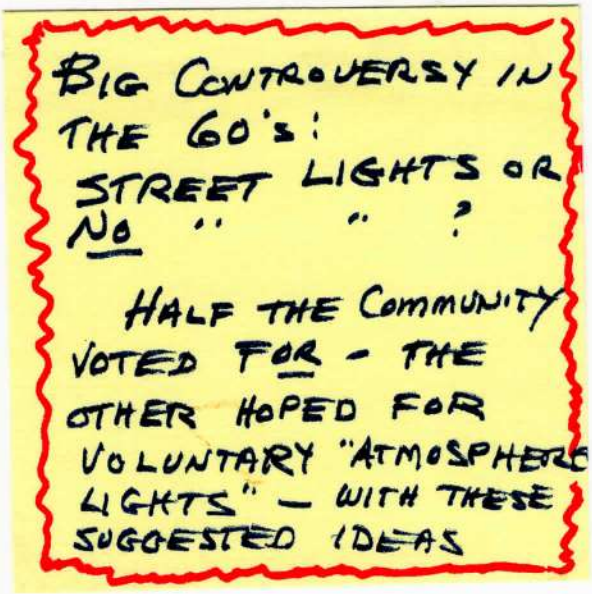

BIG CONTROVERSY IN THE 60's:
STREET LIGHTS OR
No " " ?
HALF THE COMMUNITY VOTED FOR - THE OTHER HOPED FOR VOLUNTARY "ATMOSPHERE LIGHTS" - WITH THESE SUGGESTED IDEAS

MAY '68

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GLOW?

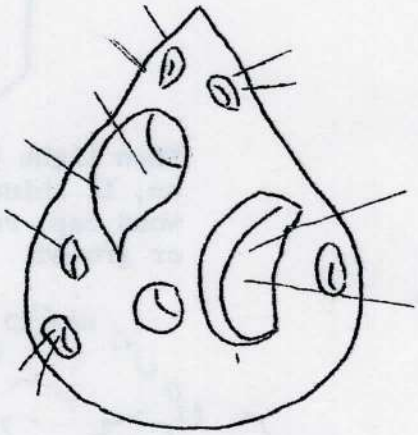
FLORENCE STRICKLER (with influence of JIM FREEHOF, ARCHITECT, CHM OF HRA CA OUTDOOR LIGHTING PROJECT

How does your garden glow...at night? You are the proud possessor of a lovely landscaped yard and a warm and welcoming home that after sundown every night acquires all the visual appeal of the Black Hole of Calcutta? But you don't like a street light shining in your bedroom windows all night. You like the country-like atmosphere of Holmes Run Acres. You believe bright lights are unattractive but that soft lights enhance beauty. And you're weary of the polls taken the past twelve years about the desirability of street lights...and would like some action?

By now you probably have been part of a discussion group headed by Jim Freehof, Chairman of the Civic Association's Outdoor Lighting project. As is usually true when Holmes Runners have a community problem to solve... the ideas projected are worthy of thought and promotions. You're Where The Action Is!

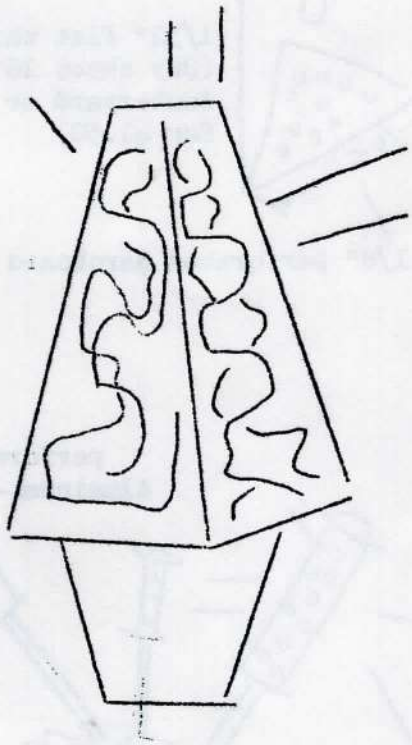
Now that spring is here officially, many of us are ready to get down to planning seriously about "beautifying" our yards and houses. We hereby present some ideas. If accepted and you find some that will give you inspiration...good! If not...well that's one of the nice things about Holmes Run Acres. We'll still like you and your yard anyway!

