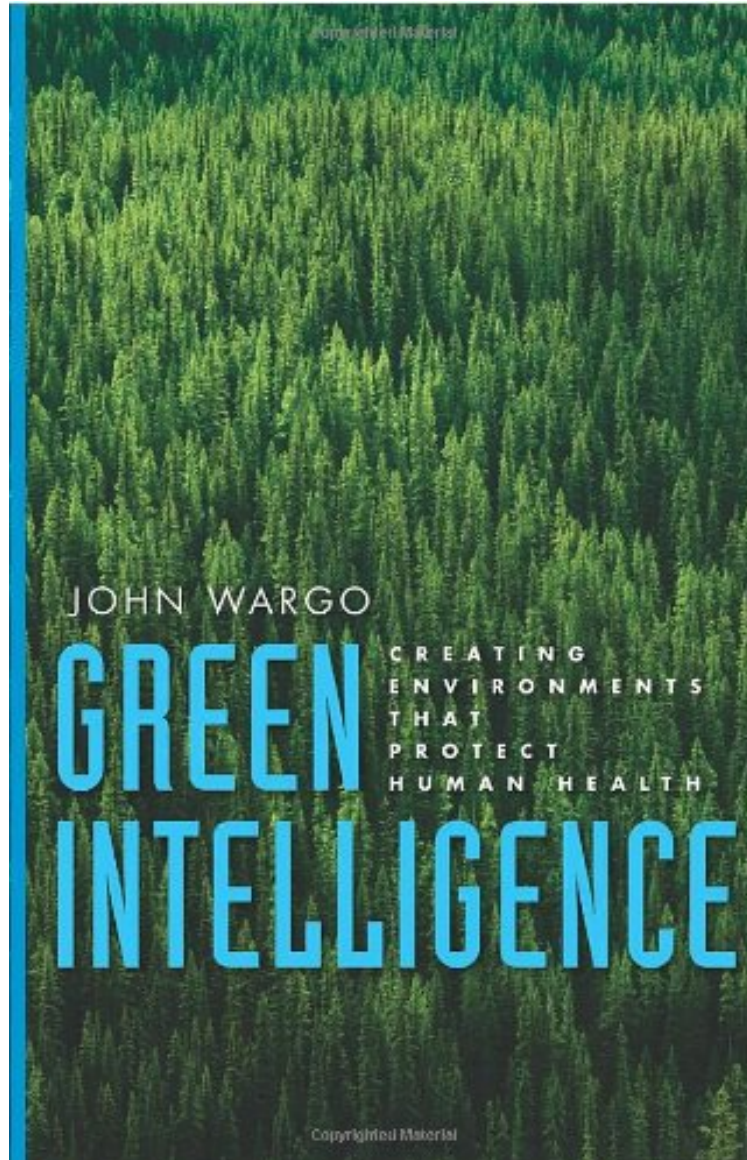


(Read free ebook) Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health

# Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health

*John Wargo*

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**John Wargo : Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Overview Book, Great Price, Nice Emphasis on Public

Information Gaps By Robert David STEELE Vivas I like this book. It is not as detailed as any of the following but does a super job of blending together in a very easy to read manner coverage of five areas: nuclear testing, military contamination of training areas, pesticides, vehicle emissions, and plastics. Among the books I recommend (and have reviewed) for more detailed insights: Pandora's Poison: Chlorine, Health, and a New Environmental Strategy High Tech Trash: Digital Devices, Hidden Toxics, and Human Health Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power The Blue Death: The Intriguing Past and Present Danger of the Water You Drink Blue Frontier: Dispatches from America's Ocean Wilderness The Next Catastrophe: Reducing Our Vulnerabilities to Natural, Industrial, and Terrorist Disasters Big-Box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America's In-Store Ecological Economics: Principles And Applications This book would normally have been a four on the substance of the five domains, especially if one is looking for more in-depth appreciations, but I found the Notes and the Index satisfactory, and the intelligence-information perspective that this author makes a special effort to address carries the book most easily to a solid five. Highlights from my fly-leaf notes: + 80,000 synthetic components that have not been evaluated alone or in combination + EPA studies and regulates "one chemical at a time," has absolutely no ability to contemplate combinations that are additive, synergistic, or antagonistic + There has never been a master plan for environmental law as the same time that "the problems we now face are far more subtle, decentralized, and imperceptible." + 90% of the chemicals are exempt from Federal review due to grandfathering or other loopholes + ZERO information is available for 43% of those 90% that are exempt, and limited basic information is available for another 7% of the 90% + 95% of the information that \*is\* provided to the federal government about chemicals is classified "confidential business information" that cannot be shared with state, local, or foreign governments, much less the public + The recurring theme across all five areas of concern is "strategies of public deception" by both the corporations and the federal agencies responsible for oversight of the corporations. + Lack of public knowledge is the most fundamental obstacle to effective safeguards. + QUOTE (xxi): "The underlying causes of our ignorance include illiteracy, secrecy, deception, privacy, language barriers, and perhaps most importantly, the control and ownership of science by powerful institutions." + Classification of the atomic testing program prevented informed challenges leading to over a decade of primitive open air testing combined with an inability to predict weather patterns that poisoned a good two thirds of the continental United States at one time or another. + Human testing of nuclear effects was done without disclosure or informed consent + Three big concerns: persistent human incapacity to manage highly hazardous materials; failure to warn populations; and failure to have serious contingency plans (e.g. all our nuclear power plants are close to major urban centers) + Vieques island a single DoD training site for a long time, has, as a very low estimate, 45,000 unexploded bombs in the waters around the island. + DoD has gone for decades without understanding the consequences of its training emissions (fluids as well as emissions) on ground water--as I write this, there is a case breaking at Camp Lejeune. + 1200 licensed pesticides, many of them "parked" in a "special review" limbo, political speak for okay to use while we avoid understanding this + Vehicle emissions include "a highly diverse mixture of hazardous contaminants including particulates, ozone, nitrogen oxides, and volatile 'air toxics' such as benzene." (p 207) + Over half the U.S. population lives in countries that have not and will not meet federal standards + Of thousands of air pollutants, EPA monitors only six types, and the matter of how and when those six types are measured is subject to criticism + Indoor air is of concern in 30-50% of the buildings today; 107 active pesticides have been approved for indoor use + Air pollution now kills more than breast and prostate cancer combined (not sure what that really means) + 9% of kids in the USA suffer from asthma--this I understand, and it especially means urban poor kids. + Plastics are neither tested nor labeled. At Phi Beta Iota I am posting an image from page 268 + There are two islands of plastic debris in the Pacific that are twice the size of Texas (!) INFORMATION PATHOLOGIES OF LABELS- labels not seen by those who are exposed to the application- Illiteracy blocks understanding of labels when seen- Only address proven adverse effects- Safety claims often unproven- Information about many adverse effects withheld- Warnings are seldom updated- Labels do not adequately explain hazards- Applicators (humans) often are poorly trained- Residues persist longer than most realize- Labels often use confusing language- Pesticides are often not tested thoroughly- Labels often use misleading imagery- Unsubstantiated claims of effectiveness LESSONS LEARNED ACROSS THE FIVE AREAS + Secrecy shuts the public out and makes accountability impossible + Alternative uses of money not debated: for \$5.5 trillion we spent on the US nuclear testing and armaments program from 1960-1990, what could we have done for America and the world? + EPA is clueless about the holistic challenge of testing all chemicals all the time in all contexts + Cost of restoring land now that we understand what we have done is a major obstacle to doing so CONCLUSION QUOTE: "The central problem is widespread public misunderstanding of the presence and danger of chemicals in everyday environments." (p. 283) Principles for Intelligence Gathering + Track the sources and movements of hazardous chemicals and technologies + Pay attention to persistence and mobility + Determine where the chemicals come to rest + Develop a thorough understanding of exposure + Improve toxicity testing + Account for variations in susceptibility "True cost" does not appear in this book, that is a surmountable flaw that I recommend the author address in future editions of the book, which I do consider worthy of a second printing. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good Introduction/Overview to Environmental Contamination/Health By Gabor Asztalos This book is great. It reminded me

