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The midnight garden needn't be a garden of good or evil, but one simply to enjoy in the evening, or better yet, by moonlight. Many gardeners aren't home during the day to enjoy their garden, so creating one that lasts into the evening hours expands your options. Dark colored flowers disappear with the onset of dusk, while white flowering plants still shine. Some plants bloom only at night and some day-bloomers don't release their scent until evening.

Build your night garden where it is easily accessible in the evening, or where you spend your time outdoors at night. Diversification in a garden is essential for your landscape to be interesting, have something that blooms in a variety of seasons.

Two "moon plants" are—the moon vine— *Ipomoea alba*; and moon bush, or Angels' trumpet— *Datura meteloides*. Both of these plants are summer bloomers, and won't kick in and grow until the soil is nice and warm. With proper care, once they begin to bloom they will give you a wonderful show all summer long. The morning glory moon vine, *Ipomoea*, is a summer annual. This vining plant produces six inch pure white trumpet-shaped flowers that unfurl in slow motion every night just at sunset. While each flower only lasts a day—or should we say, evening, they remain fragrant well into the evening. Although it produces a prolific vine each year, it doesn't freely reseed itself, so save some seeds for next years' garden.

The *Datura*, or bush moon plant has six-inch white trumpet-shaped blooms that open at night and remain open well into the following day. This plant is a perennial most years, and can reseed as well. Each flower again only lasts a day, but almost every bloom will form a bristly round seed pod. To keep it blooming more freely, pinch off the seed pods until late in the season, when you want to start saving seeds. Keep in mind that all parts of this plant are poisonous.

Another old-fashioned plant for the night garden is one of the flowering tobaccos. *Nicotiana sylvestris* is a large plant. Unlike the common annual flowering tobacco, this plant can grow three to five feet tall, and form a large rosette of foliage. The flowers form in clusters of three inch long trumpets, and are sweetly fragrant in the evening. In milder winters, this plant will be perennial, but don't always count on it—save some seeds.

Don't overlook the *Oenothera*'s. Although these plants come in shades of yellow and pink, they are excellent late afternoon through early morning bloomers. First to bloom is the showy evening primrose, the pink *Oenothera speciose* which can be invasive, followed by the yellow blooms of *Oenothera biennis*. Both are perennial, and may freely reseed in the garden.

Night blooming jasmine is not a showy plant to put in the garden, but once you've gotten a whiff of its night scent, you won't want to miss it. *Cestrum nocturnum* produces greenish-white tubular-shaped flowers. The sweet scent is phenomenal, and it blooms in cycles throughout the summer. There are numerous true jasmines which have fragrance all day, and also have nice white showy flowers which will continue to shine in the night garden. Star jasmine - *Jasminum nitidum*, and pink jasmine - *Jasminum polyanthum* are two good annual choices, while the Confederate jasmine-

*Trachelospermum jasminoides* is an excellent evergreen perennial vine.

Starting in the late afternoon, *Mirabilis jalapa*'s (the common 4 o'clock) two inch trumpet-shaped flowers open, releasing a jasmine-like scent. Although they aren't all white, they give you a mix of colors ranging from pink, rose, white, orange, to yellow. They are easy to establish, and come back for many years to come.

For those who like the truly unusual, consider a houseplant that you move outdoors for the summer. The night blooming cereus is truly the ugly duckling of the plant world. This gangly vining succulent houseplant produce flower buds along the edge of the leaf. It usually takes a little over a week or more before the bud is large enough to open, but once it does—stand back—these flowers are unique and enormous--seven or more inches across. They won't open until the sun is well set, but remain open and fragrant all night.

Your "night" garden need not consist just of night blooming plants, but any light colored bloom which stays open in the evening will blend in well. There are many excellent choices of white blooming or silver foliated plants to choose from. They include bulbs and perennials: candytuft, white Japanese anemones, snowdrops, lily-of-the-valley, ox-eye daisy, Shasta daisy, white bleeding heart, lilies, snow on the mountain Euphorbia, phlox and tuberose with their sweet fragrance. Shrubs include: white or light pink azaleas, white flowering forms of butterfly bush or buddleia, mock orange, Clethra, Itea, 'Annabelle' hydrangea, oakleaf hydrangea, deutzia, gardenia (also highly fragrant), pearl bush—*Exochorda*, spiraea, viburnum, fringe trees—and yes, even white roses. And don't overlook the annuals, with white flowering forms of begonias, cosmos, dianthus, impatiens, lantana, sweet alyssum, verbena, and zinnia. White or silver foliated plants include dusty miller, artemisia, silver or white hosta and heuchera, lambs ear and lamium. You have a wide range of plants to choose from, so explore your options.

Even if you have ample time to enjoy your garden during the day, why not extend your viewing pleasures. Besides the fact that you often have more time to sit and enjoy your night garden, the temperatures are usually cooler as well. Consider comfortable seating near your garden, and possibly add some extra lighting—for when the moonlight isn't available.