The artists and do-it-yourselfers will make easy and pleasant work of a project. They won't need advice and help, probably. All the rest of us "betweeners" and/or unimaginative all-thumbers....HELP! We'll start with the pretties first...then tell you how you can use a low-voltage setup to get the effect!

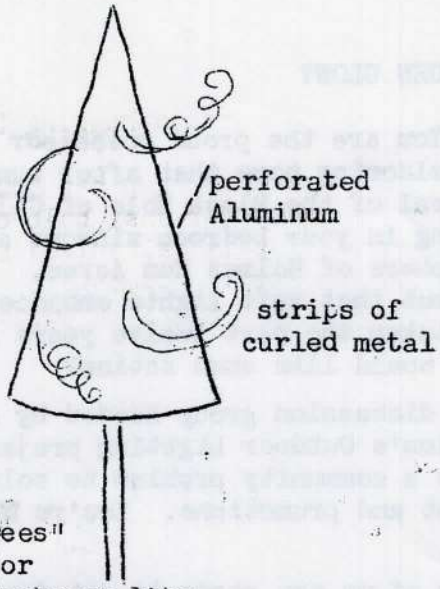


Pinch Pottery

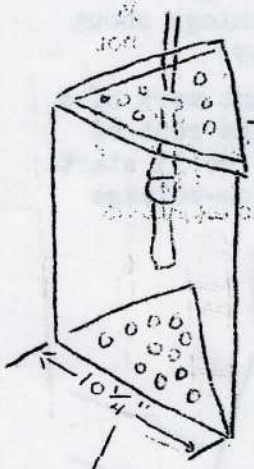
(Florence Strickler has instructions for this -- Will loan)



Design on welded shade was done with a cutting torch. Material is wrought iron.



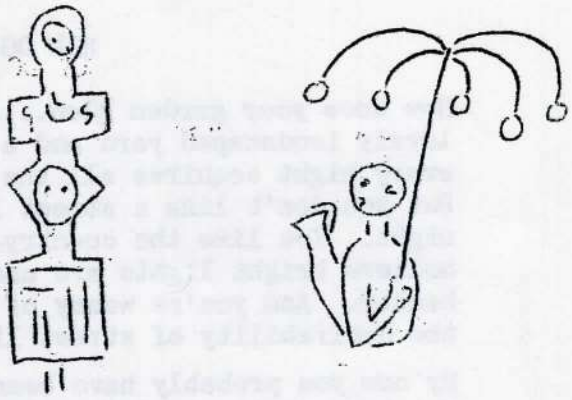
"Trees"
(or
make mushroom-like
designs)



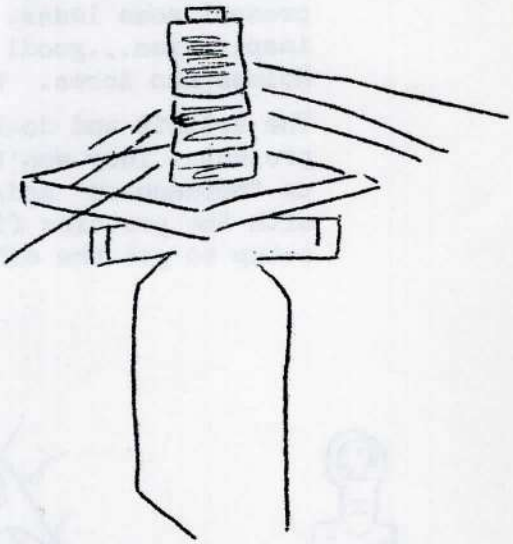
--$\frac{1}{4}$" x $\frac{1}{4}$" wood strips
2 nuts on threaded extension
tube.

