



# Light entertainment

Let the light play in your garden long after sundown

WORDS CYBELE MASTERMAN

Often overlooked, outdoor lighting is the secret behind successful spontaneous barbecues, lazy afternoons that spill into the early evening and, importantly, enabling your family to safely enjoy the outdoors. We've pulled together some bright ideas to help you create a lighting plan to enhance your outdoor lifestyle. It takes all sorts of lights to make a garden, so mark out areas that need light and think about fittings for travel routes, as well as entertaining and garden zones. "Lighting shouldn't be overdone. It needs to be subtle," says Annie Wilkes from Parterre.

### Trick of the light

**UPLIGHTS** For water features, an uplight is a simple way to add shimmer, and at the base of a wall, it will highlight colour and texture. Simplicity is the key, so consider highlighting one statement tree.

**CIRCUIT LIGHTS/SERIES LIGHTS** Keep your garden working as the sun goes down by showing off sculptural shapes. "Line the edge of the designated area with a series of low-voltage lights," explains Matthew Cantwell from Secret Gardens. In addition to making the space feel bigger, you can control what people see, as anything unsightly can be left in the dark.

**SPIKE LIGHTS** These portable lights, featuring a spike base that is inserted into the soil, can be moved as the seasons change to spotlight different plants as they come into bloom.

**DIMMABLE PENDANT LIGHTS OR HANGING DOWNLIGHTS** These lights are perfect for outdoor tables, helping you to control the ambience when you entertain outdoors. Candles and lanterns can also work a treat. "I love the rechargeable garden lamps," says Matthew. They look great dotted around the garden, on tables, steps and garden walls. For a selection, visit Neoz, which also has a range of gorgeous glowing seats (see page 177). >



Downlights are accentuated by candles and votives.



Uplights highlight a bridge over tranquil waters.



### Find your way

Traditionally, path lights are regularly spaced every metre or so. Alternatively, the light from a discreet mix of uplights fitted in the ground, or downlights mounted on a wall or in a tree, will spill out onto the path while keeping the focus on the surrounding beauty.

On steps, make sure each tread is bathed in direct, unshaded light. Your best bet is small lights set on or in the steps or on an adjoining wall. For cooking zones, mount an adjustable spot above where the cook will stand and another to the side of the barbecue which will minimise shadows, keeping the chef happy.

### Know your lights

LEDs offer the coolest light, are available in a multitude of shades for a little dash of colour, last for 50,000 hours or more and produce minimal heat. They're the hands-down winners for areas where bare feet might brush past. SOLAR LIGHTS require the least amount of effort and energy. Simply stick them in the ground and let them run. The gentle glow will mark out garden beds and paths. METAL HALIDE SPOTS come into their own when illuminating barbecues and task areas. They take an easy eco replacement bulb and fit standard light fittings. They also use 75 per cent less energy than halogen and come in a range of shapes and colours.

*"Dim the interior lights AND TURN UP ALL GARDEN LIGHTS. IF LIGHTS INSIDE ARE BRIGHTER THAN THOSE OUTSIDE, YOU'LL ONLY SEE A REFLECTION"* - MATTHEW CANTWELL

### Insider tips on outside lighting

Matthew Cantwell of Secret Gardens suggests:

- A large wall is always a great opportunity - think of it as a blank canvas for artwork and have a bit of fun with your light show.
- When plants are up against the wall, give them some depth with a mix of lighting. Lights at the front will cast moving shadows on walls, while backlights will stop them looking washed out. Also, a mix of up-and-down lights will bring out dimension and depth.
- To get the best view at night, dim the interior lights and turn up all garden lights. If the lights inside are brighter than those outside, you'll only see a reflection. Call Secret Gardens on (02) 9314 5333; [www.secretgardens.com.au](http://www.secretgardens.com.au).



Wall and garden lights mix form and function.



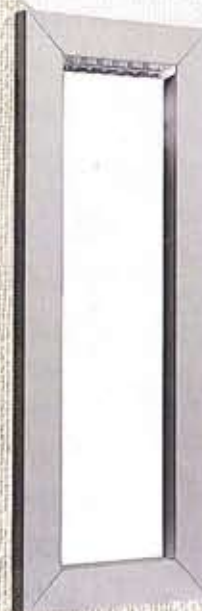
A blaze of light sets the mood.



*bright sparks*

Add shimmer with these innovative outdoor lights

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- I. Genie hanging votive, \$19.95/small, \$24.95/medium, \$29.95/large, Papaya, (02) 9386 9980. 2. Gleam Lantern, \$34.95/large, Country Road, 1800 801 911. 3. Innermost 'Asteroid' plastic-encased light, \$170, Optique Lighting, (07) 3386 1700. 4. Rio citronella candle torch, \$8.95/pack of 4, Metro:Style, 1800 683 969. 5. Faro tealight holder, \$36, Blomus, (03) 5442 8688. 6. Gardman solar candle lantern, \$59.99/pair, Kmart, 1800 634 251. 7. Homemaker plastic solar bollard, \$49.99/set of 10, Kmart, 1800 634 251. 8. Rombi Lit cordless illuminated seat, \$858, Neoz, (02) 9810 5520. 9. Patio by Jamie Durie solar deck light, \$12.98/pair, Big W. 10. Rectangular LED path light, \$49.99, HPM, 1300 369 777. 11. Envirolux acrylic bollard, \$69.95 each, Beacon Lighting, 131 595.



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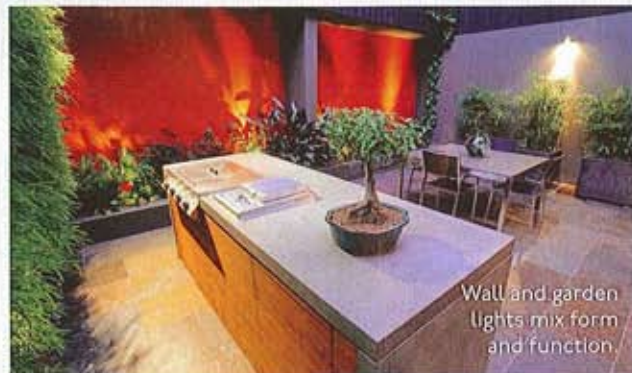
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