



LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

Design Guide



illuminating Answers To All Your
Outdoor Lighting Questions

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Why Light?



You never know just how powerful and important light is — until it goes away. Even the most familiar setting becomes foreign when plunged unexpectedly into darkness.

As a child, your fear of creatures that went bump in the night went away with the simple click of a night light's switch.

Now, as an adult, what's your first instinct when you lose power during a thunderstorm? You grab a flashlight. Even a thin beam of light brings comfort to an otherwise scary situation, bathing the whole room in a wash of soothing illumination. Light offers a sense of safety and knowing to any space it occupies.

But it's more than that: Light, when added with an eye to design, also offers an extra aesthetic touch to its surroundings. It highlights what's beautiful and casts a shadow on the unseemly.

And your landscape is likely no different. There are plenty of reasons to add landscape lighting to your outdoor spaces, and to do so with aesthetics in mind. Here are just a few.



Safety and Security

Many homeowners decide to install landscape lighting purely for their peace of mind. And security lighting doesn't necessarily have to mean huge flood lights triggered by sensitive motion sensors.

Landscape lighting is one of the best, simplest ways to secure your property and loved ones — with fewer dark corners and untouched areas in your landscape, there are fewer places for trouble and mischief to lurk. Landscape lighting also keeps you safe from slips, trips and falls while navigating your outdoor living areas by night.

Installed correctly, even the most aesthetically pleasing landscape lighting automatically provides safety and security by its presence alone.

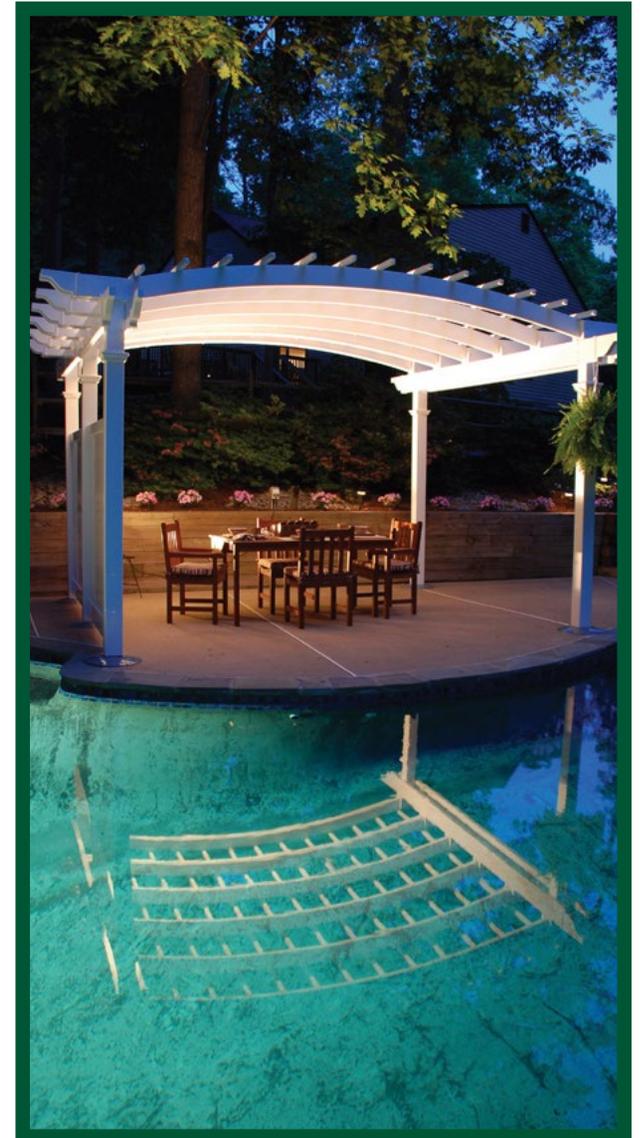
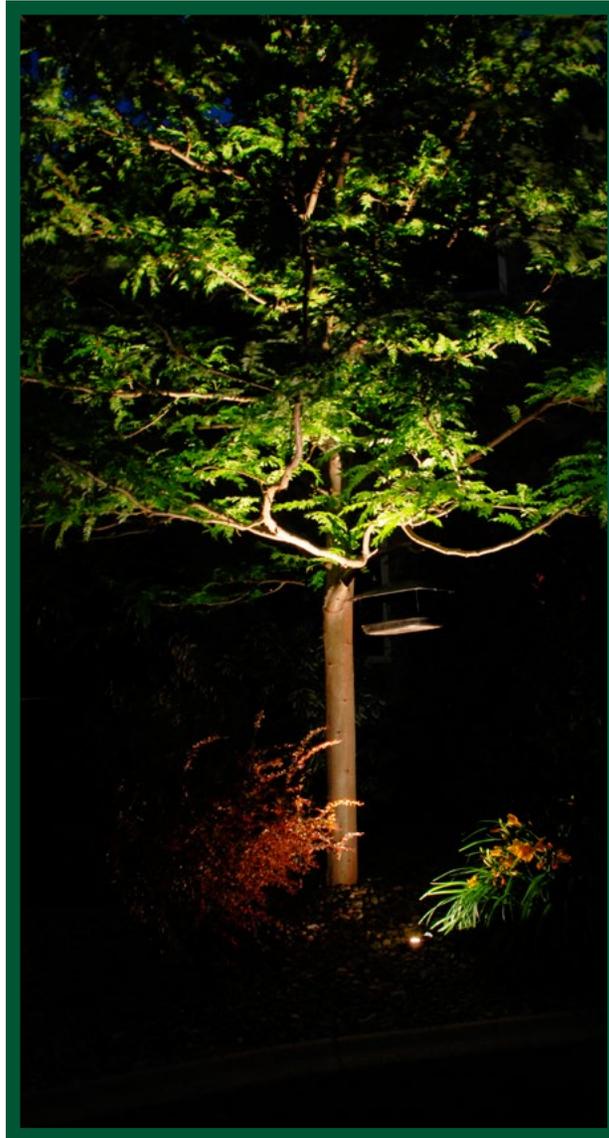


