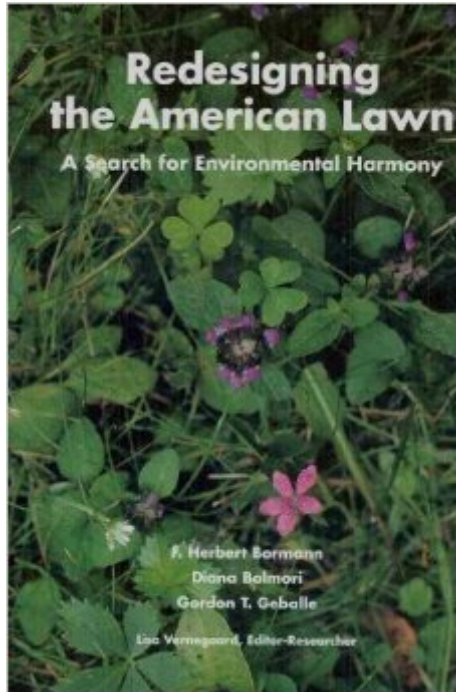


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# Redesigning The American Lawn: A Search For Environmental Harmony



## Synopsis

Americans love their lawns, but are they contributing to serious environmental problems facing the planet? This book states that the lawn may be an ecological anachronism and argues that a re-think on their care is necessary to demonstrate commitment to a more ecologically sound world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book's forte is 2 things: Its' explanation of the negative impact of millions of monoculture, traditional lawns - not on just the environment, but on the lifestyles and wallets of those who tend them. And then it offers sound advice (which does -NOT- start with "get rid of your existing grass") which can be easily followed by the average homeowner. The solutions proposed in this book are not radical, unattractive schemes, and most of the suggestions offered will result in a BETTER LOOKING YARD and savings of time and money. I read it from cover to cover twice. I hope to soon have my yard working for me, instead of me working for my yard. I found a good compliment to this book in "The Lawn, A History of an American Obsession," by Virginia Scott Jenkins. If you're interested in more of the history and background of the entire lawn concept, (and some neat old pictures of advertising,) you'll love this book. It explains how agriculture, chemical companies, the garden industry, golfing, housing developments, world wars, etc... and the advent of new inventions have come together to result in an entire lifestyle revolving around 'the lawn.' The complete answer to the question, "Why do we have lawns, and what did people used to have around their property?" Read this, then read "Redesigning" to see what having all these lawns does to the world and the people in them, (and, of course, suggestions for improving things in your own little slice of the

world.)

Most Americans do not realize how much their tastes in gardening have been affected by marketing on the part of lawn care companies. Nor do they seem to realize what environmental havoc they wreak through the lawn care practices preached on TV, and promulgated every time they watch the Masters Golf tournament on TV and think they should try to emulate those greens and fairways at home. They have been seduced into an unrealistic world that wastes their time (why mow?), money (why put fertilizer down 4 times a year?) and the environment (Do they really even have the weeds or bugs in their lawn that the 'weed and feed', and 'grub killers' are prescribed for? If not, why are they paying extra for the privilege of putting down toxins they don't even need?) This book is a scholarly approach to reviewing the problem - highly recommended if you tend to ask "WHY?" before "How much?"

This is a wonderful resource about a very important environmental problem - the American lawn. The diagrams are especially clear and complete. It provides the history of the lawn, scientific background about the problems associated with the lawn, and also gives very practical advice about how to create a Freedom Lawn. I initially got this book (first edition) from the library, but decided this was one I wanted to have for my personal reference - especially since the second edition includes updated information.

I have to say that I bought this book on a lark, not expecting much from it. I was wrong. It presents a whole new way to look at the typical suburban lawn, namely mine. I have to admit that I have not yet come to grips with the notion that a dandelion might have a place in my lawn, but I have come to love the sea of white that is a clover lawn in bloom. The difficulty in that is that my neighbors do not love my clover lawn. Mowed short, my new lawn has still drawn criticism. Next spring, I will begin to add elements of a meadow to my lawn. That should be an adventure with my neighbors. The book is really interesting. What it does more than anything else is to rewrite what might be possible in even thinking about what "lawn" means. That there is an alternative to a sea of uniform green is wonderful. That adding the usual fertilizer/weed killer chemistry actually takes the life out of my lawn is an eye opener. And that one might be released from being enslaved to a kind of lawn that is utterly foreign to where I live is truly a relief. The practical steps back to sane lawn work and to a life giving lawn are clear, useful, inspiring, and effective. Take a look at this book. Read it slowly and at least allow the possibility that it offers a better way.

This book takes a long, hard look at the industry surrounding lawn care, with its chemicals and fertilizers, and asks whether this is necessary for a good life, and examines the history of how Americans came to value these artificially cultivated huge expanses of mown grass. It also details several case studies where suburban folks successfully challenged the neighborhood norms and morphed a manicured lawn into a more natural hodgepodge of plant life that is better for the environment, still lovely, and much less work and cost and waste to maintain. Even though this book is decades old, the information in it is more relevant now than ever.

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