



A Guide to Garden Lighting Techniques

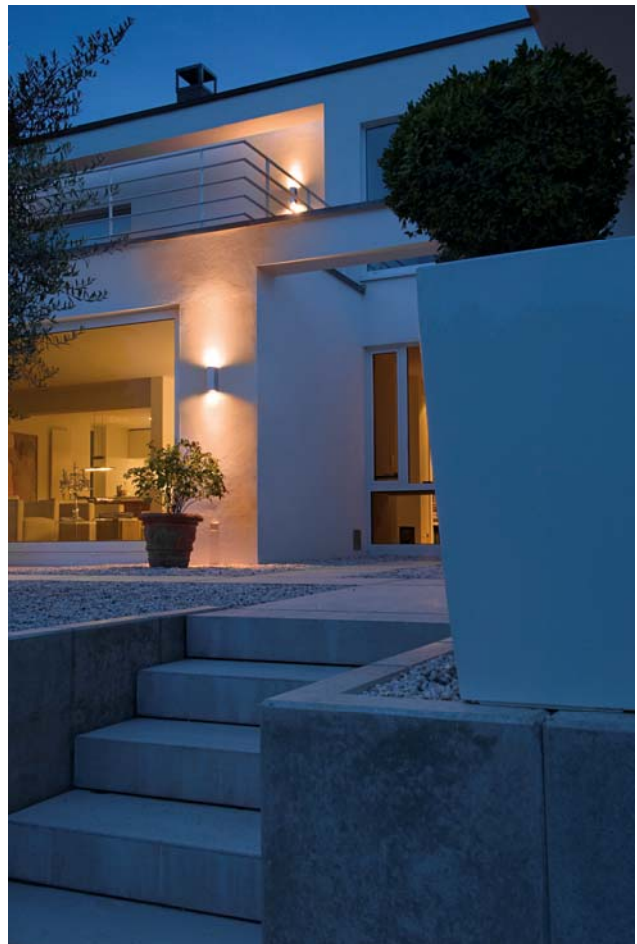
Gardens are getting an even higher profile since the ideas at the last Chelsea Flower Show. Apart from the idea of an outside room with seating and eating areas overlooking ambient pools, elegant planting and dual function hard landscaping, it seems the next area to be brought outside is the office. Wi-fi function allows many people to work from remote locations and if you can be based at home it makes sense to have an office with the greatest appeal. Of course, there are many of us who still grind out the nine to five away from home and returning to a peaceful yet stimulating garden is an ideal way to relax without having to make a journey – it's right on your doorstep.

It doesn't matter whether you are actually outdoors or not – a well-lit garden can still bring great pleasure when viewed from a conservatory or through French doors when it might be too cool to enjoy your exterior environment. Lighting is a way of transforming a garden from an outdoor space to an outdoor room. Several effects can be achieved to make the most of attractive features, safety and security.

Landscape garden lighting will showcase your exterior property to best effect and can enhance its value. It certainly draws kerb appeal and shows ownership pride, which is a good indication for viewers to the potential of the interior. Outdoor lighting offers all year round appeal and spectacle. Safety is increased with well positioned garden lighting and risks are reduced around a variety of landscape features including walkways, decks, pools and hot tubs. Another benefit is greater home security by providing deterrent to potential burglary, vandalism or other crime.

The fixtures and fittings that might be used to create different lighting effects can be wall-mounted, recessed, lamp posts, bollards, pillar lights, bulkhead lights and occasional cubes and globes for ornamental lighting that can be a feature in its own right. Within the ranges available there can be adjustable options, PIR motion sensor function and timers for activating and controlling duration of illumination.

There are 16 popular terms you may come across when people refer to lighting and the types of lights or beams best-suited to the function or desired effect. Some of them you might be familiar with and others you may guess at: up-lighting, down lighting and spotlighting are reasonably self-explanatory as are underwater, step lighting and pathway lighting. Terms like grazing, moonlighting, flood washing, spread



lighting, shadowing and silhouetting, accent lighting, cross lighting, mirroring and vista lighting may sound obvious but they have specific ways of being achieved.

Up-lighting: Using spike lights, spotlights and recessed lights, plants, statuary or signage can be illuminated from below when the beam is directed upwards, giving the opposite effect of daylight rays. The lights can be, and very often are, disguised by rocks or other plants so that the beam appears as if by magic.

Down lighting: Use of wall mounted spot lights and down lights can be used to cast a beam from above a feature in a downward direction, in contrast to up-lighting. This mimics the natural direction of daylight and is useful for providing pools of illumination over areas requiring security, safety or general lighting for amenities.



Spotlighting: Creates a dramatic, theatrical effect by putting an object ‘in the spotlight’. By using adjustable spike spotlights, or wall mounted spotlights set some distance from the illuminated feature, a large pool of light will focus on the object. It is regarded by some as distance accent lighting with a narrower beam.

Underwater Lighting: Specialty lights specifically for water areas will bring some surreal effects as well as making the feature visible at night. Submersible lights for pools, ponds or fountains can have a much drama as you desire depending on the level of illumination you require from a soft glow to an outstanding spot.

Step Lighting: There are a variety of ways to illuminate steps. If they do not have a side wall, recessed or surface mount lights can be fitted along the tread or the riser to show the flight. Where there is a side wall, a wall-mounted light can illuminate the area in a wash or a series of lights can follow the stepped pattern for a different effect that still offers high visibility.

Pathway Lighting: There is a variety of lighting suitable for illuminating pathways. Freestanding beacon, spike or bollard lights can line a path or driveway, recessed or surface mount lights can be positioned in or on surface to show the width and the route of the pathway. Wall-mounted lighting can be used to throw illumination in strategic areas so that there are enough pools to provide illumination for the length of the pathway.

Grazing: This technique can be achieved by using adjustable spike spotlights, wall spotlights, up-lights or recessed down lights. Grazing will accentuate the surface texture being illuminated by



creating a strong shadow that results from acute angle positioning close to the plane of the wall, fence or other feature.

Moonlighting: This effect is created by using low power lights such as tree mounted spot lights or hanging lights. The purpose is to recreate a moonlight effect – where you want it – by fixing lights in a tree so that they shadow the lower branches and foliage onto the ground below. Just like moonlight then, you have subtle, dappled lighting over the area beneath.

Flood Washing: Wide beam spike spotlights and floodlights create a smooth, even illumination of selected objects. It differs from grazing as the lights are set at a further distance from the surface to be illuminated and bounces back the light without strong shadows making a soft wash of light that is more subdued and intimate.



Spreadlighting: This is ostensibly an alternative form of path lighting where the lamps used create circular pools of light over an object. Usually a hooded shade is used to direct the light downwards on the feature beneath such as low planting and is popular for use on terraces, steps and patios.

Shadowing: Can be achieved by using adjustable spike spotlights or wall spotlights to create a distinct sharp shadow of an architectural plant or tree by positioning the beam directly in front of the foliage and shining it through it on to a wall behind. It can be an elegant alternative to moonlighting if your garden has only small shrubs and plants, sometimes called ‘city moonlighting’.

Silhouetting: Where shadowing shows the front of the plant or feature in light with its shadow behind, silhouetting illuminates the wall or background surface so that the object in front is haloed and will throw a shadow but it itself is not illuminated from the front. Suitable lights for this effect are spike mount up-lights, recessed up-lights or spotlights.

Accent lighting: Adjustable spike spotlights, wall spotlights and recess up-lights fitted on a structure, a tree or on the ground can direct a beam to emphasize individual focal points such as plants or statuary so that they stand out within the view.

Cross lighting: Adjustable spike spotlights or wall spotlights are used at the side of a feature to wash light across it. Usually used for an individual feature to highlight it yet draw the eye in a specific direction to avoid other ‘clutter’ and may be mounted in a tree or wall so that the beam gives the required spread to focus on the object.

Mirroring: Up-lights, spotlights and floodlights can be used as a particular form of accent lighting that takes advantage of an area of still water. Lights are positioned so that the object is reflected on the water at night (as long as no underwater/submersible lighting is on simultaneously).

Vista lighting: Shield lights or step-lights can be used to offer foreground lighting with a direct downward beam that doesn't intrude on a view by offering illumination without glare to the view beyond. It is popular for terraces, patios and roof gardens.

Having seen the different techniques that may be employed for lighting it is important to understand the types of lighting – ambient, accent or task lighting or mood, feature and function in other words. There are modern, contemporary styles as well as traditional, classic designs that can harmonize with your setting.

But any outdoor lighting needs to be waterproof and this is guaranteed by the IP (Ingress Protection) rating



given to fittings. An IP rating is made up of two digits following the letters IP – the first digit refers to solid objects that might ingress and the second digit to the level of water protection ranging from 0-8. In an exterior environment, garden lighting will be exposed to elements and water from hoses or sprinklers.

For ordinary garden lighting the minimum IP you should look for is IP23. Consideration should be given to an area you might clean with jet sprays which would require an IP45, shallow water installations, from 15cm to 1m deep, require a rating of IP57 and IP68 for water areas over 1m deep.

After taking so much trouble in choosing the type of lighting you need for the place where you want it the fittings used need to be durable. Anti-corrosive, hardwearing metals such as

stainless steel and aluminium are ideal, or opt for robust plastic lights that are made from impact resistant polycarbonate and ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene).

LED lighting is popular in gardens, along with halogen bulbs. Each has their own advantage regarding economy, brightness, colour, operating temperature and UV radiation (that can attract flying insects). Check with your supplier which would be most suitable for the purpose you have in mind.