Highlighting Architectural Elements

The exterior of your home and the other architectural elements of your outdoor living areas are just equally important to your landscape design and the lighting you select to illuminate it!

Whether you've built your landscape around the design of your home or designed the two in stark contrast to each other, you may want to consider highlighting architectural elements of your home with landscape lighting. Retaining walls, stairs and other architectural landscape elements may be another area to consider adding landscape lighting.

illuminating Special Features *and* Focal Points



Your plant material and hardscaping aren't the only elements of your landscape that make it special.

Did you invest money in a new swimming pool or spa? Perhaps there's a fountain that you love so much, you want to light it by night as well. Is there a pergola or arbor on your property that deserves the landscape lighting treatment?

There's specialized lighting available for nearly any special feature you can dream up. Just ask your landscape lighting designer.



Adding Aesthetic Touches

But lighting can be about so much more than safety and security.

You shouldn't have to stop enjoying your landscape and outdoor lighting areas just because the sun has gone down: Landscape lighting extends the amount of time you can spend outdoors, enjoying your landscape, and can even create new aesthetic interest by illuminating your landscape in a new way than sunlight does.

Because there are so many different ways to light your landscape, the aesthetic opportunities for outdoor lighting are practically endless.

Before You Start Designing



Choosing The Perfect Fixture For Your Design Style

As with all your other landscape elements, your outdoor lighting should reflect your personal design style. Whether you opt for fixtures that match the basic style of your home and other landscape elements, or decide to make a bold statement with outdoor lighting fixtures that really stand out from the rest of your landscape, there's a wide variety of fixtures out there to help you achieve that look.

If there's a particular style you want — from traditional to transitional, modern to Mission — there's a good chance your landscape lighting professional knows just the right fixture to suit.

Finding The Right Fixture Material

Once you've settled on a fixture style, it's time to think about what material you'll select for your fixtures. Budget is a big consideration where fixtures are concerned — the material they're constructed of can make a huge difference in price.

