



fithouse

EXPERT ADVICE

smart outdoor lighting

Good lighting extends the time you can enjoy being outdoors, adds drama to a landscape, and enhances safety. Use a mix of different types of lights, suggests Doreen Le May Madden, lighting designer and owner of Lux Lighting Design in Belmont, Massachusetts, and head of residential lighting for the Illumination Engineering Society of North America. A lighting professional can design a system (fees start about \$100 per hour); you hire an electrician to install it (for about \$60 an hour).

Madden favors 12-volt lights to create a range of lighting effects. Transformers (required to convert 120-volt house power for low-voltage lights) can be buried or concealed in bushes; lines need to be buried only 6 inches deep. To

match outdoor lighting with different needs, she suggests the following.

- On steps, pathways, and driveways: *xenon bulbs for soft, overall lighting.*
- For mood lighting, such as casting dramatic shadows up a tree or down from a tree to "moonlight" a flower garden: *MR16 halogen bulbs.*
- For security lighting: *motion-detecting floodlights.* But because the glare of motion-detecting lights is hard on the eyes, aim the floods at the ground or use glare-control accessories.

To camouflage light sources along pathways and driveways, fixtures should blend in or be hidden in shrubbery so your walk "doesn't look like an airport runway," Madden says.