relief from the summer heat on countless southern porches. About 1900 C.E. Pleas a farmer in Chipley, Florida was discouraged with the poor growth of kudzu near the house, so he pulled it up and threw it on a pile of trash in the backyard. Two years later that dismissed little kudzu plant had covered his trash heap and nearly half the farm. Then his chickens began eating it, and the cows and goats too. Tests showed that Kudzu sent its roots after water seven feet into the soil, aerating it, and because it was a legume, restoring nitrogen in the process.**

**For generations southern land had been depleted by the careless planting of corn, cotton and tobacco. Kudzu seemed like a miracle in the making. A great crusade to spread the plant kicked into high gear during the Great Depression and reached a peak after World War II, but the longer people dealt with Kudzu the less enthusiastic they became.**

**In the post war years, other plants and chemicals were developed that better covered, restored, and protected the soil, but the big problem was Kudzu was too much of a good thing. It took over everything in its path, houses, telephone poles, orchards, pastures, and, rumor has it, the occasional inattentive cow. In parts of**

**the South, kudzu has run wild,  
squatting on the landscape like some  
obese potentate.**

**In an era of shrinking government  
budgets and scarce resources there  
may be an economic future for the  
millions of acres of kudzu and that is  
good because it is certainly here to  
stay.**

**At the University of Richmond, this  
is Dan Roberts.**

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### **Resources**

**Rosen, Aaron Eli. *Feasibility Study: Eradication of Kudzu  
With Herbicides and Revegetation with Native Tree  
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