

Mitch Ratcliffe

## Sustainable Ideas From a Net-Zero Home - Earth911.com

September 12, 2018

Thursday, July 12 2018, 10:51 AM

---

## Sustainable Ideas From a Net-Zero Home

Gemma Alexander July 12, 2018



5 SHARES | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0

The boldly modern Genesee Park Net-Zero Home stands out from its mid-century neighbors, but its most impressive features are not immediately obvious. The first Built Green net-zero home in the Seattle area, this 3,700 square foot, 4-bedroom home produces as much energy as it uses. Whether you are building your dream home or just trying to make the one you already have better, you can borrow some ideas from this ultra-sustainable home.

### Solar Water

Heating water accounts for almost one-fifth of the average household's energy costs. Many people remember the old solar water heating systems that gave scalding water on sunny days and cold showers on cool days. The Genesee Park Net-Zero house uses a newer system by Silk Road Environmental. It uses a nontoxic thermal gel that stores the sun's warmth, instead of heating water directly, to maintain a consistent hot water temperature.

### Solar Electricity

Seattle may be cloudy and high latitude, but solar panels can operate with greater efficiency in cooler climates. With a rooftop covered in solar panels, the Genesee Park House will produce between 9,000 and 10,000 kilowatt hours a year. That's enough to power an energy-efficient house like this one.

Solar power systems are highly individualized to the circumstances; it can take between six and fifteen years to recoup the cost of a solar energy system. However, the federal solar tax credit allows you to deduct 30 percent of the installation cost from your federal taxes.