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Solar Power Savings

Posted: 2009-10-05

Besides the roof systems, there are cost-effective solar projects for getting your hot water, heating your pool and warming your home. Let's take a look at four common installations.

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Solar Financing Makes Alternative Energy Affordable

Posted: 2009-10-04

Not all homeowners can afford \$20,000-60,000 for home solar power. Even those who have the money, or sufficient home equity, may not want to use their savings or leverage their credit to buy solar.

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Solar Power Installation Breakdown

Posted: 2009-10-03

There is a great deal of misinformation circulating about the cost of installing a solar power system, specifically a roof-mounted photovoltaic (PV) one.

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\$3 Billion Almond Shelling Company to Install 45,000 Sq Ft. Solar Energy Facility

Posted: 2010-01-18

In what clearly has become a trend in California, another agricultural company has turned to solar energy to meet its needs.

This time it's a second-tier food firm, almond-shelling company Pohl & Holmes, which serves the 1.5-billion pound, \$3-billion-per-year California almond industry, the largest in the world.

For Pohl & Holmes, the installation of a ground-mounted 504-kilowatt solar photovoltaic (PV) system, covering an area of about 45,000 square feet, will offset more than 70 percent of the facility's electrical needs and save the company more than \$2.5 million over the installation's 25-year panel warranty.

The approximately 740,000 kilowatt-hours of power annually, furnished via 2,520 solar panels, will also prevent about 531 metric tons of carbon dioxide, which is the same as permanently removing 102 cars from American roads or planting 13,627 trees.

The system was installed by design/build solar power company Cenergy Power, a division of Santa Ana-based BAP Power Corp. which specializes in utility-scale, agricultural solar power systems.

Cenergy's financing options, which deliver solar energy without down payments, installation costs or hidden fees, combined with a solar rebate from Turlock Irrigation District (which provides irrigation water and electric power to Merced and Stanislaus Counties), means the system will pay for itself in less than two years.

Pohl & Holmes solar array is expected to be completed by the middle of November, and joins the ranks of California agricultural installations which help the state's growers to reduce their operating costs via clean, renewable energy.

One of these solar arrays, installed by the first almond processor in the state to turn to solar, is the Minturn Nut Company, which also used Cenergy's expertise to install a 403-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system on its main warehouse in Le Grand in August of 2009.

Almonds aren't California's only nut crop, and both Modesto-based Quality Nut Co. and Hughson grower Direct Nut Co. have installed solar energy systems to cut down on the cost of growing walnuts and delivering them to grocer's shelves.

Other California agricultural firms who have turned to solar to provide clean, renewable energy include Santa Paula-based fruit grower Limoneira, whose two-phase, 2-megawatt installation provides the electricity to pump irrigation water.

And then there's the Lundberg Family Farms, a rice-growing firm north of Sacramento whose 2006 solar installation produces more than 350,000 kilowatt-hours per year for rice growing and processing.

Last but not least are the over 100 California vintners who have chosen solar to reduce the costs of making wine, but with the recent rash of thieves using the Internet to identify these vintners and steal their solar panels, we've decided not to name names.

Suffice to say, the next time you pick up a nut, or bite into a piece of fruit, or pour a glass of wine, think not only of the sunlight that went into making your delicacy at the biological level, but the sunlight that went into keeping it affordable.