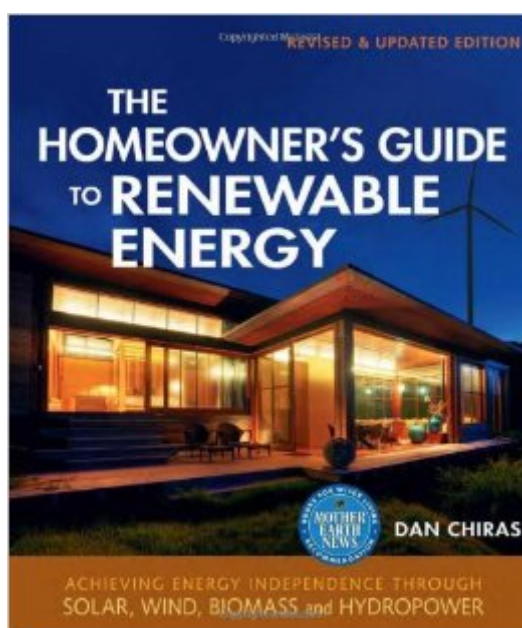


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# The Homeowner's Guide To Renewable Energy: Achieving Energy Independence Through Solar, Wind, Biomass, And Hydropower



## Synopsis

Energy bills have skyrocketed in the United States, and traditional energy sources can be as damaging to the environment as they are to your pocketbook. The Homeowner's Guide to Renewable Energy will show you how to slash your home energy costs while dramatically reducing your carbon footprint. Completely revised and updated, this new edition describes the most practical and affordable methods for making significant improvements in home energy efficiency and tapping into clean, affordable, renewable energy resources. If implemented, these measures will save the average homeowner tens of thousands of dollars over the coming decades. Focusing on the latest technological advances in residential renewable energy, this guide examines each alternative energy option available including: Solar hot water and solar hot air systems Passive and active solar retrofits for heating and cooling Electricity from solar, wind, and microhydro Hydrogen, fuel cells, methane digesters, and biodiesel This well-illustrated and accessible guide is an essential resource for those wanting to enter the renewable energy field. Packed with practical tips and guidelines, it gives readers sufficient knowledge to hire and communicate effectively with contractors and is a must-read for anyone interested in saving money and achieving energy independence. Dan Chiras is the author of twenty-nine books on residential renewable energy and green building and the director of The Evergreen Institute's Center for Renewable Energy and Green Building, where he teaches workshops on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and green building.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a great introduction to essentially all the renewable energy resources available. Chiras takes a sensible, realistic look at a number of options for both reducing your dependence on fossil fuels as well as saving money. He talks about which solutions work best in which climates and gives tips on where to begin wading into renewable energy. I originally bought the book as a resource to help us select which renewable energy options were viable in our new home design. It served that purpose well but I will also keep it handy as we move forward as Chiras goes beyond the typical introduction and gives planning suggestions and some detailed discussions on sizing and maintenance of a few systems. Note that this book is targeted at home owners wishing to retrofit their EXISTING homes for renewable energy. Repeatedly throughout the book, Chiras recommended his book "The Solar House" for those of us designing new homes. I plan to read that book before building but still found a lot of useful information in this book.

I read this book cover-to-cover over the course of a couple of weeks. I'm new to the field of renewable energy, so you'll have to take my criticisms for what they are, a critique of the writing: 1) The author frequently repeats himself, and sometimes goes so far to state that he is repeating himself, and that the reader should refer back to a previous section. 2) Many of the references are "so and so claims such and such" or references to the Home Power magazine. It's great that the author cites his sources, but it often left me wondering if the author placed any stock in the claim being reported. 3) The author frequently refers to his own house, which was designed from the ground up to use renewable energy. While this is neat, it doesn't seem applicable to readers who already own houses (with a 99% chance that they're not nearly as efficient, and that it's not possible to convert them). 4) I would have enjoyed more information on solar power, since it seems to be the most applicable in urban and suburban areas. Instead, it received basically equal treatment alongside micro-hydroelectric and wind power. Still, it's a good book - 3.5 stars - and contains a number of references to other sources of information on the topic.

This is a good book for people who want a better understanding of what can be achieved using renewable energy in a residential application. It only gets 4 stars from me because the author gets a bit preachy at times about his opinions on fossil fuels and future scarcity, high price, etc. He does practice what he preaches and uses personal examples in much of the book.

I found this book to be more satisfying than the author's more popular book, "The Solar House". Of course, they aren't functional substitutes for each other. This book goes deeper into renewable energy systems available to address the energy needs of residential buildings and related topics. I appreciate his discussion on conservation, the breakdown of the energy consumption of a 'typical' residence, etc. This book goes deeper into energy than "The Solar House" goes into passive design, providing almost enough information to evaluate and size some systems. The amount of information presented varies by system, as solar photovoltaic and wind power get a more detailed treatment than biomass. For someone wanting enough information to select, size and/or design systems -- or more realistically to evaluate the proposals generated by a systems provider -- supplemental information will probably be required.

If you only intend to buy one book about renewable energy this is the one for you. It clearly explains all the different RE technologies and gives you all the information to decide which technologies fit your individual situation. For people more familiar with RE, it acts as a great reference book. Highly recommended.

This is an outstanding, readable, comprehensive presentation of the subject of renewable energy for the homeowner. For each topic the author presents the principles, salient facts and a range of projects from the simplest do-it-yourself to that which would require a professional installation. Illustrations are excellent. In solar hot water for example he presents projects which range from a mini batch system consisting of a coiled black hose to a professionally installed all weather solar collector, storage with on-demand gas supplement. Based on this reading I plan to build a freestanding outdoor thermosiphon solar shower using cast off materials and to replace an inefficient hot water tank with a propane on-demand all season hot water heater. Chiras educates the homeowner to think broadly and to plan very manageable projects suited to his/her needs. Superb!

This book will make you an expert in nothing, but rather it will give you a sufficient overview of basically all the renewable energy and efficiency subjects regarding your home. I read this book cover to cover, and although I couldn't complete any of the projects myself, I know exactly what kinds of projects I would want to pursue with my home. Chiras references a lot of other books if you wanted to get more in-depth regarding any of the subjects. I feel so much more learned about this

stuff after reading this book. I'd recommend this book to anyone who wants to start learning how to make their home greener, and more importantly to a lot of folks, to anyone who wants to save a whole pile of dough on their home energy costs.

we are looking at building an underground home and getting off the grid...this book has a wealth of helpful info to help us...we would highly recommend it to all!

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