

How does your garden glow?

Once an afterthought, gardens and garden lighting are now just as important to many homeowners as the interior of their home.

This NICEIC fact sheet offers illumination, inspiration and advice on how to install garden lighting professionally and safely.

Q Are there any rules for carrying out electrical work in the garden?

A Rules in England and Wales were tightened in 2005 to prevent the number of accidents caused by faulty electrical work. All electrical work in the garden must now be carried out in accordance with national safety standards and comply with Part P of the Building Regulations.

Q Can I carry out the work myself?

A You should only carry out work if you are able to do so in accordance with the wiring regulations BS7671 and can inspect and test that it is safe for use. To comply with the law you must notify your local building control office before starting any work and pay the appropriate fee for it to be inspected.

Alternatively an electrician registered with a government approved Part P scheme, such as NICEIC, should carry out the work



What to consider?

Time spent planning your lighting scheme will enhance your garden's best features.

- Visit local garden centres, DIY chains, electrical wholesalers and look at websites, such as www.allweatherlighting.co.uk, for inspiration.
- Concentrate on the most attractive features, such as a plant or water feature, and don't light everything in sight.
- Think practically – light up steps and paths for safe access and combine with security lights.
- Think about the controls – there are various options from wall-mounted light switches to hand held remote controls.
- Avoid positioning lights so that they shine into a neighbour's window.
- Some outdoor lights can get hot, so place out of reach of small children.
- Use an electrician registered with a government approved Part P scheme to carry out the work, such as one registered with NICEIC. Download our Part P Factsheet for more details.



How to create different effects...

Torches can help you plan your lighting and decide which spaces you want lit and whether you want uplighters or downlighters

Water lighting

This effect looks good, and if you have fish, they'll turn into colourful streaks of light, however it doesn't provide much functional light.

Uplighting

These work well-positioned at the end of the garden shining onto the fence and make the space appear larger.

Downlighting

Use these to pick out features such as a tree or place above a table to give you more light when you're eating.

Shadowing

Put a light in front of a sculptural plant or object to create a dramatic look. The height of the light will make the shadow larger or smaller.

Cross lighting

Two lights positioned at opposite ends of a feature will highlight it with a softening effect.

Moonlighting

This gives a romantic effect by mounting a light in a tree so the foliage breaks up the light beams.

Light washing

Position a light at the foot of a wall and it will gently wash over the nearest surface.



Don't forget safety...

NICEIC expert Tony Cable says: "All sockets must be RCD protected for safety. An RCD or residual current device works by switching off the flow of electricity when a cable or flex is cut, and should be hardwired to your fuse box.

"Cables for fixed outdoor lighting installations must be buried at a sufficient depth to avoid damage from garden tools and should also be protected by an earthed metallic cover. This will require the electrician to dig a trench in the garden. Where possible lay piping or conduit for cables to pass underneath any hard landscaping. Your electrician can advise what to do if hard landscaping has already been laid.

"Decorative lights plugged into an outdoor socket, should be taken inside after use unless the box states they are waterproof - they are not designed to stay out all year round," adds Tony.



What to buy...

Always buy good quality outdoor lighting equipment from a reputable retailer and make sure the light fittings (luminaires) are weatherproof. An approved quality light fitting should always carry an IP rating, which indicates how well it stands up to external conditions.

Don't forget to look for the BEAB Approved Mark or the European Community (CE) safety symbol too.

The same rules apply to light fittings for water features – make sure anything you buy is waterproof.



Lighting up

All cables and transformers should be placed out of sight to ensure the lighting scheme is only apparent when lit at night.

On completion, an NICEIC registered electrician will provide you with a Building Regulations Compliance Certificate to certify the work meets national safety standards and fulfils the requirements of Part P of the Building Regulations. All domestic electrical work notified to Building Control by NICEIC electricians is covered by an insurance-backed warranty for six years.

NICEIC maintains a list of around 24,000 approved electrical contractors and domestic installers. Find one in your area by calling **0870 013 0382** or visit **www.findanelectrician.info**

So, even if you lack the most basic green finger skills, you can still work wonders in the garden this summer.

Why should homeowners choose an NICEIC electrician?

Cutting corners can have dangerous consequences, so in the interest of safety homeowners should use a professional and fully qualified electrician to carry out electrical work in their home, such as one registered with NICEIC.

NICEIC was set up in the 1950s and is the leading independent voluntary electrical regulatory body assessing the competence of UK electricians. NICEIC maintains a register of around 24,000 Approved Contractors and Domestic Installers.

To enrol with NICEIC all electricians, and anyone they employ, must comply with national safety standards and codes of practice. They are regularly inspected, which means NICEIC is a symbol you can trust, and is only displayed by electricians offering a dependable service. Use our **www.findanelectrician.info** site to find an NICEIC electrician in your area.

