

DIY

# Blossoming After Dark

CREATE A **TWILIGHT GARDEN** FOR A TRANQUIL, OUTDOOR MEDITATIVE SPACE.



*Midnight in the Garden, Bunny*  
Holly Ward Bimba



**FROM THE COOL MOONLIGHT**, to the soft sounds of nocturnal birds, to the scent of night-blooming flowers, the most magical time to enjoy your garden may be at night. In addition to offering natural aromatherapy, spending time outdoors in the evening can be good for your health—improving the quality of your sleep, easing anxiety, and enhancing the libido. Create your own private outdoor space, designed to be enjoyed at night, for a tranquil oasis where you can rest, meditate, and disconnect from the hyperconnectivity of your indoor life.

“A connection to the natural world enhances your well-being, and a garden at night is very much alive in ways that might surprise you,” says Julian Duval, president and CEO of the San Diego Botanical Garden. He suggests thinking about all the senses when planning a twilight garden.

- **COLOR AND TEXTURE:** White, lavender, and blue flowers; silver grasses; and plants with textured leaves all become luminous and reflective under moonlight. “Consider your region to see what thrives in your climate before planting,” Duval says.

- **SCENT:** Many plants become more fragrant at night, including star jasmine, lilies, evening primrose, Madagascar orchids, white snowdrops, and dragon fruit cactus. Night-blooming plants save their musky or fruity intoxication for evening, since pollinators like moths and bats rely on scent to navigate.

● **SOUND:** Think large chimes with deep tones, or a trickling fountain to create a soothing ambiance. Or cultivate a natural soundtrack: Try filling ceramic bowls with water to attract croaking frogs, or just sit quietly and listen for the sounds of owls or the rustle of nocturnal animals.

● **SPACE:** Place your seating area first (some comfortable chairs and a low table should suffice), then plant around it. Surround the grouping with pots of scented plants, and use pergolas, canopies, or trellises loaded with night climbers for privacy, creating a tranquil cocoon.

● **LIGHT:** You want to bask in starlight, but you also need to safely navigate the space. Illuminate a few pots with soft accent lights, place candles in glass jars, or light a hurricane lantern. Light a pond or water feature, or place floating candles on any still water surface. Hang fairy lights, and use footlights to illuminate any pathways leading to the garden.

—BARBARA ALBRIGHT

## A Nighttime Nook

No yard? Try these tips to create a twilight garden in the smallest of spaces.

- Garden vertically, planting vines and other climbers on trellises, creating a curtain of white or pastel color. Use hanging baskets and window boxes.
- Fill containers with tall plants and flowers that spill over the sides. Line steps with potted, fragrant plants for a natural, inviting spot to sit at night.
- Lean a mirror against an outside wall or railing to reflect the space, or line the outside of a planter with mirrors.
- If you have a wall, consider painting it and adding a focal point, such as a water feature, which provides soothing white noise.
- Enclose the space as much as possible, creating the sense of a peaceful, hidden world. Bamboo makes a beautiful, natural screen.

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