



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

LIGHTING SEASON!

With summer on the wane, it's getting dark earlier and we tend to meander back into our households for the evening to watch thrilling episodes of America's Talented Big Brother Can Dance With The Stars In The Glass House Bachelor Pad For The Real Housewives Of Jersey Shore part 35. While this sounds fine, it's still very comfortable outside at night and I would much rather be hanging out on a patio or the backyard for the night with a tasty beverage in my hand. With that said, let's take a look at lighting.

Landscape lighting adds beauty, security, and safety to a home, and gives the home an entirely different look at night. A well-placed bullet spot fixture is popular to light up focal points all around the property, but these fixtures can also be mounted to the house or up in larger trees for an OUTSTANDING downlighting, or "moonlighting", effect. Path fixtures are often used to light up walkways and such, but these can also be used for a down lighting effect on smaller lawn focal points, small to medium boulders, home address signs - you get the idea. Other fixtures in all different shapes and sizes are now on the market to be placed in hard to reach areas that standard bullet and path fixtures may not fit, examples being under-step and deck post fixtures.

THE MYTH OF LED LIGHTS "LED lights have a blue tinge that I don't like" was heard quite often, and in years past when they were just coming into the market, I agreed with that. Well, here we are now and I gotta say, LED manufacturers have perfected the color! It's not your grandma's blue light any more! LEDs are just as white as the interior lights in your home, and use FAR less wattage. Did you know that a Sollos 4.5 watt MR-16 lamp has the same effect as a 20-25 watt halogen? Or that a Sollos 2.4 watt Bi-pin lamp is equivalent to the 20 watt T3 lamps? Believe it!

"LEDS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE!" Yes, LED lamps are more expensive than halogens. However, LEDs need so much less power, that smaller wire and transformers can be used, which will save a LOT on the cost of a system install, plus chances are that you will still have room for future expansion. Example: using lamp wattage above, let's say you have a 20 fixture install, 10 bullets and 10 paths. LED wattage: 69 watts. Halogen: 400 watts. So, for LED, use a 300 watt transformer, lesser gauge wire, and still have a TON of room to expand. For Halogen, you're looking at a 600 watt transformer, minimum 12-2# wire, leaving maybe enough space for 1 or 2 very small expansions, depending on voltage drop on the wire. Also, manufacturers of LEDs have continued to drop pricing dramatically over the past couple years. Keep fighting the good fight, Corporate America!

IN CONCLUSION Landscape lighting is a continual 4 season special effect for a home. Lighting can be installed for your new customers and pre-existing customers. It does take a little bit of math, but so does landscape, brick, and pond installations. If you have never installed a system before or if you're not quite comfortable with it yet, swing by the Plant Center and I'll be happy to give a quick, easy, and painless crash course on how to hook up a low voltage system.



Dave Reutter

Christensen's Plant Center
6282 Gotfredson Road
Plymouth, Michigan 48170
(734) 454-1400 voice
(734) 454-1414 fax

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