

## DESIGN/BUILD

## Night light

At PLANET's DBI Symposium, landscape lighting expert Jan Moyer tells design/build pros there's more to lighting the landscape than meets the eye. *By BETH GERACI*

**J**an Moyer stood at the front of the room, asking for the lights to be turned off. "All the way off, please," she said when the lights dimmed.

There was a certain irony in her request. That's because Moyer was the featured speaker on landscape lighting at the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET's) DBI Symposium in Dallas in November.

Moyer is the founder of The Landscape Lighting Resource, Inc., a non-profit organization that disseminates and preserves information about landscape lighting. She came armed with ample advice for her audience, covering everything from effective wattage to adjusting to the day's evolving light.

Landscape lighting professionals must think a project all the way through before they get started, Moyer cautioned her audience of 50 design/build professionals from around the country. They must consider how the landscape will change through the seasons, throughout the day or even over the years.

"The view from a window changes from morning to night and season to season," she said. "Also, plants grow. So how will the plant's role change in the whole composition—how will it affect the landscape lighting in the future?"

Moyer also emphasized the importance of considering how the interior of the home relates to its exterior landscape, and how lights that are on indoors at night will impact the effects of landscape lighting outside.

#### WHEN IT COMES TO WATTAGE, LESS IS MORE

Just as homeowners and designers must consider how landscape lighting will be affected by these factors, they also must consider something equally as important—the homeowner's relationship with the neighbors and how the neighbors will react to the new lighting scheme.

Lighting professionals tempted to use high-wattage bulbs should think again, Moyer said, not only because high-wattage bulbs may upset people who live nearby, but also because "it doesn't take much wattage to have effective lighting. It really doesn't take much."

Moyer said she often uses MR16 20-watt

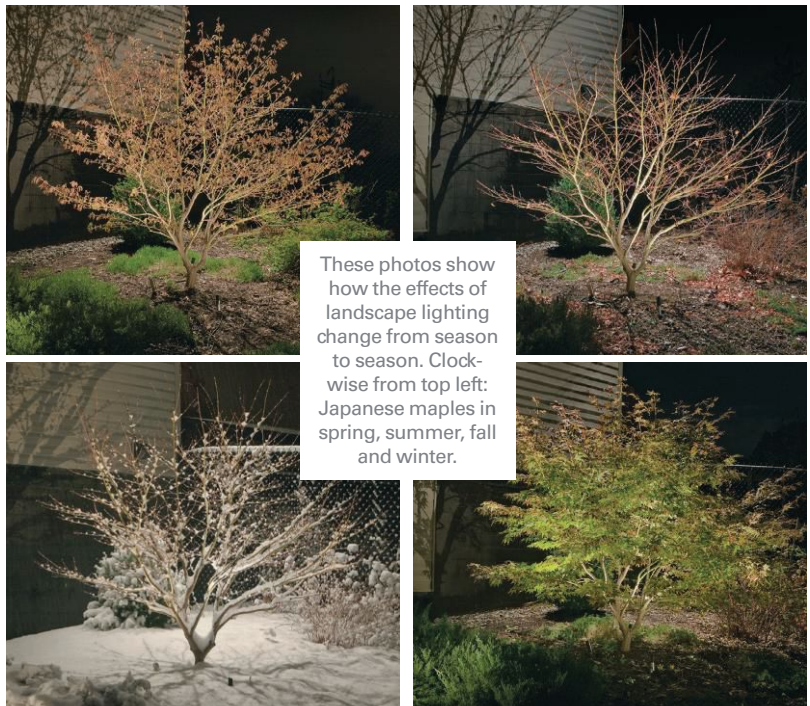
bulbs in her lighting displays, preferring to use more fixtures and lower wattage. In so doing, the landscape appears more natural.

But the industry is moving away from MR16 halogens to LEDs, Moyer said. "The landscape lighting industry is chaos right now because of this change to LED. Things are changing so fast, what was true last year is not true this year."

Moyer is about to complete the third edition of her "The Landscape Lighting Book." When she started the revision in 2009, she met with an LED manufacturer. She had a question for him—when will LED lighting finally settle down? "His answer was 10 to 20 years!" Moyer said. "And we're two years into it. So we're nowhere near settling down."

By "settling down", Moyer was referring to establishing uniform standards for LEDs. Right now, LEDs are not standardized. That's problematic, Moyer said, because for owners and designers, that means that there is no compatibility among bulbs from different manufacturers.

Nonetheless, LED is a big step up from halogen, Moyer said. "Will it be the end game? I have no idea. Will there something that's better than this? I just really don't know." **LM**



These photos show how the effects of landscape lighting change from season to season. Clockwise from top left: Japanese maples in spring, summer, fall and winter.