Ohio Grown Rubber, Crop of 1910.*

Charles P. Fox.

Product of Common Milkweed (Asclepias syriaca). A common plant belonging to the Asclepiadaceae; found abundantly throughout the United States; classed as a weed, convicted as a bee-killer, advocated as a rubber producer. Too well known to need description.

Asclepias syriaca.

Latex. Milk-like, thin; acid or neutral reaction; characteristic odor of milkweed; does not coagulate on standing in a closed vessel; imperfectly coagulated by acids; thickened or partially coagulated by ammonia; coagulated by heat; coagulated by alcohol.

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Coagulated Latex. The coagulum is plastic and can be moulded into cakes resembling some of the cheaper grades of rubber. The whey contains mineral matter and sugar.

Caoutchouc. Obtained from the coagulum. Is flabby; lacks strength and firmness; is high in gravity. Responds to the sulfur chloride and bromine tests. Yield of rubber, on basis of latex, is 2 to 3%.

Resin. White, tasteless, odorless. Gives “asclepione,” described by Watts as “radiating crystals insoluble in water and alcohol, and is not attacked by dilute caustic.”

This plant has been suggested as a source of crude rubber. The project has engaged the serious attention of several parties during the past twenty years. A careful study of the question, covering a period of twelve years, indicates that while rubber is a product of the plant, the amount is so small, its quality is so inferior, and its cost of production is so high, that a profitable industry is out of the question.