

Ballistic Ivy

Hedera helix munitionis

This hardy variant of English ivy is prized by the more discerning gardener and tactical security coordinator for its ability to actually reinforce the vertical surfaces on which it climbs -- to the point where even a new transplanting of Ballistic Ivy can repel small-arms fire after a mere year's growth. A century's worth of cultivation of this plant can produce an organic net that could shrug off an artillery shell. Or at least keep the blast from penetrating the ivy.

How does it work? Well, that information is classified as being TOP SECRET under the UK's Government Security Classification Policy, and before you say anything: yes, some in the British government miss the old nomenclature, too. But it's the modern era, and the old ways have to be kept up to date. Suffice it to say that the right people in various nation-states -- at least, the ones that the British like -- know how to cultivate Ballistic Ivy properly.

Of course, while technically those people are theoretically under the oversight of the people actually running the nation-states in question, in practice all it takes is for one

head of state to be bored by gardening to have that oversight be negated by somebody not paying attention to the right briefing. And once that happens, thanks to the vagaries of black budgets it's possible for the entire system to end up being left in a perpetually-funded bureaucratic limbo... all right, all right, it turns out that the local government managed to let its last Ballistic Ivy cultivator retire and we're just now finding his reminder that we needed to start training a replacement five years ago.

So go find the fellow, OK? We need him back at the office doing that training. And we need him happy, so make sure to wave a fat consulting contract in front of him, or anything else reasonable. And see if he's accidentally kept any cuttings. You know gardeners can be.

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