

## GARDENS

ILLUSTRATED

NATURAL  
BEAUTYJINNY BLOM'S WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY DESIGN  
FOR AN ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN

## Inspiring gardens

A ROMANTIC ESTATE IN DORSET  
THE EMERALD ISLE'S HIDDEN PARADISE  
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# Design Solutions

## KEY POINTS

- It can be tempting to light a water feature. Apart from the obvious concern (electricity and water do not mix) one can be left with ugly floodlit cables, years of silt or drowned small animals. It is better to light the opposite bank – whether this is planting or structure. After dark, the water surface will act as a mirror and reflect the scene. Swimming pools are perhaps the exception to lighting water, with underwater lighting making the pool safe to use and rather sexy into the bargain.
- Restrict your light palette to white light as much as possible for general landscape lighting as this reveals the natural colour of surfaces and planting. Coloured light may create a festive quality, but often renders green foliage as a range of dull greys.
- Don't overdo it. Carefully select the principle elements to be lit and the main areas to be used. There is no need to light a complete garden, especially in rural locations where light pollution can be evident from some distance away. Wherever you live, consider the proximity of your neighbours and the way in which your lighting decisions might affect them.
- By introducing separate circuits, different areas or elements can be lit individually, allowing the mood and character of the garden to change.
- Link ideas rather than seeing your garden features as a range of separate elements to be lit.
- If you are redesigning the garden, it is important to think about lighting before building work starts. Laying cables and installing the network can be

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## LIGHTNESS OF TOUCH

Clever use of lighting in your outdoor space can extend the use of the garden well into the night, but what fittings should you choose, and why? Andrew Wilson sheds some light on the choices available

OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS IN GARDEN DESIGN, few areas of technology have advanced quite as much as lighting. Once considered the province of the wealthy, affordable lighting is now widely available. The variety of lighting is also growing, although many of the rules and design guidelines remain the same.

Garden lighting needs subtlety, as a matter of good taste and to ensure a workable and comfortable environment that won't annoy neighbours. One only has to think of those blindingly bright, movement-activated security lights to realise how harsh outdoor lighting can be.

Firstly, the impact of lighting after dark should be dramatic and evocative but without glare. Artefacts, plants and surfaces should reflect light, but fittings should be hidden or cowed to prevent, or at least reduce, glare. Turn lights away from seating areas, pathways and walkways to shine on to surrounding walls and planting, or use cowed, semi-covered or louvred fittings to direct light on to lower surfaces. Alternatively, use lights at low level, perhaps at

the base of walls or in steps, allowing light to spread across paving but not at eye level. This creates an ambient light, soft in character, as it is bounced off surrounding surfaces. This can be supplemented by candlelight, for example. As a bonus, by day fixtures aren't offensively visible.

Secondly, consider the different reasons you may have for using light. Safety is a major consideration, especially if you have steps or ramps. Lighting can define these elements, so that guests can navigate unknown territory without harm.

Finally, specific or accent lighting can be installed to emphasise focal points or structures such as pergolas and sculptures. Shadows are also a consideration in good lighting design.

## LIGHTING EFFECTS

Lighting types should be considered separately, but used in association. Individual pools of light to emphasise focal points will seem unrelated and isolated when viewed from any distance. More general ambient light will link them in a coherent composition.

## KEY EXAMPLES



### HIGHLIGHTING TEXTURE

In this striking design, small, low-voltage uplighters wash the wall and decorative log store with light, picking out textures and shadow-patterns.



### USING CONTRAST

The filigree patterns of this pergola, lit by Lighting For Gardens, stand out brightly against an unlit background to give the structure an ethereal look.



### DRAWING ATTENTION

Uplighting emphasises the minimalist styling of this contemporary water feature and draws attention to the arching cascade of water.