of Zinn's *A People's History of the US* except from an environmental policy perspective. Zinn starts his foray with Native Americans watching white explorers pull up to their shores (we all know how that turned out for them) and moves on to untold details of America's decision to bomb Japan in WWII. Wargo similarly starts his narrative with the US military forcing natives off their land in the remote Pacific in order to test their nuclear arsenal. From there it is just unsugarcoated anecdote after another ranging from misinformed neglect up through preventable atrocities involving human contamination. At the tail end it shifts into plans to map out a better future for environmental health. If you don't think our unsafe environmental direction and chemical risk is so much an issue of tragedy of the commons but rather a tragedy of common ignorance and common denial then this is recommended text for you and your peers, a fast read that can easily be slipped into the holes that now lay occupied by the heads of ostriches.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. This book will motivate you to make changes to your environment. By birdseyeview This is an outstanding and engaging read on major historical events and processes that are happening to our planet. If you do not feel connected to and protective of the waters, forests, mountains and the blessing of natural resources, then you will after reading this book. This publication does a great job of forcing you to become aware of your surroundings and keys you into legislative and scientific developments where each one of us can target our efforts in specific ways to reverse the damage that is being done to our world.

We live in a world awash in manmade chemicals, from the pesticides on our front lawns to the diesel exhaust in the air we breathe. Although experts are beginning to understand the potential dangers of these substances, there are still more than 80,000 synthetic compounds that have not been sufficiently tested to interpret their effects on human health. Yale University professor John Wargo has spent much of his career researching the impact of chemical exposures on women and children. In this book, he explains the origins of society's profound misunderstanding of everyday chemical hazards and offers a practical path toward developing greater "green intelligence." Despite the rising trend in environmental awareness, information about synthetic substances is often unavailable, distorted, kept secret, or presented in a way that prevents citizens from acting to reduce threats to their health and the environment. By examining the histories of five hazardous technologies and practices, Wargo finds remarkable patterns in the delayed discovery of dangers and explains the government's failures to manage them effectively. Sobering yet eminently readable, Wargo's book ultimately offers a clear vision for a safer future through prevention, transparency, and awareness.

From Publishers Weekly On the morning of April 8, 1951, a group of American dignitaries visiting Runit Island in the South Pacific watched as a blinding white light filled the sky, followed by a yellow and red fireball that vaporized millions of tons of water, mud, plant and animal life into radioactive mist and debris. Within 15 seconds, the conflagration was over, but the damage the nuclear experiment unleashed on the Marshall Islands would last generations. It is from this dramatic focal point that Wargo, a Yale University professor, paints his distressing landscape of modern ecology, further coloring it with the histories of three other pernicious practices that have changed the chemistry of the planet and our bodies: the use of modern-day pesticides, the consumption of vehicle emissions and the widespread adoption of plastics. Wargo reveals how information about synthetic substances has been distorted and kept secret preventing people from taking action to reduce threats to their health. Though Wargo sometimes skirts a general sentiment of helplessness in the face of industrial and governmental actions, he punctuates the book with ways in which people can take back long-violated environments and reclaim their ecological well-being. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Green Intelligence" is by far the most informed, cogent, and readable of the books on the environment that I have encountered. His argument is clear and compelling, his approach is unusual and insightful, and his science is sound. —Herbert Needleman, M.D., University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine