

Urban Solar Greenhouses:  
Feasibility, Applications and a Model for Food Production

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PART I Section 1

The term "self-reliance" is growing in use, with the increasing urgency of finding solutions to problems of resource scarcity. Loosely translated, self-reliance means taking control--by accepting responsibility for meeting human needs on a local scale, rather than depending on removed, centralized sources for such basic commodities as food and energy. Nowhere is the movement toward individual and community self-reliance more necessary, and more beset with obstacles, than in urban areas.

The self-reliance movement requires appropriate tools, applicable to a range of situations. The solar greenhouse is one such tool, diverse in its range of possible functions and capable of accommodating the needs of individuals, families and neighborhoods. The solar greenhouse has the potential to provide its own heat and the space and water heating for an adjacent structure, to produce food on a year-round basis and to recycle organic wastes and household greywater. This role is to be contrasted with the traditional perception of the greenhouse as an energy-