

# THE STAR ATTRACTION

Creating and capturing new nocturnal dimensions in any outside space



Lighting extends the scope of a garden design into the evening, when people are more likely to be home. **Robert Webber** tells how to use it to create a focal point and bring out the best in any garden

Want to be light years ahead? We are going to look at how to create a focal point in any garden using lighting. We have been fortunate enough to work in some spectacular homes over the years and one thing that always strikes me is the way that key architectural features are lit. We take inspiration from the way that interior designers light internal artworks, statues and arches and transport these ideas to the garden to help create an extension of the inside living space. Focal points change from one garden to the next. In one it may be a simple raised flowerbed planted with grasses that shimmer in the wind. In another it maybe an architectural sculpture, an old mill wheel or a perimeter brick wall. Even the mundane can be made extraordinary with the use of light.

We have a saying at Scenic Lighting: "If you don't light it then you won't see it." Sounds

obvious, but at night you can use a key feature, well lit, to take your eye away from other less desirable areas of the garden because your eyes are automatically drawn towards the light and away from other areas.

Positioning of the actual light source is key. More often than not this is achieved by a single spotlight placed discreetly near the feature, using either coloured lenses to change the temperature of the light or honeycomb diffusers to soften it. Recently we have been experimenting with lighting features from afar, in particular using a moonlight effect where the light source is placed high in a tree and then angled down towards the feature. As the light shines through the canopy, it creates a moonlight effect across a lawn or terrace, the feature is then silhouetted against the ground. A little light can go a long way. You need to use a high powered narrow beamed LED light to achieve this.

Another approach we are exploring is to actually use the light fitting itself as an architectural feature. This goes against most set rules for external lighting design. Hiding the light fitting is deeply entrenched in us!

I've recently discovered a great lighting

manufacturer from Belgium, Wever & Ducré. With their help we have been transforming 'flat' areas using contemporary architectural light fittings, for instance, where a lawn meets the edge of a deck or a swimming pool. Lighting can become the bridge between architecture and its landscape, illuminating the juncture between one material and the next.

## So, what do I need to know?

- **Feature focus.** Any key area can be lit to create a feature focal point for the garden. If one doesn't exist then import a feature in. Use an architectural light, cube or sphere to create that main focal point.
- **Wonder wall.** Simple wall lighting can create a high-end architectural viewpoint at night. Walls always bounce light back whereas general planting absorbs light.
- **New moon.** Need divine inspiration? Look to the heavens and moonlight your feature area. Trees are great for this, try fitting several moonlights at different heights.

- 1 These lights are by Degardo from Germany. They can be used as seats, planters or just as stand alone features.
- 2 This tree had six small moonlights fitted at various heights, with the addition of a twin spike spot shining up to show the lower canopy.
- 3&4 Wall lights turn any plain wall into a canvas for light.

## ABOUT ROBERT WEBBER

Robert Webber is the founder of Scenic Lighting, a specialist exterior lighting company based in Berkshire. He designs and installs garden lighting throughout the UK and internationally. Robert can be contacted on [rob@sceniclighting.com](mailto:rob@sceniclighting.com) or via his mobile on 07766 051 000.

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