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Solargorilla solar charger

Ultimate solar solution?

by Adam Vaughan published on 12 December 2008

Most portable solar chargers look like toys compared to this, the first mainstream charger capable of powering a laptop. While we like solar gadget chargers such as the Solio Magnesium, the Solargorilla really is in a different league.

For starters, it has one of the biggest solar panels we've seen on a portable charger, helping it convert the UK's relatively weak solar energy into electricity. When we tested the Solargorilla in September, it charged an iPhone from flat to 10 per cent battery in 2 hours and fully charged a Nokia N-Series phone in a day.

While the Solargorilla can theoretically output enough energy to charge a laptop, we found it struggled in the UK. We were unable to make it power our VAIO directly. The only way we could get the Solargorilla to juice our VAIO was using its companion product, the £150 Powergorilla. The Powergorilla's essentially a big battery - you trickle-charge it using the Solargorilla, and it then recharges your gear.

The Solargorilla is robust and easy to use, thanks to a clear screen that indicates when it's charging. It's also helped by a comprehensive box of over 20 adapters for most gadgets and laptops, including the iPhone, PSP, Toshiba laptops and much more. The only real disappointment is the lack of a MacBook adapter, which is sold separately.



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VERDICT

Because it lacks a built-in battery, the Solargorilla can only charge in real-time, but its powerful panel means that should be enough for most gadget addicts. To really make the most out of this renewably-powered gizmo, however, team it up with the Powergorilla.

At a glance

What is it?

Solar charger

Good

Extremely large solar panel means it actually works, robust build quality, comprehensive bundle of adapters

Bad

Pricy, works best in conjunction with £150 Powergorilla

Verdict

If you can stomach the price tag, this is the best portable solar charger we've seen

Price £140

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10