

## Solarscaping: Not for Rooftops Alone

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No longer relegated only to rooftop applications, solar electric systems are taking the form of garden structures limited only by a designer's imagination. "Solarscaping" has become increasingly popular as a means of providing clean, renewable electricity using materials that can complement the style of any home. Fences, awnings, trellises,

canopies and carports are all possible applications for solar modules.

Recent technological advances have enhanced aesthetic appeal of solar panels, opening incredible new design opportunities. Sanyo now offers a "bifacial" translucent module that filters sunlight, creating soft diffused shadows,

and producing electricity from sunlight collected from both sides of the panel. Reflected light absorbed by the underside en-



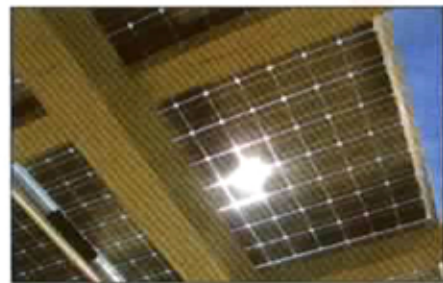
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ables the panels to generate up to 30% more electricity than their advertised rating. The bifacial modules also perform better in high temperature situations than normal panels, and are eligible for California Solar Initiative rebates and Federal Tax Credit incentives.

Local solar contractor Marc Candelaria recently completed several solarscape installations, including a free-standing shade structure for Russell Okinaka, a high

school advanced placement environmental science teacher. Mr. Okinaka had incorporated many energy saving strategies before the system was completed, so his home is now powered 100% by nine high efficiency mono-crystalline solar panels. He is delighted with the result, saying "I've always been a tree hugger, and my primary motivation for building the shade structure was to reduce my ecological footprint - I feel we all have a responsibility to do our part. The structure is beautiful, and turned out much better than I anticipated."

For those who seek to eliminate their electric bill, or reduce their home's carbon footprint, there are many alternatives to roof mounted photovoltaic systems. With some flair and imagination, solarscaping can be both functional and aesthetically pleasing as an ecologically friendly garden element. ☺



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