

# OUTDOOR LIGHTING

## Shedding some light

*With spring in the air, more and more homeowners are looking for ways to incorporate their home's outdoor areas into their everyday lifestyle, and garden lighting offers the ideal solution.*

A well designed outdoor lighting scheme can extend the usable hours of any garden — no longer will outdoor activities such as entertaining al fresco, swimming, dining or just relaxing on the patio be curtailed when the sun sets. Says Melissa Davidson from leading lighting suppliers, The Lighting Warehouse: "This is of particular benefit to those homeowners who spend most of the daylight hours in an office, away from their homes. With outdoor lighting, those with limited opportunity to sit back and experience the beauty and tranquillity of their garden, can now enjoy their home's entire living spaces, both indoors and out, during the day and the night."

Davidson notes that aside from extending the usable hours outdoors, garden lighting also offers a number of other benefits as well: "Outdoor lighting fulfils several requirements — it betters your home's security by deterring intruders and vandals, and it makes your outdoor areas safer to use at night by highlighting areas that would otherwise be treacherous to use in the dark, such as stairs and pathways for example. A well designed lighting scheme can also contribute to the aesthetic appeal and style of your home by highlighting attractive focal features and architectural details, and it can boast various functional uses, such as highlighting your street address for example."

### Create a co-ordinated lighting scheme

"To create an effective outdoor lighting scheme, you need to consider your landscape's ambient, accent and task lighting requirements," explains Davidson.

**Ambient or background lighting** creates sufficient lighting for your requirements, whether you want a low-level glow to create a relaxing ambience or full illumination for practical purposes. "Recessed ground lights, free-standing posts and poles, floodlights, wall brackets, lanterns, bulkheads, and sphere light fittings are all practical choices for ambient lighting," says Davidson.

**Accent lighting** highlights specific features for either decorative or aesthetic reasons, such as garden statuary, plants, trees, arches, windows, doorways, water features and signs or house numbers. "For accent lighting, install the light fittings a short distance from the chosen feature and angle the beam to shine directly onto it. Ideal fittings for accent lighting include walkover lights, floodlights used as uplighters, wall-mounted spotlights as downlighters, submersible fittings, garden spike spotlights, surface and recessed light fittings," says Davidson.

**Task lighting** is used to light up very specific areas with a clear purpose, such as lighting steps, pathways, driveways or changing levels. "Surface recessed, walkover, drive-over and post fittings, bollards, outdoor table lamps, spotlights and short post lamps are all good choices for task lighting," says Davidson.

## Press Release



*Valiant up light*  
R799.95



*Belgravia pendant*  
R499.95

### Lighting and security

Davidson notes that, especially in South Africa, security lighting should also play a big role in any outdoor lighting scheme: "Exterior lights with a passive infra-red sensor can improve the security of any outdoor space. The sensor activates the light when it detects movement within a pre-set range, and as such, deters criminals. The sensor can be attached to one fitting, or a remote sensor can be attached to more than a single fitting and when movement is detected at one point, all the selected lights will automatically come on. The latter is especially good for L-shaped areas." She notes that it is important to position the motion sensor correctly — the higher you place it, the less distance you will cover, while a lower floodlight will offer a broader coverage.

Says Davidson: "Floodlights are also a good security solution — choose fittings with low-cost, energy-saving lights so that they can be left on all night as a deterrent for would-be intruders. Floodlights boast different size beams for different effects, and you can achieve a wide but shallow spread of light, or narrow but penetrating coverage. Daylight globes and fittings with built-in daylight sensors are a wonderful invention and a must-have for any outdoor space. Globes are switched on automatically by way of a special sensor that detects a loss in light at dusk or early evening. Conversely, in the morning these fittings are 'magically' switched off, thus saving against leaving outside lights on all day long, or when you go away on holiday," Davidson explains.

## Style, durability and safety

Outdoor lighting comes in a plethora of various styles and materials, and it is critical that the style you choose complements the architectural style and the interior décor of your home for a seamless aesthetic. “Remember that the aim is to create a seamless flow between your home’s indoor and outdoor spaces, and as such, the outdoor lighting you choose should match the look of your home’s interiors.

“For example, if you own a contemporary home, then the outdoor lighting you choose should be simple and sleek in its design and choice of materials. For more traditional homes, such as the Provencal-, Tuscan and Georgian- style homes for example, more traditional outdoor lighting would be a better option — these tend to be larger, more ornate type fittings,” explains Davidson.

With regards to durability, Davidson notes that outdoor fittings can be made from a wide variety of materials, including plastic, aluminium, stainless steel, brass and copper — all of which can alter the fitting’s longevity and performance: “For garden fittings that can withstand the elements, they need to be made from hardwearing materials. Anti-corrosive, hardwearing materials such as stainless steel and aluminium are best, or you can opt for robust plastic composites.

“Remember that any outdoor lighting needs to be fully sealed against the elements to protect it from rain, irrigation and any splashes prevalent in outdoor areas. Water and electricity can be a lethal combination, so it is important that this is front of mind when selecting outdoor fittings,” comments Davidson.



*Oxford up light*  
R329.95



*Shire lantern*  
R599.95



*Kensington 3 light*  
R1 699.95

## The choice of light source

When choosing exterior lights, it is as important to consider the light source as it is the fitting itself, says Davidson. She notes that the following light fittings can be considered:

- Halogen lamps are ideal for bright spotlighting, but can consume relatively high amounts of electricity and are thus not very energy efficient.
- Metal halide offers great daylight-quality illumination, a long life and it is energy efficient.
- Energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs are the ideal choice for outdoor lights that are on all night as they are long-lasting and boast low running costs.
- Light emitting diodes or LEDs are popular for small, more flexible fittings as they are incredibly compact, are highly efficient and offer a very long lifespan.
- Traditional incandescent light bulbs are inexpensive and emit a warm glow, but they are not energy-efficient at all and not recommended.
- Solar-powered lighting is the most cost-effective to run and environmentally friendly option of all — they are quick and easy to install as they don’t need to be connected to the mains electricity, and they are powered entirely by the renewable light energy from the sun.

### Key things to remember about outdoor lighting design:

- Create depth using light and shadows: Don’t light up the entire garden — shadow and silhouettes create intrigue and interest.
- Light up focal points: Use lighting to highlight attractive elements, such as a particular tree, plant, hardscaping or architectural feature.
- Light up usable areas: Increase your garden’s safety by lighting pathways, stairs, any changing levels and patio areas.
- Aid security: Be sure to boldly light up any security weak points in your garden.