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How to light the night this summer and create a truly magical garden

By JENNY COAD FOR THE DAILY MAIL

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There's a line in The Great Gatsby which seems to capture perfectly a summer garden party. 'In his blue gardens, men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars.'

Clandestine, magical, full of promise. But no matter how blue your garden or how starry the sky, you can still create atmosphere in your outdoor space that might just bring to mind the mood as described by Scott Fitzgerald in his famous opus.

Glow for it: Bright, temporary overhead lighting will let you dine long into the summer night

The most upmarket schemes — with underlit plants, spot-lit walkways and illuminated sculptures — will be costly but there is still a lot you can do cheaply to bring life and light to your garden throughout the year, even in the depths of winter.

Patrick Clarke, design director at landscape and garden company Marcus Barnett, (www.marcusbarnett.com) thinks that a summer garden should be flexible and not over-lit.

'Summer evenings — with gentle light fading away into the evening — call for soft light sources.'

That means lighting a particular area, such as where you are sitting or dining, using a simple, hidden light source, if possible, sited above.

'The last thing you want is a heavy light taking over,' says Clarke.

The dark side: This garden by Marcus Barnett employs subtle lighting and celebrates shadows

Interior designer Abigail Ahern agrees, 'Never eliminate shadow,' she says. 'It's a mood lifter and adds mystery.'

Dimmer switches are essential and it is important to put lights on different circuits, so you can turn lighting down or off and be more specific with what you are illuminating. This also means your scheme will work as the light changes throughout the year.

If you're after a quick fix, then hurricane lamps are a brilliant and inexpensive way to create mood. Plus, as the flame is contained, you can hide them amid foliage.

Heal's sells LSA International's elegant and vase-like storm lanterns from £28, (www.heals.co.uk) and OKA has a selection from £11, www.okadirect.com. West Elm has a faceted version from £29, www.westelm.co.uk.

Ibiza inspired: Add a touch of glamour with the Camanone Pouff and Tavolino ranges by Moduluce

And, if you are longing to turn your space into an Ibiza-like chill out zone, then the Atollino and Atollo ranges by Moduluce, plus the Campanone Pouff are pretty amazing. Circular seats from £910, www.moduluce.com. Garden suitably lit, all that remains is to make yourself an icy cold gin and tonic.