



Moonlit Gardens

One of life's simplest pleasures is together. Hydrangea 'Quick Fire' is an upright shrub with conical white flower clusters that later fade to pink and old rose and are beautiful holding snow in the winter.

As a rule of thumb in choosing "stars" for the moonlight garden, look for white or pale pink, pale green or pale yellow flowers, silvery foliage or flowers with a pleasant evening fragrance.

A nice place to start an after-work stroll is on the deck or patio where night-flowering jasmine and orange trees in containers perfume the air. Night blooming water lilies like 'Juno' 'Texas Shell Pink' and 'Trudy Slocum' make great tub or pond plants, extending the available palette of night flowering and fragrant plants.

For the top tier and background choose small trees or tall shrubs. Evergreens make a nice daytime backdrop for white flowered plants and will become nearly invisible in the dark. Japanese tree lilac and several hydrangea varieties bear showy white flowers in midsummer. Trees, shrubs and perennials tend to have a set time period for flowering. Choose high, mid and low plants that flower at approximately the same time and

Other good white-flowered shrubs include Rosa rugosa 'Blanc Double de Coubert' (an intimidating name for a tremendously carefree, fragrant shrub rose), mock orange and Hibiscus 'White Chiffon'. White roses are always beautiful in the evening and two of the nicest intermediate climbing types are Sombreuil and Sally Holmes, both of which are well-behaved and disease-resistant. The cream and grayish green foliage of Cornus alba 'Elegantissima' will light up a partly shady spot, especially at night.

Moving down in size and working from mid-border to the lower front



The white flower clusters of Hydrangea 'Quick Fire' glow by moonlight.

edging, look for a nice mix of smaller shrubs, annuals and perennials. For a change of pace in daylilies, look for the night flowering *Hemerocallis citrina*. Its fragrant lemon yellow flowers open in the afternoon and stay open until the next morning. Pale orchid Catherine Woodbury, and near-white, diamond dusted Joan Senior are both extended bloomers that open during the day and remain open well into the night.



The variegated foliage of Brunnera 'Jack Frost' lights up the floor of a shady garden.

Choose white flowered varieties of annual marigold, nicotiana, cleome, zinnia and angelonia. Flowering tobacco (either *Nicotiana alata* or *N. sylvestris*) grows well in sun or part shade. *Achillea* 'Moonshine' and dusty miller have gray foliage and pale yellow flowers that glow softly in the moonlight. Other good perennials are *Coreopsis* 'Crème Brulee', Shasta daisy, evening primrose, Bath's Pink dianthus, white Carpathian bellflower and white Veronica.

Lower growing plants that can light up the ground in shady

areas include perennials Brunnera 'Jack Frost', *Pulmonaria* 'Majesté' and 'Trevi Fountain', all of which boast silvery foliage, and numerous hosta varieties.

Look for hostas with white variegated leaves and/or fragrant flowers. *Hosta plantaginea*, though it has solid green leaves also has large deliciously fragrant white flowers. Fill in strategic open spaces with white impatiens or begonias for non-stop flowers. An outstanding groundcover for moonlit nights in the shade is *Lamium* 'White Nancy' with silver-marked leaves and pure white flowers. Annual white or pink Madness® petunias grow well in full sun or part shade and have a lovely evening fragrance.

Moon vine is one of the most fascinating of evening plants, if you can start it early enough so that it matures before early fall frosts cut it down. Fragrant white trumpets unfurl slowly, as evening sets in, and remain open until the following morning.

Two clematis make the short list for nighttime showiness; the very vigorous sweet autumn clematis with its profuse masses of starry white flowers and Clematis 'Henryi', an 8 to 10 foot hybrid with big, flat shimmering white flowers. Sweet autumn clematis is suitable for larger areas only, as it tends to be a large and rampant grower and does attract bees. 'Henryi' is more demure and suitable for a trellis in the mixed border or near the house.