

# resurgence

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Antony Brackenbury, Towyn Mason.  
Satish Kumar

The solar heater was up on the roof for heating water. There was nothing uncommon about it at all. I can't remember a house on the block that was built at the time or soon after that, that didn't have a solar heater on it. I don't think anybody would be thinking at the time about paying for heating water if they could get it from a solar heater.

Our solar heater was a square box affair and it had four tanks in it and it was covered by glass. It faced southwest, of course, just the direction the house was. It was our main supply of hot water. The pipes came down through the house from the heater, one went to the bathroom, and one went to the kitchen. There was no excess of plumbing.

The type of day would mean how hot the water was or how quick it would heat. It usually didn't take long for those tanks to heat up. You see, each tank held maybe ten gallons. You'd be surprised how fast it heated up. I know that on an ordinary sunshine day everybody in the house could take a bath and wouldn't have any trouble but you had to kind of time when everyone was going to take a bath, you know. By afternoon my mother and our housekeeper would have enough hot water for baths and by evening there'd be enough for us kids. We used to go barefoot all the time and then, you know, we had to take a bath every night, or else!

Walter van Rossem, 1896, Pasadena, California. CoEvolution Quarterly.