

LIGHT MOTIF

Outdoor lighting can be complicated. Done right, it can be revelatory.



Strategically placed spotlighting by Reynolds Landscaping adds drama to this waterfront deck.

Nothing adds more enjoyment to your outdoor lifestyle than properly planned lighting. But getting it right isn't as easy as throwing a switch. We asked Tanek Hood, the lighting and electrical expert at Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop in Manahawkin, for some tips.

BASICS

Most yards require both ambient lighting and task lighting. Ambient lighting, such as dramatic down lighting from a tree, provides atmosphere. Task lighting supplies light for outdoor activities such as food prep or barbecuing.

☀ Path lighting is needed for safety—but can also add a nice “runway effect,” says Hood.

☀ Familiarize yourself with industry terms like shadow grazing and wash lighting. These create different types of visual interest. Shadow grazing casts carefully planned shadows for dramatic effect.

Wash lighting provides a flood of light—often colored—across a space. The effect, says Hood, “can make a garden feel alive and give attention to a moving object such as grasses or wind chimes.”

WHY LED?

☀ LED lighting lasts longer, but there are other advantages. “You can achieve subtle nuances in beam spread, color temperature and watts,”

says Hood. LED lighting is measured on a Kelvin (K) scale, which indicates the color temperature. The lower the Kelvin, the warmer the color; the higher the Kelvin, the cooler the color. “Tapering from cooler to warmer LED lighting can visually direct [attention] to specific areas of interest, such as a footbridge or the front door,” says Hood. Additionally, LED lighting comes in wattages ranging from 1.5 to 9 watts. Appropriate wattage depends on the use. For instance, if safety of elders is a concern, “double the wattage of path lighting from 3 to 6 watts,” says Hood.

KEEP IN MIND

☀ The view of your landscape lighting from inside your home is as important as the view from outside. “What is the point if you, the homeowner, cannot enjoy the quality lighting from inside?” asks Hood.

☀ Any ambitious lighting project requires a lighting-design professional. Choose one who is licensed—and passionate about lighting. A pro should provide a comprehensive lighting design plan as well as a list of previous projects so you can check out his or her work.

RESOURCE: Tanek Hood, Lighting Design, Reynolds Landscaping and Garden Shop, Manahawkin. 609-597-6099; reynolds-landscaping.com.