

Brilliant Solution Solar Electric

Questions and Answers

Why is Greenpeace Campaigning for Solar Power?

Greenpeace is campaigning to introduce solutions, which over time will end the use of fossil fuels - the major cause of climate change. Solar electric panels can generate pollution-free electricity in our towns and cities. The handful of buildings in the UK currently using solar electricity could, with Government and industry support, become millions.

How does a solar electric panel work?

A solar electric panel converts sunlight directly into electricity. An inverter converts this electricity into 240V electricity suitable for use within the home or office.

Is there enough sunlight in Britain?

Studies by the Government have shown that if solar was utilised on all available buildings in Britain around two-thirds of our national electricity needs could be generated.

What if the sun isn't shining?

Solar electricity is generated from daylight. Even on a cloudy day there will be diffuse light, so panels will still generate some electricity.

Will solar panels work all year round?

Yes they will, although as more light means more electricity, they will produce more electricity in the summer months than the winter. In the winter months power can be drawn from the grid in the usual way.

How much electricity will a solar system generate?

A standard 2kW system (about 24 solar panels covering 15 square meters) on a south-facing roof will produce 1500 units of electricity per year. This should easily generate half of the annual electricity requirements of the average family house.

Would a solar system need batteries to store electricity?

No: because the solar systems are grid connected surplus electricity is sold to the grid and any deficit in power (for example at night) is made up by drawing power back from the grid.

How much does a solar system cost?

A 2kW solar electric system should cost about £10,000. The cost of solar panels has dropped five fold in just 15 years and once a mass market for solar electricity is established it will drop even more dramatically.

Can a house generate all its electricity needs from solar power?

If the premises are suitable it is possible to meet all the average family's electricity needs using solar power. A family house in Oxford has a system comprising 48 solar electric panels on a south facing roof. Over the course

of a year the panels produce enough electricity to supply all the electricity needs of the family and run an electric car!

What are other countries doing to increase the use of solar power?

In countries such as Japan, USA, Netherlands and Germany, governments are actively supporting solar electricity, resulting in tens of thousands of solar powered homes. By contrast there are less than ten grid-connected solar homes in Britain as the UK Government is ignoring the development of solar power. Government support now to kick-start the solar industry will result in prices coming down to an affordable level and make this clean power available to all.

What can I do to help increase the use of solar power in Britain today?

If you want to solarise your home, see the list of solar installers on <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/solarnet.htm>. These firms can advise whether your house is appropriate to install solar electric panels and how much it will cost. Thanks to a breakthrough collaboration between Greenpeace and power company TXU Europe (Eastern Energy) you can now get a fair price for the solar electricity your solar panels export to the grid.