1/32" flat white fiberglass
(Buy sheet 18" x 30 3/4" at
lumberyard or hardware store
for $1.50)

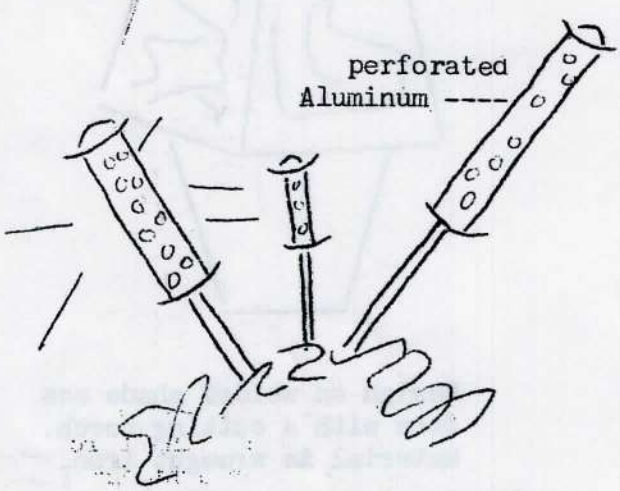
1/8" perforated hardboard



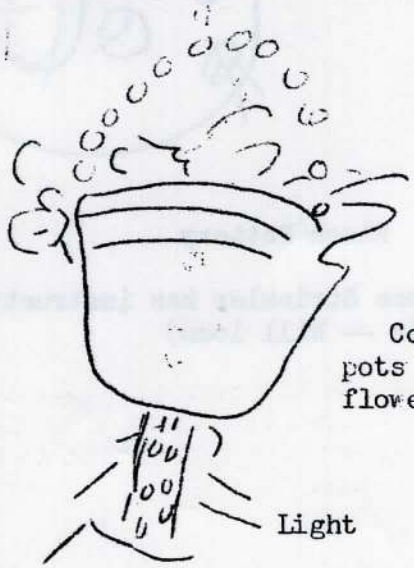
Large-scale hangings (metal, ceramic or wood) on house, backstops, or treets... shine arc-light on it...or go to a garden store (botique! in Georgetown or Alexandria) or nursery.



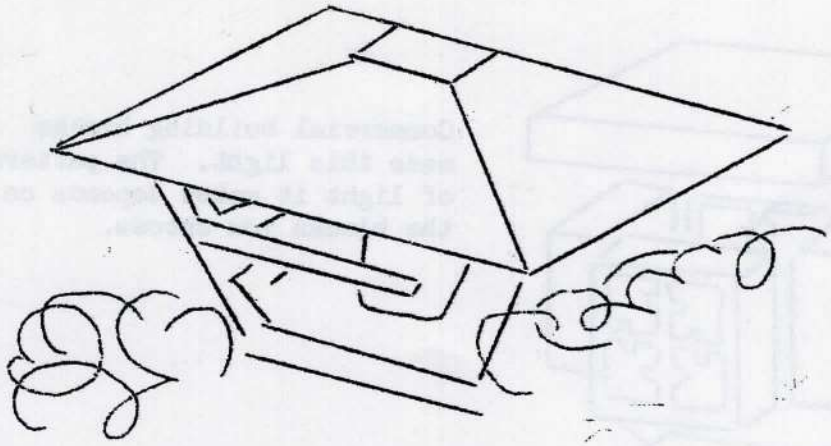
When light (in flue tile) is on, it shines up against flat wood cap, reflects across steps or ground.



All "heights" tubes in ground.
(Could also be square-shaped and use plastic, colored glass or fiberglass shades.)