But lifetime durability is another factor: Landscape lighting goes through a lot during its life! Constant exposure to the elements — including rain and irrigation water, as well as animal urine — means it's important to select a fixture material that can handle everything it endures in its service environment.



Aluminum

Aluminum is very affordable but typically of the lowest quality. It's also not as durable as other materials: Over time, it will oxidize, and the paint will fade.

Aluminum doesn't hold up well around salt and will corrode over time, so it's not recommended for coastal applications. Powder coating will extend the life of an aluminum fixture, as the paint will seal the aluminum — but they're highly affected by the sun's UV rays. In just a few years after installation, you can expect to see these fixtures begin to discolor, or depending on their quality, even chip and peel.

Copper

Copper is another great quality option for outdoor lighting. Copper is not quite as solid as brass, so some manufacturers will make brass fixtures and coat them with copper so you have the best of both worlds: the longevity of brass and the beauty of copper.

Copper will also develop a patina over time, darkening when exposed to the elements.



Brass

Made from a mixture of copper and zinc, brass is a hard metal that holds up well in all environments. Brass fixtures are more expensive than other metal fixtures, but they'll last for many years and often come with extended warranties.

Brass will develop a patina over time when exposed to the elements, but it will not corrode and is a great option for outdoor and landscape lighting, especially in coastal environments.

Composite

High-quality composites can offer better structural strength than the lighting sets sold in hardware and big-box stores. Composite materials are resistant to corrosion and can be much more affordable than comparable solid-metal fixtures.





Types of Lighting

The type of bulb you use in your fixtures is largely up to your personal preference — including how much maintenance you want to do — but your budget may dictate which type of bulb is a better choice.

Halogen

Halogen bulbs have been the standard in landscape lighting for a long time.

They're low voltage and offer clean, warm, bright light for outdoor use. It's important that your landscape lighting professional purchases their bulbs from a high-quality manufacturer — halogen outdoor lighting has come a long way from the bulbs produced by inexpensive, mass-market brands of yesteryear.

LED

If you're interested in looking beyond halogen lighting, there's another option out there that's gaining in popularity: LED landscape lighting.

LED lighting is low maintenance and eco-friendly. And as it becomes more prevalent, the quality has really improved! Until recently, LED lighting manufacturers' quality control was inconsistent, resulting in poor color quality, premature failures and generally low-quality light.

Now, low-voltage LED landscape lighting offers the same warm light and soft color as halogen lighting — it can be tough to tell the difference today.



Your Budget

So much of your landscape lighting will depend on your budget, from the type of fixtures — and how many you install — to the type of bulbs you use.

But the amount of money you're able to budget for your landscape lighting right now may also help you determine whether you install all the fixtures in your landscape lighting design — your master plan — or install the components of the complete design in phases.

Go in to your first meeting with your designer with a good idea of your budget, be frank about your priorities: Where are you willing to splurge? Where might you be willing to cut back?

Make a list of the elements that you absolutely must incorporate into your landscape lighting design, and those you simply want to have.

Needs

To establish your needs, case your property by night. Take note of the areas in your landscape that represent a safety or security risk in the dark.

Is there a dark recess of your landscape where a thief or other intruder might be able to hide out? Maybe the pool deck or a walkway between two areas of your outdoor living area could use some special lighting after an embarrassing recent incident.

Your landscape lighting designer will spot some of these areas thanks to their professional experience, but you should make a well-defined list of areas you're concerned about, too — it's your family's safety and your peace of mind, after all.

Wants

Your "wants" column is more about the fun aspects of your landscape lighting. This is your opportunity to tell your landscape lighting designer all about the truly special areas of your landscape that you want illuminated by night — features someone might not take note of unless they visited often or truly knew you.

This is your opportunity to tell your landscape designer about the heirloom rose plant that's been passed through your family for generations — or the swimming pool you spent your family's life savings on last summer (you should be able to swim in that pool 24 hours a day for what it cost!).

These wants are an investment, for sure, but they're worth making if you've got the budget for them.

Landscape lighting professionals have dealt with homeowners with all manner of budget concerns — so you're almost guaranteed they've heard yours before, too, and will have a way to address it.



