Shopping for Solar

A solar array is installed in America every two minutes, according to community solar advocates Solstice.

With solar getting more affordable, more homeowners are jumping on board, having solar panels installed on their homes. Given the newness of solar energy, however, knowing what to look for while shopping for solar panels can be tricky.

The U.S. Department of Energy offers a primer for homeowners called “Homeowner’s Guide to Going Solar.” The website (bit.ly/3rIT1xk) covers the basics of how solar energy works, how to determine if your home is suitable for a solar installation, and the financial and safety considerations involved.

HOME SUITABILITY
Many factors are considered in determining whether your home is suitable for solar panels. In general, you will need to own your home and have a newer roof with a south-facing slope that isn’t obscured by excessive shade. Each individual solar company will have its own requirements.

FINANCIAL MATTERS
You can buy solar panels outright, finance them with a loan, or lease panels. With a loan or lease, your monthly payments could be lower than your monthly electricity bill, but you will be locked into a long-term contract.

Another option is a power purchase agreement, through which a consumer agrees to purchase power produced by panels installed on his home at a set price. Purchasing panels could allow you to qualify for the Solar Investment Tax Credit, a 30% federal tax credit available through 2022. Lease and PPA agreements do not qualify for the credit.

SAFETY
If you’re worried about whether solar is safe for your home, rest assured the industry is well regulated to protect homeowners. Solar panels must meet international inspection and testing standards, according to the Department of Energy, and installers must meet qualifications and install panels to meet local building, fire and electrical codes. Your system should be thoroughly inspected by a certified electrician before it goes online.

COMMUNITY SOLAR
If you decide solar panels aren’t a good fit for your home or budget, you can still benefit from solar energy via community solar. This concept is a way for you to buy into a group solar project which feeds solar energy into the electricity grid, and get a credit on your electricity bill in exchange. To find a community solar project near you, visit communitysolar.energysage.com. Enter your average monthly electricity bill and ZIP code to see how much you could save per
Ready to CRUSH your most annoying bill?

There has never been a better time to go solar!

Take advantage of these benefits:

- Energy independence - keep the lights on even through an extended power outage
- 26% tax credit - let the government help pay for your system
- Pays for itself in as few as 5 years and provides energy for 30+ years
- Zero down financing available to qualified homeowners

CALL (707) 443-5652
TO SCHEDULE YOUR FREE CONSULTATION TODAY!
After a long winter spent cooped up at home, spring is a natural time to declutter, clean and organize your home. Here is a checklist of spring cleaning jobs to remember. You can go it alone, or consider hiring a local cleaning service to help you really make your home shine.

MarthaStewart.com recommends replenishing your cleaning supplies before you get started. That way you’ll have all the tools you need for the job.

• **Basic cleaning.**
  Sweep, mop, vacuum, clean toilets, the works. This is the time to tackle deep-cleaning jobs you’ve been putting off. Sanitize the hard-to-reach area behind the toilet. Scrub off caked-on soap scum and grime on the bathroom faucet. Really get in there and finish the job.

• **Once-in-a-while jobs.**
  This is the time to clean the oven, open all the windows and clean the tracks, glass and screens. Degrease the kitchen cabinet doors and hinges.

• **Seasonal maintenance.**
  Clean gutters. Clean and repair outdoor furniture. Pressure wash the deck or patio. Clean any debris from the roof. Consider having your air conditioning unit cleaned and serviced.

• **Declutter.**
  Spring is a great time to go through adults’ and kids’ closets to see which clothes no longer fit or have holes/stains. Make a donation pile and organize the remaining clothes in drawers and closets. Do the same with toys and books. Toss any food that’s been hanging around in the refrigerator a bit too long. Inventory the deep freeze so you can use up foods that have been lurking there.
We have everything you need!
Fruit trees, Vegetable Starts, Bedding Plants, Indoor Plants, Soils, Pottery, Fertilizers, Bulk Wood Bark and more…

madrivergardens.com
3384 Janes Rd, Arcata
(707) 822-7049

IS YOUR HOUSE MEETING YOUR NEEDS?

Now more than ever, you need a home that is your safe haven. Whether you need more space to make working from home manageable or a bigger yard for all your gardening ambitions, you deserve a home that fits your life. Call a MikkiMoves agent today to help you sell a house that just isn't working for you, or to find your new home-sweet-home.

(707) 515-6683
MIKKIMOVES.COM

MAKE YOUR MOVE WITH MIKKIMOVES
Plant Summer-Blooming Bulbs

Spring is the time to plant summer-blooming bulbs, such as dahlias, gladiolas, lilies, calladiums and elephant ears. Bulbs should be stored in a cool, dry place until all danger of frost has passed. Then it's time to plant.

