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The Use of *Glycine tomentella* Hayata on the Islet of Kinmen (Quemoy)

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**The use of *Glycine tomentella* Hayata on the islet of Kinmen (Quemoy).**—The genus *Glycine* Willd. is economically important because of the cultigen *G. max* (L.) Merr., commonly

known as the soybean. The annual crop was domesticated in China (1). The leguminous seeds are an important source of protein feed, dietary oil, and soy food products.

Currently, the genus *Glycine* contains 18 wild perennial species and several undescribed taxa (2, 3, 4). The species are indigenous to Australia-Papua New Guinea and grow under a wide range of climatic conditions. Two species, *G. tabacina* (Labill.) Benth and *G. tomentella* Hayata have polyploid cytotypes and are found in the western Pacific region, for example, Fiji, Japan, Marianas, New Caledonia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Tonga. In addition, both species have been reported in Fujian Province, P. R. China (5). The dissemination of the polyploid cytotypes of *G. tabacina* and *G. tomentella* is most likely due to migratory shore birds (6). In addition, extensive library research and examination of labels of wild perennial *Glycine* holdings at many herbaria failed to reveal any ethnobotanical use of the plants by indigenous people.

On September 8 and 9, 1997 we collected seed of *G. tabacina* and *G. tomentella* on the islet of Kinmen (Quemoy). Kinmen is a Taiwan-

**Nutritional supplement (tablets) made from roots of *Glycine tomentella***

**一 條 根**

健康膠囊

純天然植物食品



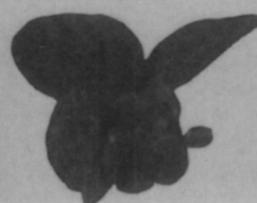
金門農業試驗所輔導  
*Glycine tomentella* Hayata

**一條根 (豆科)**  
*Glycine tomentella* Hayata

別名：蠶豆、蔓草蠶豆、一條根(金門)。

形態：蔓性草本，全株密生絨毛。葉互生，羽狀三出複葉，葉片厚，嫩綠狀，小葉橢圓形，先端鈍，長2~3公分，寬1~1.5公分。總狀花序，花冠紫色，旗生，花萼4裂，下部癒合鐘形。雄蕊10枚。子房被黃色有絨毛。莢果略長方形，長約2~3公分，有茸毛。種子近球形，蒸褐色。花果期8~11月。

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Organic Germanium·Lecithin DHA&EPA·  
Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>·B<sub>2</sub>·B<sub>6</sub>·E

用法用量：  
每日二次，一次2~3粒，16歲以下減半，飯後半小時服用，可增進食慾，長期服用有益健康。

內 容 量：500mg/粒×100粒/瓶

注意事項：避免陽光直射保存於陰涼處

製造日期：  
有效期間：二年 86.06.13

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Fig. 1. Nutritional supplement tablets made from the roots of *Glycine tomentella*.



**Fig. 2.** Bundles of *Glycine tomentella* roots for sale in a Kinmen market.

held islet just off the coast of China facing the port city of Xiamen, just 2.3 km away (7). To our surprise we found that on Kinmen, a private company (Wu-Chi Co.) was selling herbal tea bags and herbal tea capsules produced from the roots of locally grown *G. tomentella* (Fig. 1). The tea is being promoted for good health and carries the message, "Tea quenches your thirst and refreshes your mind." According to the managing director (Shu-Ching Yang) the company was started in 1995 and the use of *G. tomentella* roots is a traditional product on Kinmen. However, there is no literature available concerning its history or use on Kinmen. In the local market, we found *G. tomentella* roots being sold for home use in bundles of 250 g (Fig. 2). We suspect that some of these roots might be imported from Xiamen and are not produced on Kinmen.

According to the information officer of the Institute of Agriculture, Kinmen, the institute multiplies the seed for the farmers. The seed is planted in sandy soil in May and harvested 16 months later by deep plowing (Fig. 3.). The seeding rate recommended by the institute is 5 kg per ha. An examination of several irrigated



**Fig. 3.** *Glycine tomentella* plants growing in a field.

fields revealed that the rows were about 50 cm apart, uprooted plants lacked nodules on their roots, and the fields were severely infested with soybean rust, *Phakopsora pachyrhizi* Sydow. Currently 10–12 ha of *Glycine tomentella* is grown under contract on Kinmen and the contract price of freshly harvested roots is about US \$35.00 per kg. At present, the company sells its product to the local community, tourists, and in Taiwan. Additional products made from *G. tomentella* roots are being tested.

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