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Solar water was hot in the 1980s, but due to the poor performance of some of those early systems, it faded into relative obscurity. Nobody wanted to deal with scalding water on hot days and cold showers at night.

Water heating accounts for 17 percent of a typical home's energy use, so it's a ripe target for savings. The mainstream water-heating conversation shifted to tank versus tankless. But engineers continued to work on solar technology. Today, solar hot water systems are very different from those initial, unreliable systems.



SOLAR WATER HEATING INSTALLATION AT CANYON NEST BED AND BREAKFAST IN MOAB, UTAH. IMAGE: SILK ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL