



Many landscapers are planning to cash in on the nightlighting market, which is expected to grow significantly.

BY THE LIGHT

Landscapers on the cutting edge of the industry are beginning to offer nightlighting installation as a viable add-on service. Golf course superintendents and park managers are also taking advantage of the trend toward 24-hour beauty.

by Jerry Roche, executive editor

Using "the light...of the silvery moon" to illuminate landscapes sometimes just isn't good enough.

For stunning, you can't beat a well-lit landscape at night. For secure, you might consider installing an intruder alarm system—but nightlighting can help. For safe, there's nothing like having a well-illuminated driveway and sidewalk.

These, then, are the main reasons to sell nightlighting systems to landscape clients—whether you're a golf course superintendent looking to spruce up a clubhouse area, a contractor looking to make a little extra cash on your next residential installation, or a park superintendent looking to minimize vandalism.

The trend toward night-lit land-

scapes has captured the fancy of homeowners and facility managers in the extreme South and Northeast. If lighting follows other landscape trends, it will soon be popular from sea to shining sea.

Lighting boom

"There's a tremendous excitement for nightlighting going on throughout the country," notes Larry Powers, president of Genlyte, Inc., Littlestown, Pa. "There's a big market for high-end residences, hotels, restaurants and all types of retail establishments, particularly stand-alone establishments. We see a real explosion in the coming years.

"I see a tremendous opportunity for a contractor. In many areas of the country, they would have a tremen-

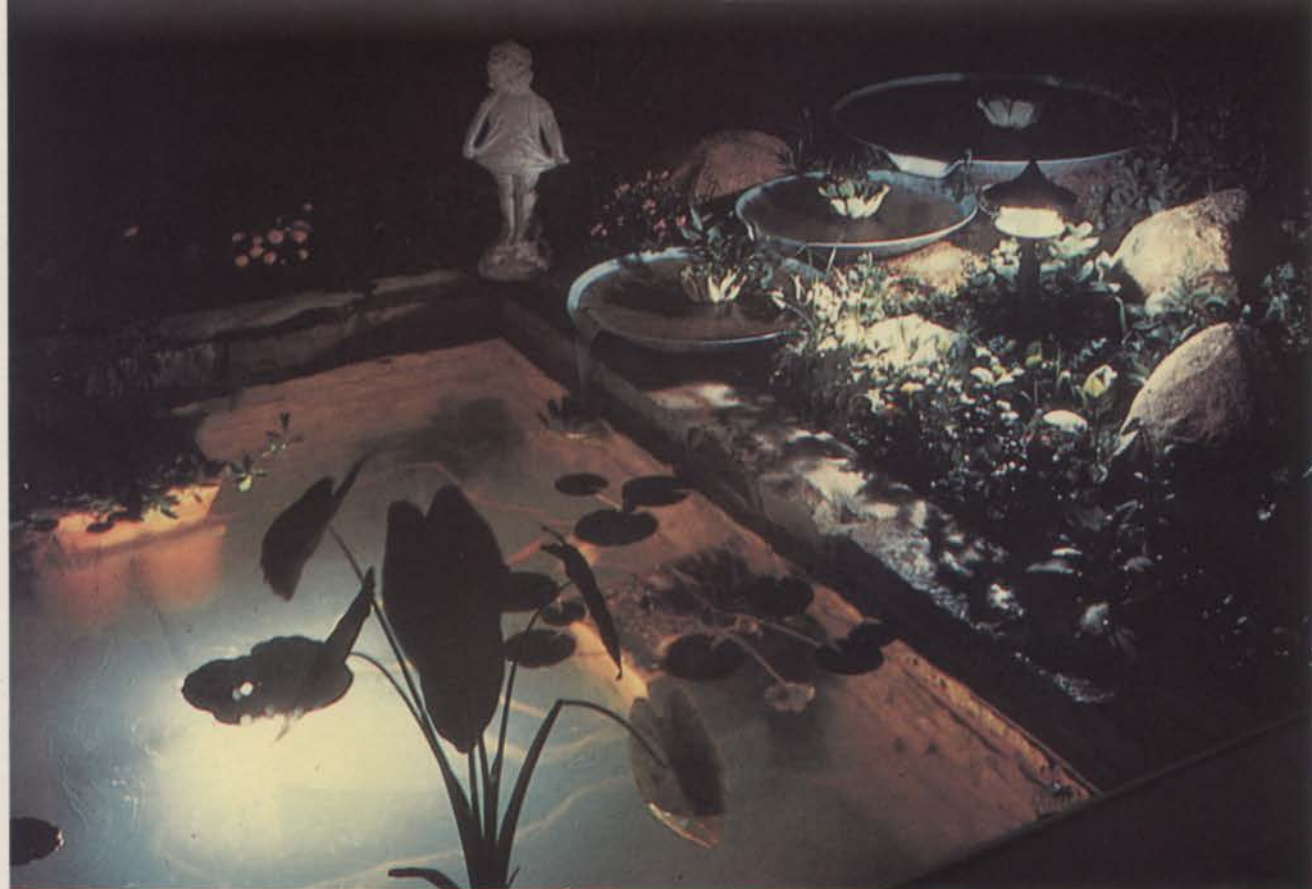
dous surge of business. We think it can be very profitable, too. One of our distributors in northern New Jersey says that they have never sold a landscape lighting job under \$1,500."

Landscape lighting, a \$120 million a year business at the wholesale level, is projected to grow 10 to 15 percent per year over the next five years.

"This is an extremely hot area now," agrees Rick Wiedemer of Hinckley Lighting, Cleveland, Ohio. "People are pouring thousands of dollars into their landscapes. But you can't see the expensive landscaping unless you light it."

The art as science

Good landscape lighting is as much art as science. Few hard-and-fast rules apply, but it employs certain funda-



Low-voltage lights like this one on the ground from Hinckley Lighting can be matched to outdoor line-voltage lights installed on residential properties.

mentals. Knowing the basics will help the job go easier, minimize callbacks and more fully satisfy the customer.

"The average landscape contractor won't know about the aesthetics of landscape lighting unless he or she goes to some seminars or places where somebody teaches good lighting techniques," Powers says. "The American Lighting Association puts on a series of lighting seminars throughout the United States on techniques of landscape lighting."

Neil Mitchell of Major Electric Supply, Pawtucket, R.I., organized a seminar in September for landscape architects and contractors and electricians. Despite terrible weather, a standing-room-only crowd showed up.

"Selling landscape lighting is as easy as taking candy from a baby," Mitchell believes. "All the contractor has to do is open up his yap. If it's installed at the time the landscape is being installed, it's very easy and economical."

Mitchell says that contractors can charge homeowners \$100 to \$200 per fixture and make a good profit.

"We've found that the average residential lighting sale is \$3,000 to \$5,000," notes Wiedemer. "On big residential jobs, we think that it's probably best to follow up a year later with lighting. If the owner is tapped out after the landscape construction,



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the lighting might come into play even two to three years down the road."

Lighting by design

When selling lighting, the design begins by determining the client's

needs. Since there are so many fixtures on the market, the first step is to gather information and formulate a plan based on specific requirements. Make sure to ask:

- What lighting effect does the client expect?
- Does the client entertain often?
- Where are the guests usually located?
- Where should the lighting system be controlled?
- Is security a primary concern?
- Which key landscape features should be used as focal points?
- What tone or feeling do you want to achieve?

Next you should define the budget and identify the lighting manufacturers that fit your needs. Finally, select and place specific lighting fixtures.

"There are a lot of different grades of landscape lighting," notes Powers. "Most people aren't very happy with the very low-end products once they put them in. If I were a contractor installing a job, I'd want to make sure I had a quality product with some warranties. Dogs wet on them, sprinkler systems sprinkle on them and they take every kind of outdoor abuse that there is."

The right light

Fixture selection is a critical decision. Selection is made by considering economics, positioning, shielding and

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A CRIME-STOPPER

Adequate nightlighting can deter crime, according to the National Lighting Bureau (NLB). A dramatic example was provided in a case history submitted to the organization's National Lighting Awards Program.

After two female employees of the Bellevue (Wash.) *Journal-American* were accosted in the daily newspaper's parking lot in 1982 and again in 1983, new lighting was installed. No further incidents have occurred.

Somewhat ironically, the new lighting—which provides 21 percent more light—costs 24 percent less per year to operate and maintain.

Journal-American facilities manager Robert F. Phillips sought Maurice W. Dick, service manager for Holmes Electrical Contractors of Renton, Wash. Dick recommended high-pressure sodium lighting to replace incandescent lights.

Annual energy consumption of the new system was \$840. The cost of replacement lamps, lamp replacement labor and ballast replacement amounted to \$505 per year, bringing the system's total operation and maintenance costs to \$1,345 per year. Because the new system's 2,042 kilowatt-hour connected load is 54 percent less than the original system's, utility costs were cut \$454 per year.

In addition to the safety factor, Phillips says that several employees commented that the new lighting, with its distinctive "golden-white" color, made the buildings and landscape more attractive, linking them into a unified whole at night.

According to NLB executive director Richard H. Geissler, the *Journal-American* case "demonstrates the important difference between lighting management and lighting energy conservation."

More information about the benefits of lighting and specific techniques that can be applied to obtain them is available from the NLB. A free directory of the bureau's publications is available by writing the NLB, 2101 L St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20037; or calling (202) 457-8437. □

LOW-VOLTAGE, NOT LOW-PROFILE

More and more, experts are agreeing that low-voltage landscape lighting is the thing to sell to residential customers, rather than what they call "line-voltage" lighting systems.

Low-voltage systems are light, movable and safe. They employ a transformer to reduce voltage from line-level (110- to 120-volt house power) to low-voltage (12-volt, equivalent to an automobile battery) and direct-bury cable. Line-level equipment, on the other hand, requires junction boxes and underground conduit. It is extremely permanent, compared to its low-voltage cousin.

"Low-voltage systems are also very safe," notes Art Crisfield of Hinckley Lighting in Cleveland, Ohio. "If you run over the power lines with a mower or snip them with pruners, you won't blow your teeth out."

"They also have freedom of

movement," notes Ken Nicholas, Crisfield's co-worker at Hinckley Lighting. "We make 6-, 12-, 18- and 24-inch stems on spikes. You just stick them into the ground where you want them. If you want to move them, it's extremely easy. You just pull them out."

Neil Mitchell of Major Electric Supply in Pawtucket, R.I. notes four advantages of low-voltage lighting:

- Generally speaking, the fixtures themselves cost less. Though cheap plastic models can be bought at discount department stores, lighting manufacturers and electric supply houses have top-of-the-line metal products priced beginning at \$25 each, which is still relatively inexpensive compared to line-level equipment.

- Installation is considerably less costly. In many cases, digging is not really necessary. For instance, wiring for lights in ornamental beds can



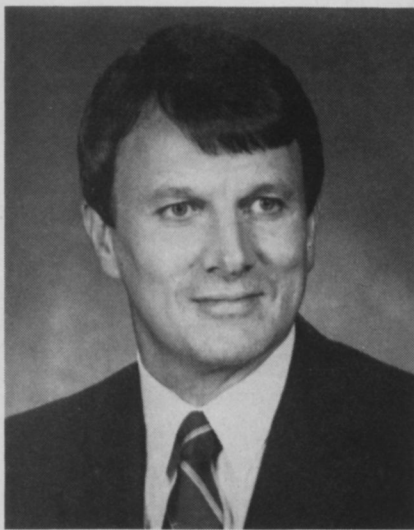
Ken Nicholas (l) and Art Crisfield of Hinckley Lighting say low voltage systems are economical and safe.

be easily buried under mulch. Licensed electricians are required to install the line-voltage systems; no license is needed for low-voltage installation.

- Systems are safer for children and pets. No "blown teeth," as Crisfield says.

- Though the bulbs are low-voltage and low-wattage, they produce two to three times the amount of lumens as their line-voltage equivalents.

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"dayform" (what the fixture looks like in daylight).

Power sources include line-level (120-volt) and low-voltage (12-volt). Each has its advantages. Types of lamp sources are incandescent (including quartz/tungsten and

halogen), metal halide, mercury vapor and high-pressure sodium. Colored lenses, no matter what type of source, should be used sparingly.

Placement, of course, is the key to a beautiful nightscape. Positioning fixtures in relation to the object to be

lighted can radically affect the finished job's mood and tone. The best way to determine the most desirable fixture placement, most experts agree, is trial and error at the job site.

Locating a spot very close to the object creates tremendous contrast, character and shadows. The further the light source from the object, the softer the gradations between high-spots of light and deep shadows.

As a sales tool

A final note to bear in mind. Observes Wiedemer: "When people go down the road at night and see these well-lit landscapes, they're going to ask who did the landscaping, not who did the lighting."

"The progressive, aggressive landscapers will recognize that this is an excellent add-on sale."

An instructional video tape produced by Genlyte can help landscape contractors acquaint themselves with the lighting design and installation market. It is available by writing P.O. Box 128, Littlestown, PA 17340 or calling (717) 359-7131.

To find out more about outdoor lighting, write or call the American Lighting Association, 435 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 644-0828. The ALA offers a 16-page, four-color brochure for \$2. Landscape managers can also order bulk copies at 35 cents each with a minimum order of 250. **LM**