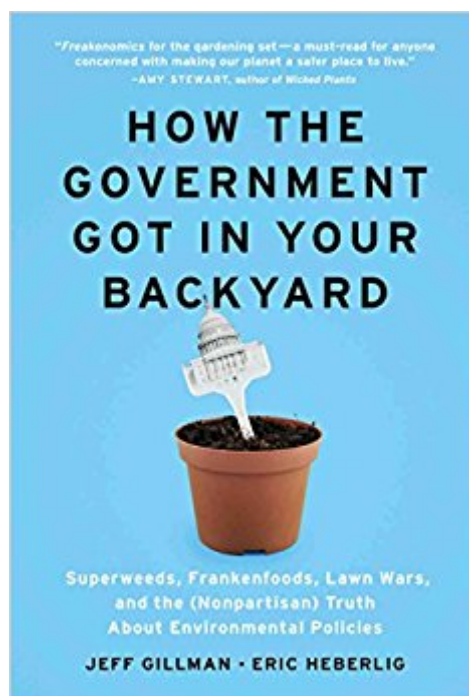




The book was found

# How The Government Got In Your Backyard: Superweeds, Frankenfoods, Lawn Wars, And The (Nonpartisan) Truth About Environmental Policies



## Synopsis

Biotechnology – the future or a genetic time bomb? Renewable fuels – the key to cleaner air or just corporate welfare? Greenhouse gasses – baking the earth to death or just a needless worry? Plant patents – improving gardens and farms or just profiteering? When you stop to think about it, the government has its hand in every important environmental issue. And with the left and the right raucously disagreeing about whether the government's policies are for good or for evil, it's impossible for a concerned citizen to know what to think. How the Government Got in Your Backyard distills the science, the politics, and the unbiased, nonpartisan truth behind hot-button environmental issues from pesticides to global warming. By clearly representing what the left says, what the right says, what the science is, and what the facts are, Gillman and Heberlig don't set out to provide the answer – they light the path so concerned citizens can uncover their own true and informed opinion. In this season of political discontent, the unbiased truth about environmental policies – free of political agendas – is as refreshing as it is fascinating. How the Government Got in Your Backyard is not for Republicans or Democrats, liberals or conservatives. It's for anyone who is ready to get to the bottom line.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gillman and Heberlig take a nonpartisan approach to existing environmental laws and consider how each political sphere would like them changed. They use an interesting conceit, highlighting a topic,

providing background, then relating how it is received by the Right and the Left. This clarifies dense material, making for an accessible title that also explains why it is so difficult to alter existing laws. Members of Congress, they write, would be perfectly happy if scientists came before them and all agreed that "this pesticide is safe, allow it" or "this pesticide is unsafe, ban it." But anticipating that level of consensus from the scientific community makes *Waiting for Godot* look like an afternoon's diversion. Therefore, politicians are forced to take sides on issues they know little about, resulting in frustration all around. Gillman and Heberlig also wade into private-property rights and home-owner associations and pose the question of just what a good yard means. In all, their discussion illuminates environmental confusion on a national scale and offers help in making the far-ranging debate easier to understand. --Colleen Mondor

"Illuminates environmental confusion on a national scale and offers help in making the far-ranging debate easier to understand." • *Booklist* "A lively read for a broad audience, from political activists and policymakers to gardeners and anyone who simply wants to know more about these important issues." • *Book News* "If government issues relating to produce draw your attention, this book may help broaden your thinking." • *The Packer* "You will be very surprised when you read this book. It may change your mind or you may stick to your guns. Either way, you will become informed, more knowledgeable, and be able to separate fiction from fact." • *Virginia Master Gardeners Association Report* "This book condenses the facts in an accessible manner and poses both sides of the debate without preaching either way." • *East Oregonian* "If you want to know the actual science details behind many of today's issues including those that affect gardening, such as chemical fertilizers and GMOs, you owe it to yourself to get this book." • *BornToFarm.com* "Gillman and Heberlig are a horticulturist and a political scientist respectively, and their unique angles allow them to open these issues to the regular folks like me." • *SuchABookNerd.com*

I used this for a paper for school. I learned things. I got an A on the paper

Good book that provides an overview of governmental policy on issues related to the environment. Read it for a class but found it very enjoyable and I was able to learn a lot of new things from it.

The authors wrote in the Introduction to this 2011 book, "we're going to take you on a tour of what,

exactly, the government has done and could do about our environment... We don't provide the ultimate answers... but we do evaluate and separate the data, policies, and rhetoric, giving you a better, clearer basis for YOU to decide what the government should do about ... everything else that affects this beautiful blue and green sphere on which we live." (Pg. 17) They argue, "The theory that organic food is more sustainable than conventionally produced food because it relies on products that are renewable and are better for the environment remains debatable... nonrenewable fertilizers and potentially dangerous pesticides abound in the organic world, just as in conventional systems... Furthermore, organic food is elitist... only more affluent people can afford to eat it... And finally, it is far too easy for organic producers to cheat... If producers want to slip in conventional chemicals, the chances of getting caught are slim and, even if they are, punishment is not assured." (Pg. 49) They observe, "many people... feel as though we're just waiting for the biotechnology industry to make a wrong decision on some plant or animal. When this occurs, we will suddenly see problems that we cannot now imagine. Could it occur with an animal rather than with a plant? It's possible... Some research shows that they wouldn't survive... but the truth is that, until it happens, we don't really know." (Pg. 119) They conclude, "People claim to love the environment, yet few spend the serious amount of time that is needed to understand sides of the argument... that they claim to support. If there's a unifying message in this book, it is this: Don't be one of those people." (Pg. 215) This diverse and engaging book will be of interest to a wide variety of readers.

What is the topic of a book entitled, "How the Government Got in Your Backyard: Superweeds, Frankenfoods, Lawn Wars, and the (Nonpartisan) Truth About Environmental Policies"? Doesn't this sound like a government bashing book, a book written for those "dittoheads" out there? Well, this book might be of interest to some dittoheads, but there are many others that should find it of interest. This is a book about how government works and government policies are formed and implemented. It uses a number of topics to get the major points across: organic agriculture rules, invasive species regulations, local restrictions on your lawn, and GMOs, to name a few. The book and its chapters are well-written and insightful. "While these scientific disagreements are certainly significant, the most important limitation of science is that it can't set priorities or address trade-offs. Priorities and trade-offs are value judgments. Science's goal is accuracy. At best, science can determine what is likely to happen if certain policy changes are made. It cannot determine whether the policy is good or bad, or whether the costs of the policy are worth it. It can't determine whether resources would be better spent doing something else, or whether implementing and enforcing a policy is even feasible. But these factors are at least as important as scientific accuracy in

determining whether anything can get done politically" (p. 27). "Members of Congress and their staffs operate in a largely oral culture where people are more important than documents. They may not formally use research but they talk to experts and hear about the results of research through testimony at congressional hearings. Politicians like narratives or stories that connect problems, solutions, and real people's lives... A marginally talented scientist who can tell a good story about his or her research is much more useful than a brilliant scientist who cannot" (p. 22). Interesting book! It reminds me of a book I read titled *Working With Congress*, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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