Meeting With Your Designer

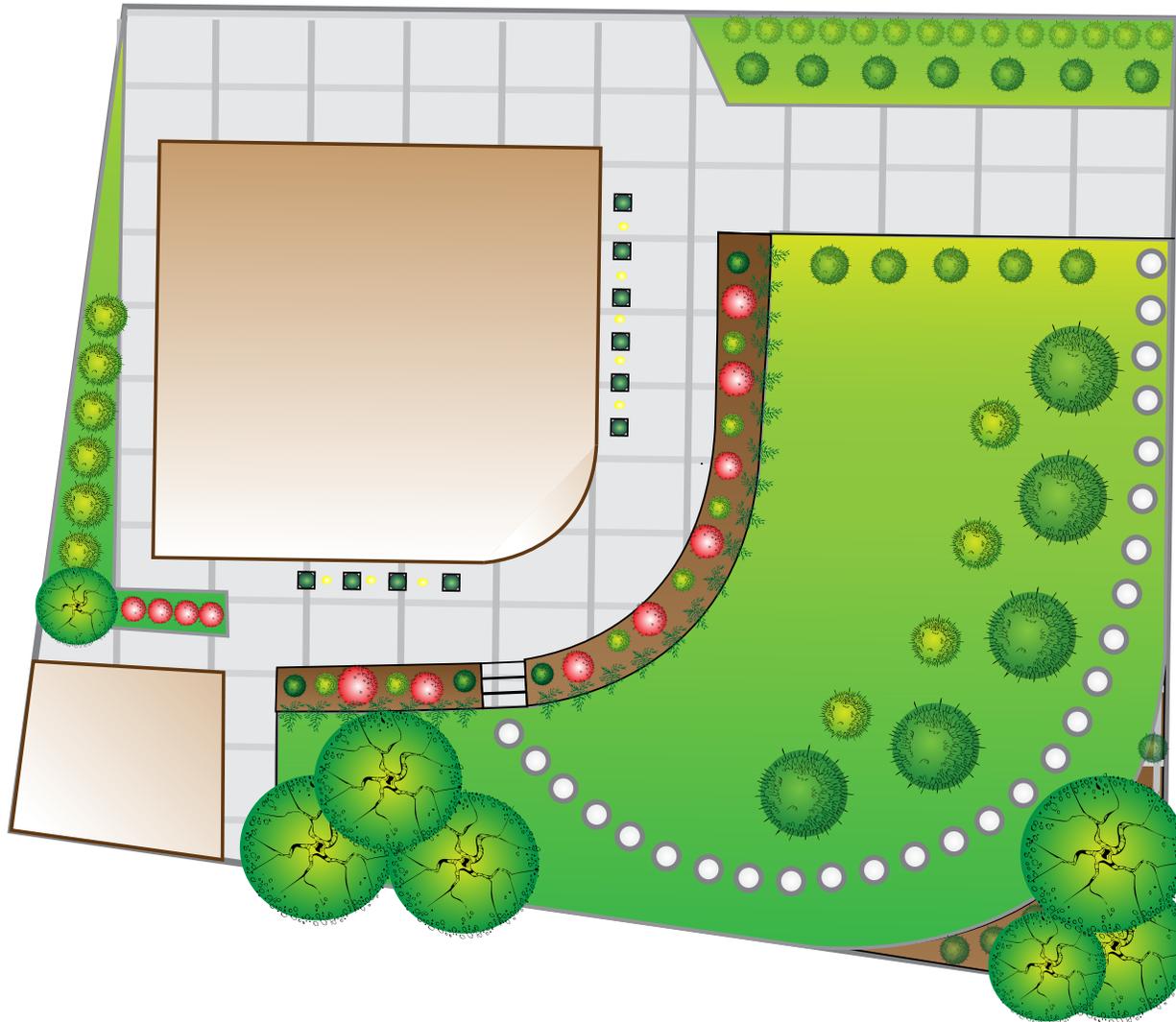


It's the moment you've been waiting for: A meeting with your landscape lighting designer to determine the look and feel of your landscape lighting. Now is the time to sort through all that inspiration you had, all the lists you made (both in your head and on paper), and share them with your designer.

