

# PURE BRILLIANCE

The Light Ideas guide to garden lighting effects



Light Ideas International Ltd. Suite 3, Faraday House, King William Street, Amblecote, Stourbridge,  
West Midlands. DY8 4HD Telephone: + 44 (0) 1384 377378 Fax: + (0) 1384 377387  
E-mail: [info@lightideas.co.uk](mailto:info@lightideas.co.uk) Website: [www.lightideas.co.uk](http://www.lightideas.co.uk)

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all photography by Justyn Willsmore

Uplighting is when the light source is placed in front of, and below, the object to be lit. It's especially effective for highlighting a large focal point in the garden - a tree, a big shrub, or architectural features such as pillars, statuary and urns. Here, we uplit three silver birches in the New Forest.

# up lighting

2



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# down lighting

In down lighting, the light source is placed above the object to be lit. Downlighting is usually used to emphasise the architectural features of a house or garden buildings, to highlight doorways or gates, or to spotlight objects such as planters or benches. The eerie effect here was created by downlighting a gargoyle.

# silhouetting

Sometimes also called backlighting, silhouetting is when the light source is placed behind the object to be lit. It can be used to create truly dramatic lighting effects. An opaque object, such as a statue, will have its outline defined, but its detail will remain shrouded in shadow. A translucent object, however – like the foliage in the picture – will shine.





# path lighting

Path lighting needs no explanation, but it does need careful planning. The light beam needs to be kept at ground level because if path lights dazzle, the effect will be uncomfortable and, possibly, hazardous. If a path is to be lit as part of a wider garden lighting scheme, keeping the path lighting discreet will usually enhance the impact of the lighting elsewhere. Dramatic effects can also be achieved using path lighting to mark any boundary. Here we used it to illuminate the boundary of a blue-painted deck.

# wash lighting

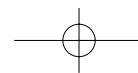
Wash lighting, as its name suggests, is used to 'wash' a surface with light. The solid surface might be the ground, a wall, even a fence. The light source is placed as close to the surface as possible so the play of light and shadow across it emphasises its texture.





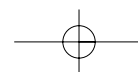
Spread lighting  
uses specially designed  
fittings mounted on a short stand to  
throw pools of light onto the ground. Ideal for  
illuminating low level planting, it is also an effective  
alternative for lighting paths or driveways. These copper fittings cast  
a warm, reddish light and blend well with their surroundings as they weather.

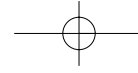
# spread lighting



# cross lighting

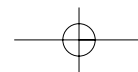
Cross lighting is similar to uplighting, in that the light source is placed below and in front of the object to be lit. Where it differs is that instead of placing one light source directly in front of the object, two light sources, some distance apart, are placed in front of the object. This double beam of light from two different angles makes the object appear more three-dimensional and solid. Here we have shown a variation of cross lighting where the two light sources are placed behind the bench to create an interestingly architectural shadow.





Many lighting effects rely on focusing a tightly defined beam of light at a single point of interest. Moonlighting does the opposite. It's created by shining, from above, a wide beam of light across a relatively large area. The fitting is usually mounted on a high branch of a tree. The result is a soft, diffused light – perfect for creating a soothing atmosphere for a seating area. In this Hampshire garden we have used it to cast shadows of leaves across the seating area in a summer house.

# moon lighting



# step lighting

Whether lighting a single step on a garden path, or an entire staircase – as in this Guildford garden – minimising glare is a safety issue. It's also an aesthetic consideration. Unless the steps are a distinctive architectural feature in their own right, the use of discreet fittings that create little light spill will avoid distracting attention from more interesting features in the lit garden.





# shadowing

Like all lighting, garden lighting creates shadows which can be used to great dramatic effect. Shadows of leaves, topiary, trellising or statuary can be projected onto house walls, or across lawns, decks or terraces. Adjusting the size of these shadows can be a very effective way to evoke strong moods in the night-time garden.



# water reflection

At night, a pool, pond or lake is a mirror. Lighting an object near the edge of the water, or branches overhanging it, will create a reflection in its surface. On a still night, it will be a perfect mirror image. When a soft breeze blows, the reflection will dance on the ripples.

# water feature lighting

Most garden lighting illuminates static features. Lighting the flow of a fountain or other water feature introduces movement into the night-time garden. To uplight the flow, waterproof fittings can be safely immersed in the water. Alternatively, fittings can be concealed in nearby planting or incorporated unobtrusively in the hardscaping.

