

# KUDZU in Marblehead, MA

Progress Report  
Sept 20 - Oct 22  
2006

# Marblehead Facts

- Marblehead is a seacoast residential community first settled in 1629 and retains much of its historical legacy with its large number of colonial homes and narrow streets. With more than 20,000 residents in its 4.2 square miles, it is densely populated and heavily built (95% built out\*), making open space a very limited resource. The Marblehead Conservancy believes that making the public aware of the open spaces and encouraging and facilitating their appropriate use is an important factor in developing public support for the preservation of these spaces and the acquisition of additional space.

\* As determined by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission in 2000.

# Controlling Kudzu in Marblehead

- The Marblehead Conservancy, Inc (501c 3) Trails Group has undertaken the project of controlling an outbreak of an invasive plant, kudzu, in Marblehead. We are proceeding with assistance from Town departments and advice from State and Federal agencies.
- This includes Biosecurity and Regulatory Services MA DAR, USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife, IPANE, New England Invasives Plant Group and others.
- The Town of Marblehead departments that have been involved include the Board of Health, Recreation, Parks & Forestry, Light Dept, Water and Sewer Dept. and support from the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen.

# Marblehead Conservancy Trails

- We have sent out Trail Crews all year long, once per week for 1.5 years and twice per week for the last 3.5 years – totaling more than 400 “events”. Altogether we have donated over 7,312 man hours to improving Conservation areas. We have built a 50’ drop switchback, stone stairs with >25’ height in two locations, 8 stone creek crossings, and have rehabbed about 2.5 miles of trails including spreading 351 cubic yards of woodchips on the trails. We have removed many acres of bittersweet, multiflora rose, and barberry and have planted over 6,500 trees and shrubs.
- We have completed almost two dozen group projects with local schools, boy scouts, local camps, and Earth Day/Arbor Day events every year.
- Of the 7,312 man-hours we have provided to town Conservation areas, about 85% is volunteer effort and 15% our paid Forest Ranger - Douglas Perkins.
- We are now working on controlling Kudzu in Marblehead while it is still localized and we can be successful.

# KUDZU'S ECOLOGICAL THREAT

- Kudzu kills or degrades other plants by smothering them under a solid blanket of leaves, by girdling woody stems and tree trunks, and by breaking branches or uprooting entire trees and shrubs through the sheer force of its weight. Once established, Kudzu plants grow rapidly, extending as much as 60 feet per season at a rate of about one foot per day. This vigorous vine may extend 32-100 feet in length, with stems ½-4 inches in diameter. Kudzu roots are fleshy, with massive tap roots 7 inches or more in diameter, 6 feet or more in length, and weighing as much as 400 pounds. As many as thirty vines may grow from a single root crown.

# Seasonal growth of Kudzu creating a monoculture in Dahlonega, Ga

with permission from [www.KOKudzu.com](http://www.KOKudzu.com)



Winter



Spring



Mid-Summer



Early Fall

Kudzu has only been found in a couple locations in New England. This pictures shows Kudzu covering a road in Greenwich Connecticut, Oct 2006. Kudzu has now been found in Marblehead. We want to stop it before it spreads.



10/25/2006



10/25/2006

# KUDZU SEEDS AND LEAF



10/25/2006

# Kudzu topping trees above multiflora and bittersweet Sept 30 2006



10/25/2006

10

# Kudzu is near the main power line for all of Marblehead



10/25/2006

11

# Doug and Bob cutting kudzu; notice the leaves, vines and seeds



10/25/2006

12

# Doug examining kudzu vines



10/25/2006

13

4 inch diameter kudzu vine. The root going up and to the right has been traced over 50 feet along the ground



10/25/2006

14

Kudzu strangling Norway Maple showing that it has been growing for many years.



10/25/2006

15

# Dick cutting the area to the ground to locate kudzu roots and new shoots



10/25/2006

16

Bob stacking up kudzu root, leaves, seeds and all other material for transport to incinerator



10/25/2006

17

**Kudzu site Oct 18:** two trailer loads of debris have been removed from the site but dead kudzu with seed pods is still present in the trees tops. The majority of the area has been cut to the ground and debris gathered for trucking



10/25/2006

18

# Oct 18 view from the back of the site showing the power poles



10/25/2006

19

# Kudzu site progress

## Sept 30 and the same location Oct 18



# Removing Kudzu and all the seed pods from the crown of trees.



10/25/2006

21

# Marking Kudzu root crowns



10/25/2006

22

# Digging up Kudzu root crowns



10/25/2006

# Kudzu root crowns



10/25/2006

24

If you want to join us, walk in from Rt. 114 at the Salem/Marblehead line crossing the foot bridge along the old railroad bed (Fred & Doug).



10/25/2006

25

The site is located directly across from the first power pole closest to Salem.

