

# idea corner

## Illinois Solar Home Tour

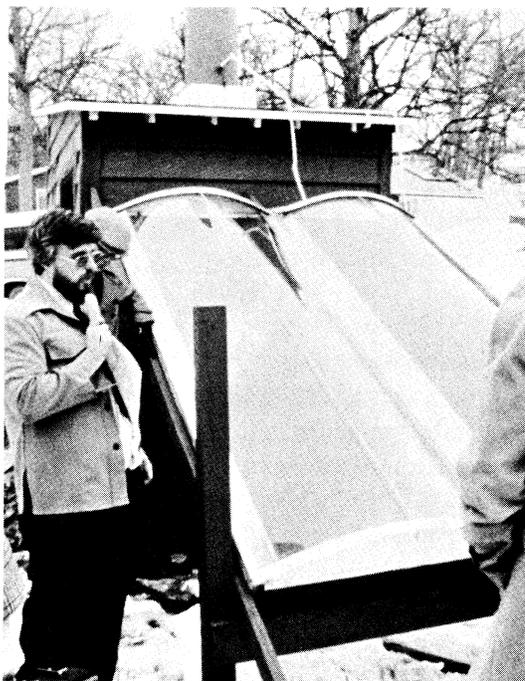
Today's world energy situation has homeowners looking for new ways to cut home fuel consumption. Many are investigating alternative energy sources. Although solar energy presents many advantages, most consumers lack the fundamental knowledge and expertise needed to incorporate it into their home heating systems.

Because local homeowners had expressed an interest in receiving more solar information, the Marshall and

Putnam Counties' Extension Service office decided to hold a solar home tour. The purpose of the tour was to acquaint homeowners with the principles of solar heating and to show several of the construction designs presently being used in home solar collectors.

Three area solar homes were selected for the tour. Each captured a different aspect of solar heating. One residence featured a homeowner-designed hot air system that used metal solar collector panels. An A-frame home incorporated eight roof-mounted collector panels to a hot water heating system. Three 400-gallon tanks were used for heat storage.

The third home featured three home-designed plexiglass panels on the garage for preheating water for domestic use. Two other homemade panels provided heat for a passive solar shower for summer use. Under construction was



*Homemade panels for a passive solar shower.*

a solar greenhouse that incorporated bank of water and antifreeze solution for heat and cooling.

The solar tour was publicized through radio, newspapers, brochures, and Extension newsletters. About 110 homeowners, building contractors, and college architectural students attended the tour. Some came 120 miles to participate in the program.

The tour was preceded by a short slide presentation on the fundamentals of solar home heating. This helped acquaint homeowners with solar energy terminology and principles. In addition, each participant received a packet of solar reference materials.

The Marshall and Putnam Counties solar home tour was the first of its kind in Illinois. The response to the program was excellent. Many commented that it was great to see Extension out in the lead in the area of solar energy.

The tour showed homeowners the many practical applications of solar energy in the home. It also helped introduce a new group of people to Extension and its programs.

**ROBERT W. FRAZEE**  
*Extension Adviser-Agriculture*  
*Marshall-Putnam Counties*  
*Henry, Illinois*