

# Harvesting the Power of the Sun

Sustainability Spotlight Article Excerpt From Connections For Sustainability Newsletter Issue 2: February 2012  
By Jaclin DuRant - Livability Educator

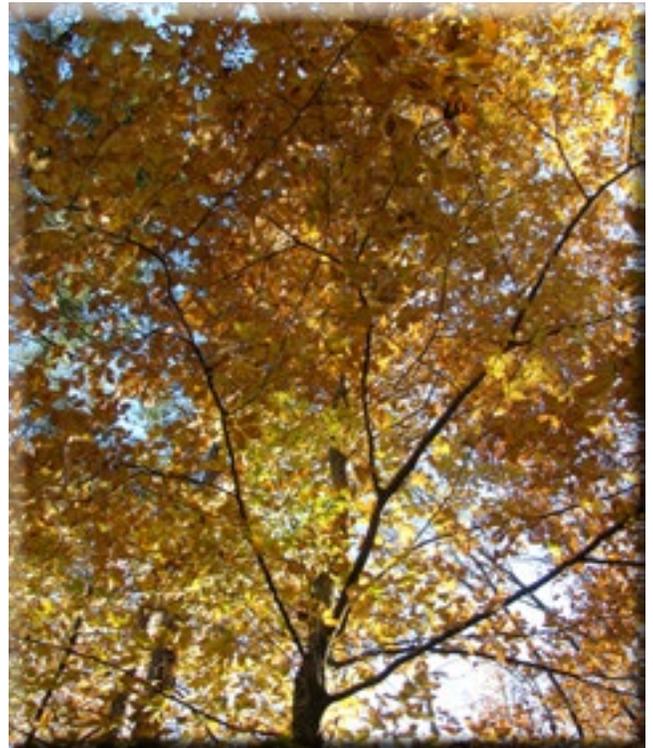
Solar panels are expensive. That is one of the most common statements that people make when discussing solar energy. Though advances in solar technology have made solar power much more widely available than it once was, solar panels still tend to be costly enough that homeowners are skeptical about purchasing them.

But, solar panels are not the only way use solar energy. There is evidence that ancient Greeks and Romans built their homes to take advantage of passive solar energy, and so can we!

Passive solar energy is the sun's ability to heat your home (or water for your home) without the use of electricity. Making use of passive solar energy is easy to do, just build or retrofit your home with southern facing windows that will capture the sun's rays in winter, and use awnings or shades to reduce heat in summer.

Installing passive solar water heaters and planting trees on the west and east sides of your home to help shade your home during the morning and evenings in summer (as well as blocking the wind in winter) while keeping the southern side open

are just a few more ways that any home owner can harness the power of the sun without purchasing solar panels.



Evergreen trees make the best windbreaks in winter, while deciduous trees are especially good for shade in summer. Planting the right plants in the right place can go a long way towards increasing the efficiency of your home.

