

Evening gardens

Many of us are very busy people, some of us have fulltime jobs, we have families that need our attention, we have the inevitable house work and of course tending to our treasured gardens, and a multitude of other things that take up more time than we realise.

So when do we have time to sit back and enjoy our gardens? For many of us and certainly almost everyone in the community who have young children with extracurricular activities, a dog, and a fulltime job, there is no time available until the evening.

The evening may be the best time for you to enjoy your garden. What are the benefits of an evening garden? Some flowers and foliage are more obvious as the sunlight fades. In the heat of mid-summer it is often more pleasant to be outside after dark. Moonlight can illuminate flowers and foliage making the garden at night a different experience, a place that is almost magical.

How do we create a garden that shines after dark?

The answers are white and light coloured flowers, silver or variegated leaves and plants that produce particularly heavy scents after dark. Plants that open after dark or that release significant scent in the evening are often those pollinated by moths. The appearance of the blooms is not the most important factor, as it is dark, but scent is very important if pollination is to take place. In the humid weather that we often experience in July and August scents can be remarkable in the evening.

So why are we talking about this in March? You need time to make plans and decide what plants you need to buy and where to plant them. First choose an area for your evening garden



that is easily seen from a comfortable spot such as a favorite chair on the deck or a rocker on a porch. Where do you sit with a glass of wine or a cup of tea? The easiest way to begin an evening garden is with annuals whether planted in the ground or in pots. The common petunia is a great evening plant. They almost glow in the dark and many are very fragrant. Sweet alyssum is also fragrant and creates a wonderful border around a garden bed. There is a less obvious bonus of using white annuals as edging. For family members or visitors who have trouble seeing at night, the white edges are more obvious and make nighttime garden walks safer.

If you already have perennials that have light coloured flowers or significant scent, you could move some, split some or purchase new ones, to create night time interest in view of your sitting area.

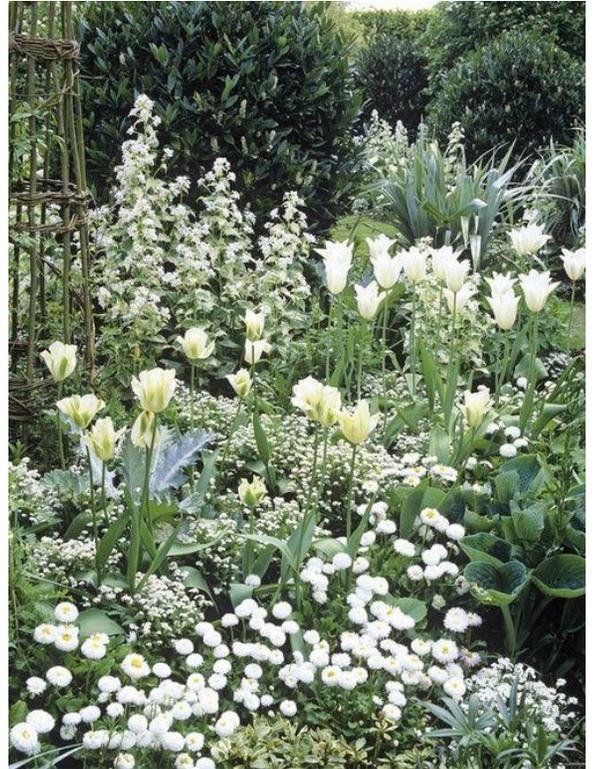
You can add light coloured tropicals to patio pots. Moonflowers are a night blooming annual vine and a member of the morning glory family. They open as dusk falls and the smell is marvelous. They like hot weather and can easily be started from seed. Tuberose is a summer blooming bulb; it is wonderfully scented and can be grown in pots. Heliotrope is a tropical grown as an annual; they are available in various purples and lilacs, occasionally white and strongly vanilla scented.

Pale yellow or light pink flowers also work well in an evening garden, think of coreopsis 'Moonbeam' or dianthus gratianopolitanus, shasta daisies or any of the pale or white summer phlox.



There is no right or wrong plant choice or design for an evening garden, plant what you like the only features you need consider are fragrance , flower and leaf colour.

If you have space you could add hydrangeas, mock orange or magnolias perhaps even a white flowered wisteria, or a white or pale lilac Rose of Sharon. For the spring season when it is dark earlier and we often only see our gardens through the window consider white or light coloured bulbs.



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If you have garden questions please contact us at streetsvillehort@hotmail.com check out our website at www.streetsvillehort.ca