

Los Angeles Times

SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 1995, REAL ESTATE, PART K, PAGE 5
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Pool Solar System to Install Yourself

CUT YOUR UTILITY BILLS

By JAMES DULLEY
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

QUESTION: I like warm swimming water and I want several extra months of use. How effective are the new pool solar heating systems that help to cool a house too? Are there any budget-priced do-it-yourself solar units?

ANSWER: Installing a budget-priced solar system can easily extend your swimming season by several months and warm the water. If your pool overheats in mid-summer, run the solar system at night instead of day. This gives off heat to the night sky and keeps the water comfortably cool.

Most budget-priced solar systems are designed for simple do-it-yourself installation. Complete kits include everything except standard plastic pipe and fittings. They use your existing filter pump to circulate the water. Start with one or two collectors and gradually add more as your budget allows.

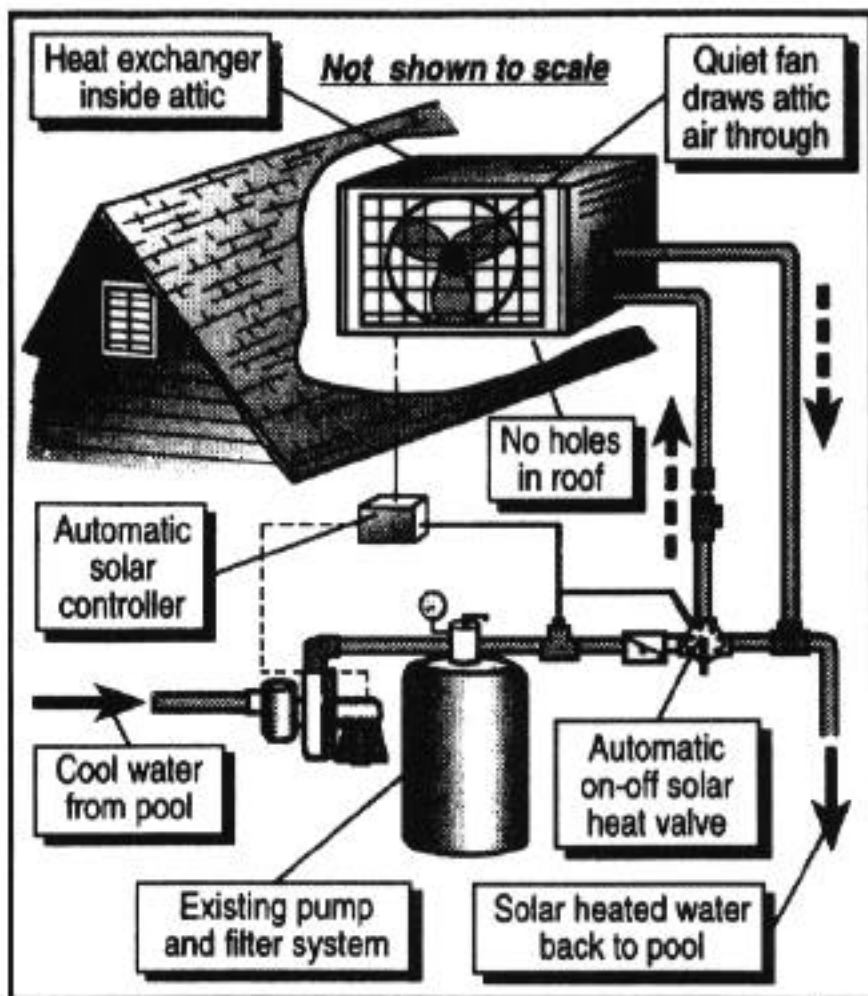
New designs of swimming pool solar systems don't require big collectors on your roof. Optional automatic controllers monitor the water and collector temperatures. The system only runs when it's needed. The controllers also automate chlorination and filtration for a 40% electricity savings.

Attic Technology makes a solar heat exchanger unit that mounts inside an attic. It draws heat from the hot attic and transfers it to the pool water flowing through the heat exchanger. By drawing the heat for the pool water from the attic, your house stays cooler so your air conditioner runs less.

A quiet fan pulls the hot attic air through the heat exchanger. In effect, it uses your entire roof area as an indirect solar collector. Under typical weather conditions, it produces 60,000 Btu of heat per hour.

Another unique solar system is built into the decking around an above-ground pool. The entire pool (12 by 20 by 20 by 60 feet) and decking are sold as a kit. The pool water circulating through the solar deck keeps the deck cooler so it is more comfortable to walk on and lie on.

Recent design changes in rooftop solar collectors have improved appear-



ance and ease of installation. Fewer roof mounting holes are needed. Many of the shallow flexible collectors (in several common roof colors) are barely noticeable from the ground.

These flexible collectors are easy to install and come in four-foot wide rolls up to 25 feet long. Although most pool collectors are uncovered, some have a clear cover option for windy or cool climates. Individual tube collector designs from Heliocol are also good for windy areas.

It is extremely important to properly size a solar pool system. If it is too small for your climate conditions and pool size, it will be ineffective.

Write for Update Bulletin No. 955 showing a buyer's guide of do-it-yourself swimming pool solar system and combo aboveground pool/solar deck kits listing collector materials, installation methods, prices and a solar system sizing chart. Please include \$2 and a self-addressed envelope and mail to James Dulley, Los Angeles Times, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45244.