

Kudzu Coalition attacks Enemy with Science and Grit

The Kudzu Coalition, a Spartanburg-based non-profit organization, is dedicated to making “our communities more attractive through experimentation, demonstration and education in the use of non-herbicidal methods to control small kudzu infestations.”

Member Paul Savko describes the group as a bunch of engineers who apply an analytical approach to the task. Their research has resulted in several findings that can be used against the plant. In some cases, these are different from the conventional wisdom.

For example, they have studied rejuvenation of the plant when various portions are removed. They found that as long as the “crown” was removed, the plant dies. The crown is located 1-1 ½ inches below the ground surface. This means that removal work does not have to disturb as much of the soil as previously thought.

An important Coalition concern is to save trees. They know that Kudzu will only grow 3 feet high by itself, but easily climbs using anything within its 3 foot reach. By cutting back all material within 4 feet of a tree,

including low branches, a tree can be protected from kudzu.

The finding that kudzu will not climb anything more than 8 inches in diameter has also resulted in new techniques.

For example, Jack Callahan has created and patented a sleeve which can be used to deter kudzu from climbing smaller trees and utility wires.

Contact the Coalition at www.kokudzu.com or 864-582-0990 with questions or requests for help.



Howard Miller, with assistance of Paul Blakeley, uses sweeps on his tractor to remove kudzu vines including the crown.



At Kudzu Coalition event, visitors view before and after photos of the Coalition's work.



Paul David Blakeley takes a break from attacking Kudzu with his skid-steer which pulls out the plant with long tines.