



*MISSION: BEAUTIFICATION ... CONSERVATION ... EDUCATION*

## **Planting and Nurturing**

June, 2020

**Volume: IV      Number: 12**

**Gardening Issue: Linda Doiron, Editor**

**Environmental Edition: May, August, November, February - Mary Lovings, Editor**

**Gardening Edition: June, September, December, March – Linda Doiron, Editor**

**Landscape Design: July, October, January, April - Suzanne Finger, Editor**

### *Moon Gardens and Fireflies*

It's early evening, the best time in your garden, when you are finally getting just a hint of a breeze. It's when shimmering flowers and silvery foliage take center stage glowing with their own light. If you haven't experienced a moon garden, now is the time for a transformation with the coolness and serenity that belongs to the twilight hours.

A moon garden is simply a garden that makes use of white or pastel blooms, sweet scents and contrasting foliage. Look for a spot in your garden where it is exposed to moonlight and can be easily enjoyed. It may be any size you wish; a large bed or smaller ones connected by pathways. Can a moon garden fit your space restrictions and budget? Yes, consider it for window boxes, containers on your porch or balcony, or any place near your home.

To get started you should track the sunset and rising moonlight for a few nights to find the right amount of light and shadow because both light and shadow add appeal. Illuminate pathways, stairs and buildings to make it safe and visible. Then add lighting to enhance your moon garden with spotlights at the base of trees, along a pond's edge, or to add a dramatic effect, train lights onto a fountain or sculpture. Work into your plan ambient lighting effects such as windows and street lamps. Finally, look around and consider shadows that can produce a pattern of interest and movement when light projects a distinctive leaf shape (think maples, palms or ferns) on a pale surface.

Your personal preference is the key to finding the right color and tone of blooms that glow at night, whether it is slightly white, yellow, green, pink, blue or purple. Alter sizes, textures and shapes of your blooming plants to fill space and create contrast, but then repeat plantings to give consistency. This will allow each of your plants to "shine."

Pay attention to your foliage choices to provide your moon garden with contrasting colors such as silver, green, red and black. Silver especially glimmers in low light, and a

plant with the fuzzy foliage of artemisia can add another dimension of interest- it's irresistibly touchable. Position grasses so that they too catch the low evening light. Boxwood edging and other broad-leafed evergreens lend definition and balance to your overall plan.

Don't be afraid to mix annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs for maximum impact. I have focused on a summer moon garden, but with a bit more planning you can extend your bloom time throughout the year. If you decide to go "big" you will be highly rewarded. A profusely blooming garden shows up beautifully with low light. Try these selections for your garden:

### **Low Sun**

Bacopa  
Candytuft  
Clematis  
Cone Flower  
Dahlia  
Daisies  
Deutzia  
Euphorbia  
Iris  
Peony  
Petunia

### **Low Shade**

Astilbe  
Caladiums  
Impatiens

### **Medium Sun**

Salvia  
Yarrow

### **Medium Shade**

Aruncus (partial shade/sun)

### **Large Sun**

Butterfly Bush  
Hydrangea  
Viburnum

## **Large Shade**

Evergreen Dogwood (partial shade)

## **Silvery Foliage**

Artemisia (low sun)

Brunnera Jack Frost (low shade)

Dusty Miller (low sun)

Variegated Hosta (low shade)

Variegated Euonymus (varies)

Japanese painted fern (low shade)

Lamb's Ear (low sun)

Ornamental grasses (varies)

## **Scents**

Angel's Trumpet (low partial shade)

Anise (medium sun)

Gardenia (medium partial shade)

Jasmine (medium sun)

Lavender (low sun)

Lilac (medium sun)

Mockorange (large sun)

Nicotiana glauca (medium sun)

Rose (medium sun)

## **Night Bloomers**

Cereus (partial shade)

