

Bell County Master Gardeners
Tip of the Week
By Joyce Friels
“A Moonlit Garden”

When I was outdoors the other night, I noticed how bright the yard looked with the full moon shining. I began to visualize a moonlit garden. It could be a place where you could relax and feel stress-free after a long, busy day.

Let's think about this white garden. It could be a place where you already have a landscaped garden, but you don't have to choose all white flowers. Choosing white flowers, along with some very light and pastel pinks, yellows, blues and purples, will brighten up the evening hours around your garden. It will look dazzling during the day also.

You could start by choosing only a few long-blooming, easy to care for perennials, for example: tall, white lilies for the background, 'White Swan' coneflower, white Nicotiana (flowering tobacco which has a nice fragrance in the evenings), white salvia greggii (sage), dusty miller, white yarrow, or shasta daisies.

Now add some annuals to this mix, like 'Bright Eye' vinca, white petunias or pastel zinnias. Mixing perennials and annuals extends the bloom time giving you an attractive garden from spring through fall. Also plant a moonflower vine along a fence or on a trellis. It blooms at night and has a pleasant sweet fragrance.

White irises, bellflower (*Campanula*), and white phlox provide a spring to summer succession of blooms. Silvery *Artemisia* and lambs ear gives texture. This combination of plants also could be used in a container garden on a patio or wherever you want a casual, natural setting that sparkles in the evenings. Add mums, snapdragons, and pansies to get blooms through fall. Include some variegated, or gray and silver for depth, and select more texture such as liriope and caladiums. Add an edging of white alyssum for lovely fragrance.

Put all your ideas together, do your plant shopping wisely, and you can have a "moonlit," easy-care garden providing a peaceful place to spend some down time to relax and enjoy the outdoors. Don't have to imagine your moonlit garden, create one! Have fun and enjoy!

Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas?

Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com