



Recommended use of a low intensity warm white LED light.

PLANTS, TREES, NIGHT TIME POLLINATORS NEED ALTERNATION OF LIGHT AND DARK

By Deborah Moran

droppable-1553899330944

(www.softlighthouston.com)

How can we showcase our gardens without compromising the beauty of the night? Landscape lighting is often uplighting which is anathema to dark skies. Instead, try lighting your landscape softly from above by pointing lights downward from the eaves of your house and/or nearby trees.

Landscape lighting is great when there are people around but not such a good idea to use at all times.

Plants, trees, and night time pollinators depend on the alternation of light and dark to thrive as well as their relative length to determine the season. At right is a tree affected by light pollution. While all the leaves have fallen elsewhere, the dead leaves near the light do not fall off the tree readily, delaying buds for spring.



There are excellent warm white or amber path lights that conceal the bulb or LEDs in the top of the fixture, creating a soft wash of light on the ground with no glare. Blue rich light is highly disruptive to circadian function for plants as well as humans and is perceived as higher glare.

Finally, some bullet shaped landscape lights make great Dark Sky patio lighting when mounted under eaves due to their strongly angled shields.

I am using some Nuvo landscape lights mounted high to create an even gentle light over my entire 20 foot long patio with zero glare. The shape allows the bulbs to be aimed at a 45 degree angle while remaining fully shielded from view as seen from the patio.

The Nuvo landscape light which I advocate for using under eaves and pointing downward. It is a modular system that comes with separate mounting plates. The strongly angled shield allows it to be pointed outward at 45 degrees while completely shielding the bulb from view if it is mounted high. I have two of these under my eaves on either side of my patio. (Key words to look for when purchasing shielded lighting are "Dark Sky.")



I use soft warm white LED bulbs. They can be used when entertaining and left off overnight. There is no point lighting a back yard no one can see. Motion detection in an otherwise dark or very subdued environment not only makes it much more likely an intruder will be noticed, it often prevents a crime from being committed in the first place.

In fact, someone in my old neighborhood of Woodside was filmed breaking off a car burglary when the motion detector went off. Meanwhile, in nearby brightly lit neighborhoods which live in perpetual daylight, they get great photos of perpetrators who often can't be recognized anyway, breaking into their cars after the fact.

Deborah Moran's website - softlighthouston.com - includes tips on finding shielded, downward pointed lighting.

Links for more information:

- darksky.org/2107-ida-award-winners/
- tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/programs/dark_skies/
- naples.outdoorlights.com/blog/2016/12/5/dark-sky-compliant-outdoor-lighting-naples-quick-guide/