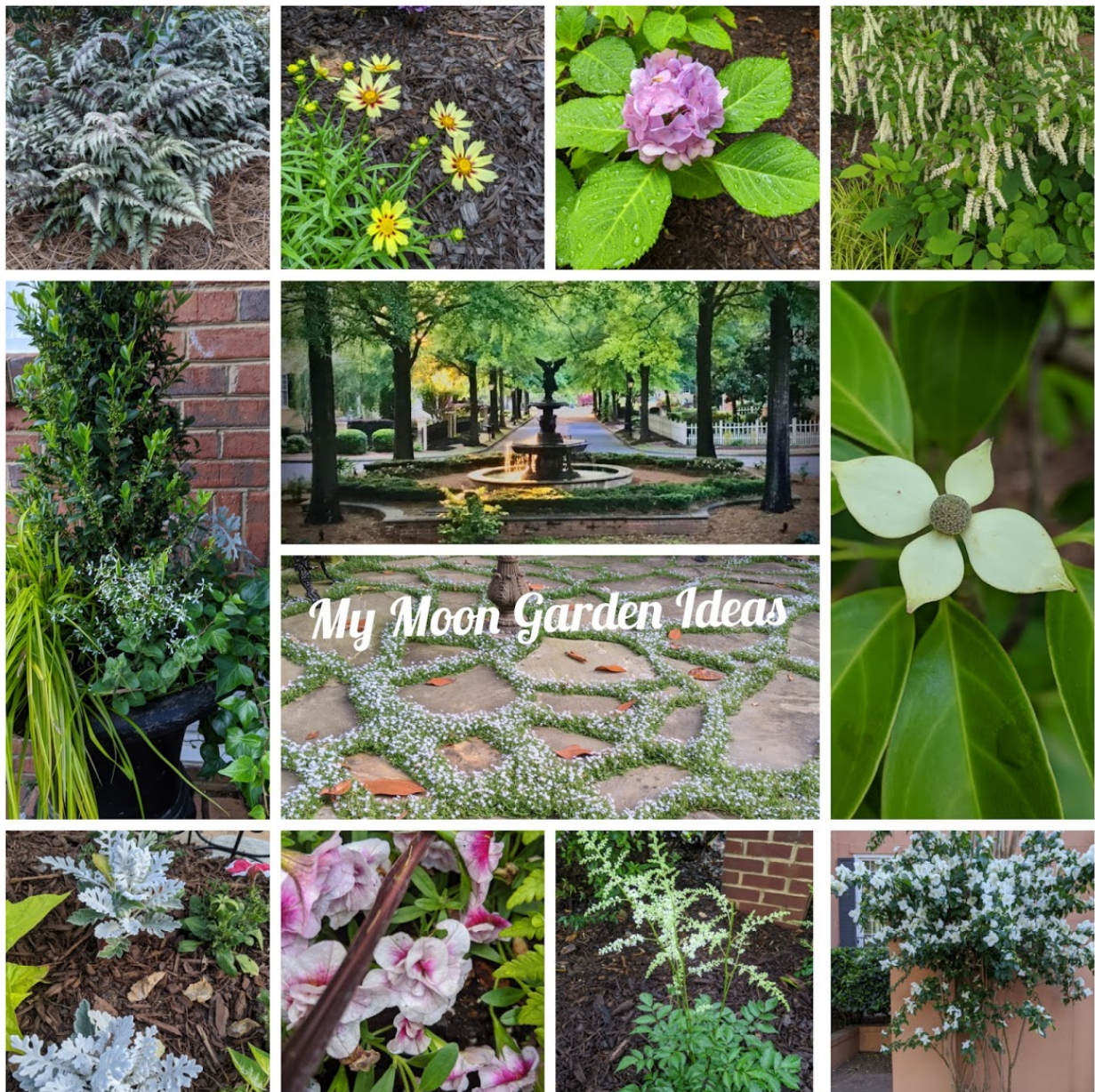
Evening primrose (medium sun)

Four o'clock (low sun)

Moonflower (medium sun)

Night blooming Jessamine (medium sun)

You can enhance your experience by adding other elements to your moon garden such as a small table and chairs, gazing ball, speakers, candles, garden path, shells, planters, bottle(s) of wine, or a trickling water feature where moonlight shimmers in gently moving water. Add pots of herbs, such as rosemary, oregano, basil or thyme that release their fragrance when touched.



If you want a quick start to the project, Better Homes and Gardens published a design for a moon garden that is complete with drawings and suggested plants for our area. You can find it at: <https://www.bhg.com/gardening/plans/colorful/design-for-a-moon-garden/>.

To complete our moon garden, consider that there are many bloomers that can provide birds and other wildlife valuable sources of food long after the flowers are gone. A good list provided by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division, can be found at this link: <https://georgiawildlife.com/planting-flowers-yourself-and-birds>. The list divides into three categories: 1. the easily grown bloomers in Georgia; 2. the ornamental ones that feed hummingbirds, and 3. the native plants for fruit and beauty.

I have saved my best idea for your moon garden until the end. When I think of summer, I think of fireflies or lightning bugs. Most of us have spent a summer or two chasing fireflies around the backyard, but there aren't as many lighting up the night sky as I remember as a child. One of the biggest threats to them is habitat loss. You can encourage fireflies by growing your grass a little higher, creating a water feature, arranging a small pile of wood, and turning off your bright porch lights.

### *Fireflies in the Garden*

*By Robert Frost 1874-1963*

*"Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,  
And here on earth come emulating flies,  
That though they never equal stars in size,  
(And they were never really stars at heart)  
Achieve at times a very star-like start.  
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part."*

Have a wonderful, star-like, fun-filled summer in your own moon garden.

*Be Well,*

*Linda Doiron*

*The Hokey Gardener*

