

New angle on kudzu control

A September 7 article by Rick Bragg in the *New York Times* described a new biological control effort to fight the “legendary weed” kudzu. Originally from Asia, kudzu has evaded ecologically safe and effective control in the Southeastern United States for more than 50 years and is a problem in numerous units of the national park system. In research funded by the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Energy, North Carolina University researchers are introducing a caterpillar, the soybean looper, into kudzu fields. The insect eats the kudzu and subsequently dies from wasp larvae previously injected into them. The Forest Service may test the strategy in remote areas of national forests where heavy equipment or herbicides are a threat to other organisms.