

Moonlighting in Your Own Backyard

A full moon casts a cool glow across your yard, lighting up the details of your home's landscape and architecture. But, what if you want to enjoy the beauty of moon light regardless of the clouds in the night sky?

The look of moonlight can be created by combining a number of outdoor lighting styles, for a play of light and shadow that reproduces that night sky. Here is a list of suggestions and tips to bring alive the romantic moonlit glow of your night-time landscape.

Down Lighting: Place spot lights high up in trees, positioned out of sight. These fixtures shine down illuminating interesting tree details and illuminating the area closely surrounding the tree.

Shadow Lighting: Lights are placed to cast shadows produced from trees, sculpture or other landscape details. These shadows are reminiscent of the contrasting light play the full moon creates.

Up Lighting: Placing lights at the base of structures or trees provides dramatic illumination that captures attention.

Mood Lighting: Working with a mix of lighting intensities, sets the mood and sculpts your surroundings with light/ Layers of soft-washed light, blended with stark shadows and bright spots, captivates the eye.

Moon Lighting: Hide flood lights high up in trees to wash larger areas with light, replicating the shine of the full moon. Angle lights from a series of locations to achieve the best effect.

Layering these four styles produces a strong contrast that resembles the appearance of the once a month, brilliant full moon. The effect is a lot like creating a soft light sculpture that sets a mood and showcases your home and landscape to its fullest advantage.

Some professionals recommend Mercury vapor outdoor tree lights, designed to best render the moon's natural glow. While moonlight actually has a red cast, the human eye cannot distinguish the red at low levels of light. Instead, the human eye sees more blue tones in the dark. As a result, people view the increased bluish cast as the look of moonlight. Use colored lights sparingly however, since they tend to appear less natural.

These lights can also be fitted with photocells so they turn on automatically as they sense the sun going down. Working with a professional lighting designer and crew will ensure that your fixtures are appropriate, positioned correctly with the best lighting controls for convenience and energy efficiency.

One additional note: Take great care to safeguard your trees. Ladders can scar tree bark, leaving your trees open to bug infestations and parasites. Ask your professionals if they use tree-friendly climbing techniques to minimize potential damage to the trunk or foliage to maintain good tree health.