

Light it up yourself

You don't have to be an electrician to safely light up your patio or garden.

Using a low-voltage outdoor light kit, available at your hardware store or home center, you can install a series of inexpensive fixtures. All you need is a standard grounded 120-volt receptacle in which to plug the light kit transformer.

A typical low-voltage light kit consists of four to 14 or more light fixtures, low-voltage cable and a weatherproof transformer that reduces household current to a safe 12 volts.

You can bury low-voltage cable in a 2- or 3-inch deep trench or, if you prefer, you can lay it directly on the ground and cover it with mulch. However, if the area where you are laying cable needs to be mowed or is likely to be dug up for planting, you should bury it at least 12 inches.

Transformers come with manual controls, automatic timers or photoelectric eyes that turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn. A photoelectric transformer must

be mounted outdoors; other types can be installed indoors or outdoors, as long as they are in reach of a grounded receptacle.

Low-voltage fixtures usually consist of a lamp head and a fixed ground stake. The lamps can be floodlights, globes or tier lamps. You can place the fixtures along a path to light the way to the house or use them to dramatize your landscaping.

Study the area you want to light carefully and measure the layout of lights before you buy a low-voltage light kit. Then determine how many feet of cable you need and how many fixtures it will take to get the desired effect.

Most low-voltage fixtures are easy to wire and put into the ground. Read the instructions that come with the kit carefully. Most follow this general pattern:

■ Lay the cable and the fixtures in the spots where you want them to go. To install a fixture, place the cable in the cable channel in the base of the light head and press firmly to hold it in place.

■ Slide the closed ground stake over the cable channel, which will

cause the fixture's contact points to pierce the cable.

■ Spread open the legs of the ground stake, press both parts of the cable together and then fold them into one leg of the stake. Snap the legs of the stake together with cable coming out of the channels on either side of the stake.

■ Dig a hole about 8 inches deep for the stake (driving it into the ground may damage it). Install the stake and fill the hole with dirt.

■ Dig a trench for the cable and bury it or, if the area will not be disturbed by mowing or hoeing, cover it with mulch.

■ When all the fixtures are installed, mount the transformer near a grounded receptacle. Connect the cable to the transformer's low-voltage terminals and plug the transformer's power cord into the receptacle.

Depending on the type of transformer you selected, set the timer, adjust the sensitivity of the photoelectric eye or simply flip the switch to turn on your new outdoor lights.



Old-new age: Front-projection television sets, like this 100-inch SharpVision model, are suddenly back en vogue thanks to a renewed interest in home theater entertainment.

Front-projection televisions are no longer relics of the past

(AP) — With television tubes as large as 40 inches now becoming available, TV systems which project the image might be expected to fall by the wayside. But this isn't happening, according to Video Magazine.

Due to the increased interest in home video theaters, front projection televisions particularly are coming back into the limelight. These project the television image on separately mounted movie-type screens.

Also contributing to the renewed popularity of front projection units is their increasing sophistication. Early front projection TVs were very expensive, difficult to set up and the image was fairly dim.

However, front projectors are

now available which are comparable in cost to the larger direct view televisions. They also offer dazzling pictures which are distinctly reminiscent of film, making them perfect for home theaters.

Video images typically exhibit exaggerated brightness and contrast, while rear projection televisions also tend to have a sharper look.

One front projection, the Zenith PV890X with a list price of \$3,999, produces a sharp picture with superior color rendition. Unlike earlier units, it has a TV tuner and a stereo sound system built in.

However, typical of front projector TVs, the picture produced by the Zenith set was not

very bright and for full effect had to be viewed in a darkened room. Daytime viewing with a front projection TV requires that the room be equipped with a set of heavy drapes to block out the light.

Another consideration is that these specialized televisions should be professionally installed. However, when mounted in a coffee table or on the ceiling, the front projector TVs take up very little space, unlike the bulkier rear projection and direct view televisions.

While viewing television on a movie screen is not for everyone, anyone considering a home theater installation should sample front projection television before making a choice.

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