The meeting will start with a walkthrough of your property. This is a perfect opportunity for you to go over your list of features you've labeled "needs" and "wants." In addition to perusing that list together, you should have a conversation about focal points within your landscape. What areas are you hoping to highlight with your landscape lighting?

Being intimately familiar with your property and landscape are a good thing here, but that familiarity may also create "blindness" to other beautiful areas of your landscape. Your landscape lighting designer may have some other ideas as to where the landscape lighting system can highlight or otherwise add illumination.

Either way, come to an agreement on those focal points before you go any further with your landscape lighting designer.



Ironing Out The Logistics

A walkthrough is helpful, but to keep the image of your property fresh in your landscape lighting designer's mind, send them back to the studio with a copy of your landscape design drawings or plans. This schematic will ensure you're working from the same page — literally!

The designer should also take some photos of your property as a way to jog their memory when placing fixtures on their design.

After they've had some time to ruminate on your needs and wants, your landscape designer will put together a formal design document — a lot like your landscape design plans — that will give you an idea of where your landscape lighting fixtures will be placed, and how they'll all work together.

Some landscape lighting contractors even use interactive software that, in addition to showing where the lights will be placed on a static drawing, can actually give you an idea of how your landscape will look by night once the lighting has been installed.

The more detail you can get from your landscape lighting designer, the better. Interactive design drawings, video “tours” and the like will help you visualize exactly what the contractor is going for in your design — and help prevent miscommunications farther along in the installation process, when it's already too late to fix them.



Installation

If you'd like to adjust the design your landscape lighting contractor has submitted to you, they should be 100 percent willing to make those changes. The process should move forward only after you've signed off completely on the design, budget and even the proposed timeline.

Once you've agreed on the design of your landscape lighting, it's time to get started on installation!

You and your designer will agree on a start time, then they'll give you an idea of how long the installation will take. It could be a couple of days to a few weeks, depending on the complexity of your landscape lighting design as well as factors like the weather.



