



Christiane Grefe **Global Gardening**

Bio-economy – overexploitation or economic model for the future?

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Car tyres from dandelions, plastics from potatoes, petrol from sugar cane and jet fuel from algae... Proponents of a knowledge-based bio-economy hope it will provide solutions to the key question of the 21st century: at a time of climate change and dwindling resources, how do we provide a growing human population with food, energy and raw materials? Already there is fierce competition for space, water and soil between food crops and feed, biofuel and fibre crops and the natural environment essential for biodiversity. Ask in ministries, company labs and biotech start-ups and you encounter other interests, whether research funding, product innovation, emerging markets or the safeguarding of resources in developing countries.

Meanwhile, synthetic biology is set to create new life forms. Is the bio-economy a totalitarian approach – as its critics insist? Or are these new technologies the way forward? How will trade agreements, research policies and agricultural subsidies have to change in order to maintain biodiversity? And who decides this?

Journalist Christiane Grefe sets out to find answers to these questions. She talks to politicians, ecologists, environmentalists, farmers and other stakeholders. In reports, debates and analyses, she sets out the risks and opportunities afforded by the bio-economy and calls for an urgent discussion about the kind of natural world we envision in the future.



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Christiane Grefe was born in 1957. She attended the German School of Journalism and studied political science in Munich. As a freelance journalist, her work has appeared in Natur and GEO Wissen, the SZ Magazin and Wochenpost. Since 1999 Christiane Grefe has been a reporter in the Berlin office of Die Zeit. She co-authored (with Harald Schumann) Der globale Countdown (Global Countdown).

Other titles of the author

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