WHEN TO PLANT
Exactly when you plant will depend on what planting zone you live in. According to GardenDesign.com, in colder climates such as USDA Zones 4 to 7, summer-flowering bulbs should be planted in mid to late spring (May to June), and in Zones 8 to 10, in early to mid-spring (late March to May).

HOW TO PLANT
The best resource for knowing how deep to plant your bulbs is the packaging they came in. In general, dig a hole that's 2-3 times as deep as the bulb is tall.

The pointy side of the bulb should face up. The roots should face down. Give the bulbs a good watering. Continue watering whenever the soil is dry. Keep in mind that over-watering can cause the bulb to rot.

MIND YOUR SOIL
Most bulbs need rich soil, so mix some compost into your soil for the best results, especially if your soil is heavy clay or has poor drainage. Loamy or slightly sandy soil is ideal.

PREVENT WEEDS
The best way to prevent weeds is to add 2-3 inches of mulch on top of your flowerbeds. Bulbs can easily grow up through the mulch. Weeds will have a harder time. Weed barrier fabric is not idea to use when planting bulbs, because it can prevent moisture from reaching the roots of the developing bulb. If you must use weed barrier fabric, cut slits in the fabric at the site of each bulb.

PLANT FOR VISUAL EFFECT
Consider when your flowers will bloom to provide blooms all season long. Different plants bloom at different times during the season. Others, such as such as sedum, daylilies, hosta or bleeding heart, will bloom repeatedly until late fall or provide consistent, rich foliage. Mix up your plantings so that your flowerbeds provide visual interest all season long.

Consult Longfield Gardens' Bloom Time Chart for Spring and Summer Bulbs at bit.ly/2KTQuQm to help you plan your flowerbeds.
SPRING PRUNING BASICS

Many perennial plants need a spring pruning. Their foliage may provide protection during the winter, but by spring, it’s time to prune in order to encourage new growth. This means pruning is an essential part of your spring gardening plans.

Here are some pruning basics to get you started.

WHEN TO PRUNE
According to the Old Farmers Almanac, the timing of pruning a tree or shrub depends mostly on when it blooms and whether it blooms on old or new growth. In general, plants that flower after midsummer should be pruned in the spring, while those that bloom in winter, spring and early summer should be pruned soon after flowering.

Burger Farm and Garden Center reminds gardeners that while an ill-timed pruning may lead to fewer flowers and fruits, it is rarely fatal to the plant.

WHAT TO PRUNE
Fruit trees such as apple, cherry, peach and plum, and vines such as trumpet vine and wisteria, should be pruned in early spring. Spring-flowering shrubs such as lilacs and rhododendrons need to be pruned as soon as their early-spring blooms have faded. This will help ensure a good bloom next year. According to TheSpruce.com, Black-eyed Susan, gayfeather, purple coneflower and globe thistle seed heads are great food for birds, so leave them be until early spring, while coral bells, delphiniums, hostas, turltheadeds and mums need the protection of their foliage during winter. Don’t cut them back until spring.

PRUNING TOOLS
It’s important to keep your pruning tools sharp. While a plant can easily recover from a clean cut, a botched cut can weaken the plant and make the plant susceptible to disease. Sharpen shears and clippers, and oil moving parts to keep them working smoothly.

HOW TO PRUNE
Some plants need more aggressive pruning than others. Consult the Old Farmers Almanac or your local extension service for particulars on how much to prune a particular shrub or plant.

In general, when pruning a tree, begin with removing any dead or dying branches, as well as any “suckers” — sprouts emerging from the base of the trunk. Make clean cuts to the branch, with no part of the growth remaining. Also remove “watersprouts,” which are small, straight vertical shoots growing on the main branches.

Thin out the tree by removing branches that grow downward, toward the center of the tree or that cross paths with another branch, as well as any limbs along the trunk that are bigger in diameter than the trunk.

Then focus on evening out the branches and removing competing branches. Finally, prune the tree from the outermost growth to give it a pleasing shape, and promote the growth of shorter, thicker branches.
ARBOR DAY IN CALIFORNIA IS CELEBRATED FROM MARCH 7TH - 14TH

PLANT A TREE AND ENRICH YOUR LIFE

ALL TREES

Our entire selection of container and bare root trees are on sale. Choose from flowering plums and cherries, maple, birch, oak, golden chain, pine, redwood, magnolia, hydrangea, liquid amber, ginko, figs, pears, apples, peaches, plums, crabapples and many more in a wide variety of sizes.

25% OFF
SALE PRICE GOOD THROUGH MARCH 9TH.

PIERSON BUILDING CENTER
4100 BROADWAY • EUREKA • 441-2700 • www.thebighammer.com