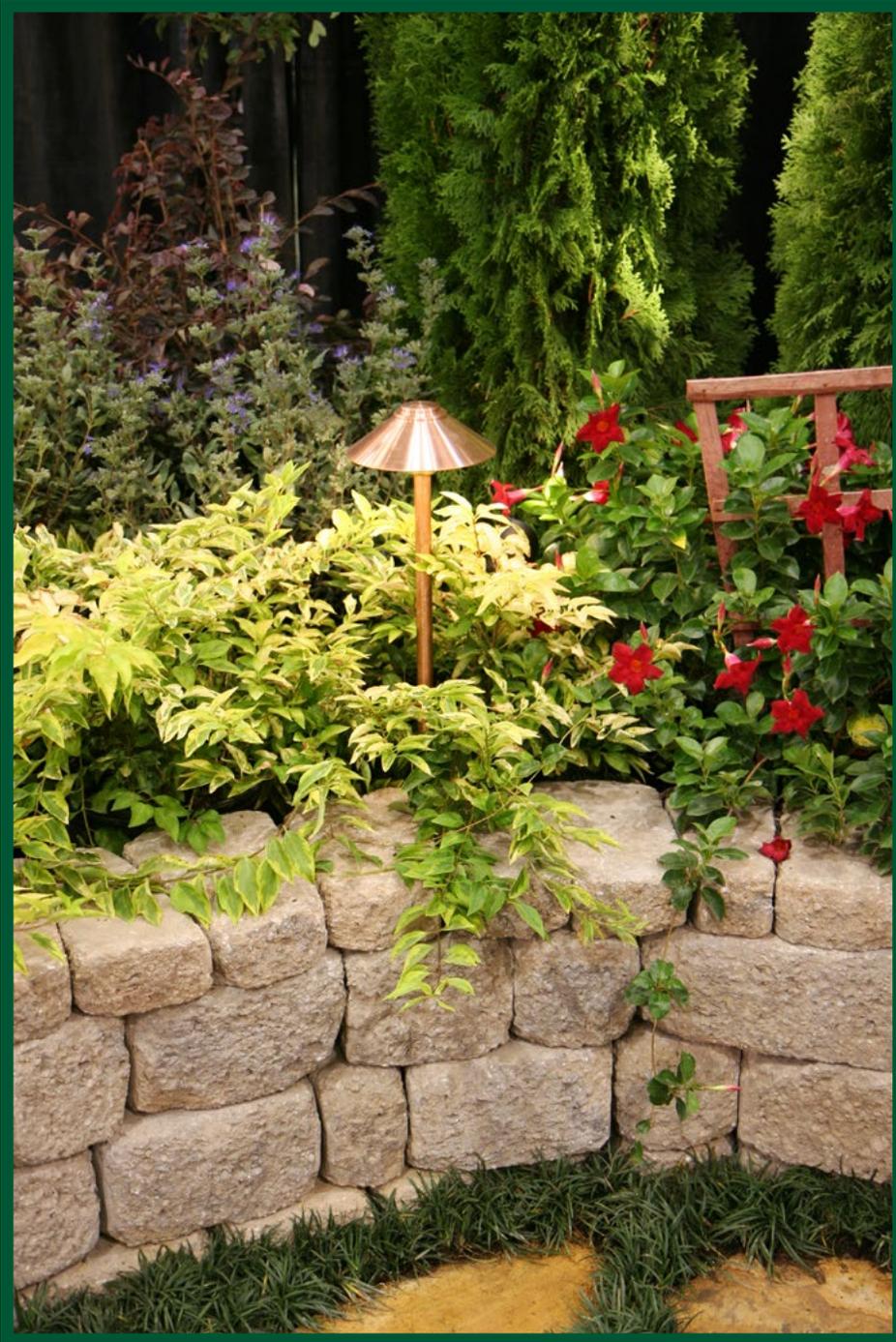
Walkthrough

You're almost done!

Once the installation of your landscape lighting is complete, you'll meet with your lighting designer once more to do a final walkthrough.

This will be done after the sun goes down, since one of the key components of your walkthrough will be looking at each fixture's direction and spread together — and making any necessary adjustment to your installation to ensure the perfect safety, security and, of course, ambience in your outdoor living space.

During this final walkthrough, your landscape lighting designer will also show you how to operate the system. (Even if your landscape lighting is set on a system of timers and sensors, you'll still want to understand its inner workings in case you need to tweak those settings, including adjusting the timer — or manually operate it at any point.)



Service

Like any element of your property, landscape lighting does need maintenance over time, no matter how meticulous and professional the installation. Without regular maintenance, the effectiveness of your lighting may falter as failed lamps go unnoticed, or dirty fixtures and old bulbs dim the fixtures that were once bright and beautiful.

The cost of regular maintenance will really depend on the materials you choose and how often your landscape lighting is actually in use.

Your outdoor lighting fixtures' light bulbs usually last about a year — and just like the bulbs for your indoor fixtures, you'll need to take special care to replace them with the correct bulb to prevent blown fuses and electrical problems.

Many landscape lighting design and installation companies also offer comprehensive service and maintenance programs. If you're interested in long-term maintenance for your outdoor lighting system, ask your landscape lighting professional about their service plans. These plans could include services like:

- Bulb replacement
- Lens cleaning
- Regreasing fixtures
- Reburying exposed wires
- Adjusting timers and controls
- Trimming unkempt surrounding plant life

The price of this service will vary from provider to provider, of course, with some even offering discounts for regular service calls.

Take The Next Steps



If you're ready to start the landscape lighting design process, we're ready for your call!

Preparing for and executing your landscape's lighting design, installation and maintenance are huge undertakings, but you'll come away with a landscape you can enjoy for years to come — and an addition to your home that could offer a considerable boost to your property value, too.

Call our office at (208) 656-3220 to get in touch with us directly, or fill out our contact form on our [website](#) to have someone at Outback Landscape reach out to you as soon as possible.

We'll work with your tastes — and within your budget — to create and care for the landscape lighting plan that's 100 percent tailored to you and your family's needs.



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