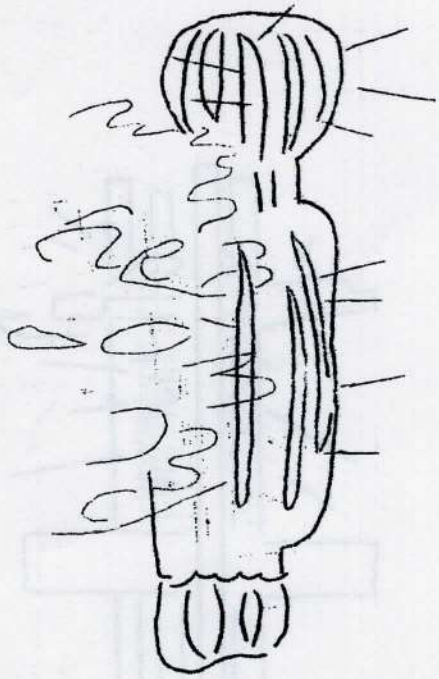


Colorful ceramic pots -- fill with flowers or plants

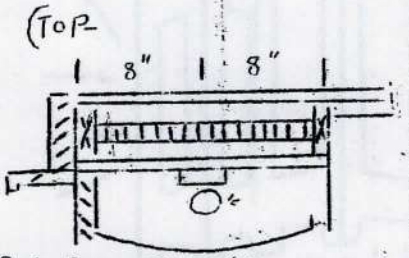


Ground-hugging Lamp

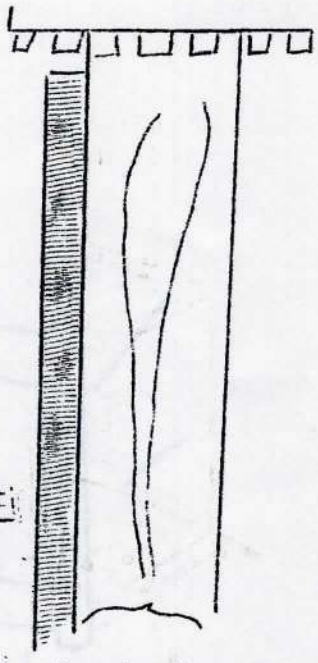
Welded lamp has hole in its top for easy bulb changing. Top is galvanized and won't rust; bottom part has rusted to a handsome burnished red.



Made of fire-glazed clay, this lamp looks the same as it did years ago when first crafted.



Cut from 2" x 6" runs from deck to soffit.

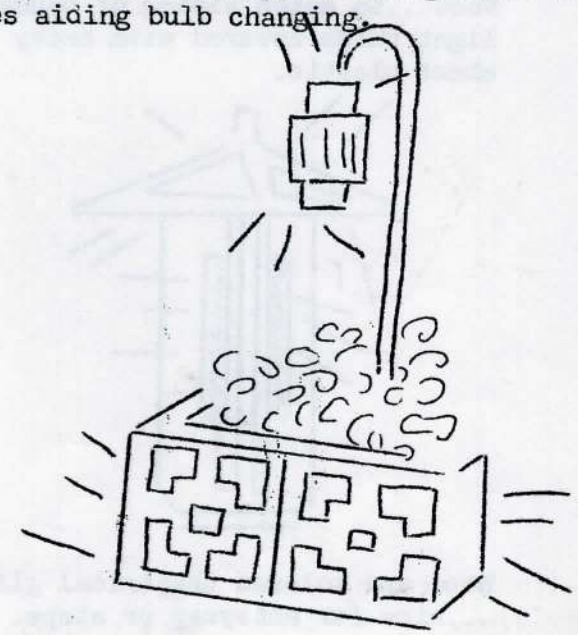


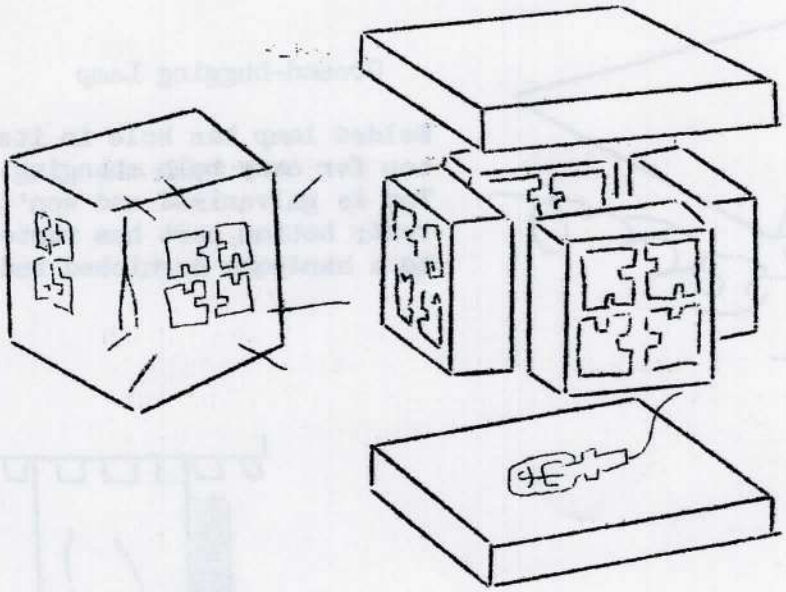
Panel of translucent plastic or glass.

