

# Favorite Solar Consumer Items

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*Editor's note: Welcome to a new column from a long-time solar and clean energy expert. If you have a question for Scott, please send it to [solarsklar@aol.com](mailto:solarsklar@aol.com).*

## What are your favorite solar consumer items?

AK, Detroit

By Scott Sklar

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Well, there are literally hundreds of products to choose from, so there is no way I can cover every class of consumer solar item. Here are my top four picks for 2014.

You can't leaf through any toy catalogue without seeing some solar gadget. For the upcoming spring science fairs, my pick for less than \$10 is the 20-piece solar robot kit from Edmunds Scientific ([scientificsonline.com](http://scientificsonline.com)). With this kit, anyone eight years or older can make a range of neat moving gizmos including a very cool mini solar racer.

For those winter days when storms knock out power, upscale Hammacher Schlemmer ([hammacher.com](http://hammacher.com)) offers a solar emergency radio that can also charge a cell phone and includes an LED flashlight. The \$99 unit is built for tough times.

For the Memorial Day and July 4th season, consider the solar flagpole light. The unit clamps onto the flagpole and for \$120 ([sportys.com](http://sportys.com)) you can illuminate your flag for 12 hours.

And when you go camping in the fall at a cabin with no electricity, you can bring your mobile solar generator. This \$1,799 unit ([herringtoncatalog.com](http://herringtoncatalog.com)) can run your laptop for 40 hours straight and has an advanced battery box with controls and meters and two photovoltaic panels. It's perfect for remote applications that require serious business and recreation loads. I have seen many inferior solar products with under.sized solar, non-ultraviolet-resistant plastic solar cell covering and chintzy plastic. Look for sturdy construction and large solar cells, preferably with glass covering the cells.

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