Plastic is bowed, snapped into grooves in frames aiding bulb changing.

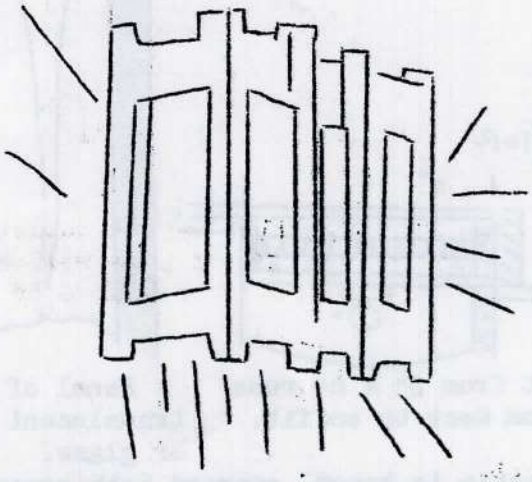
Lights Inside

Commercial blocks with 41-inch high fixture (choose your own at electrical company or make one) attaches to a spike base.

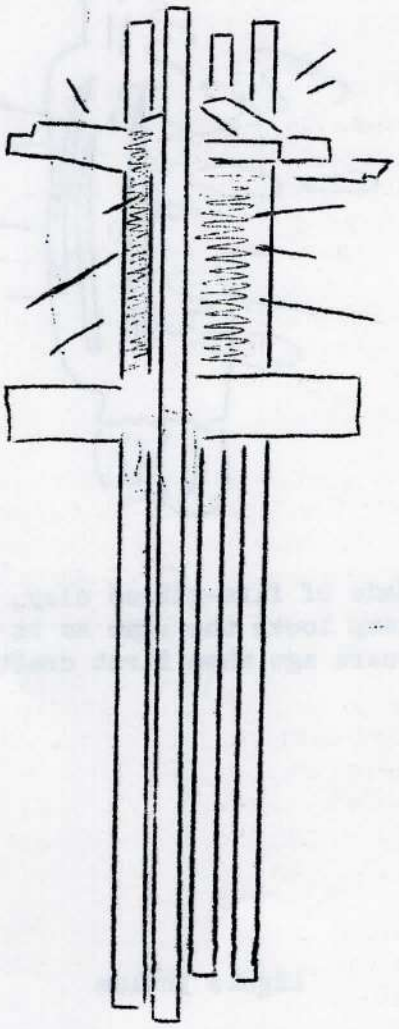




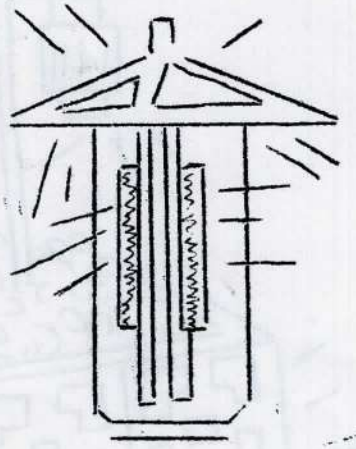
Commercial building blocks made this light. The pattern of light it makes depends on the blocks you choose.



Wood...to match siding of house... light bulbs covered with heavy sheet plastic.



Light "tower" of metal and wood serves both walk and drive.



Wood and colored theatrical glass ...nice for entryway or steps.

LOW VOLTAGE:

Low voltage outdoor lighting is safe and cheaper than other conventional systems. It is a system which uses a transformer to step down normal house power of 115-120 volts to 12 volts on one or more lighting circuits. That 12 volts is the same non-hazardous voltage used to run children's electric trains. Manufacturers claim several advantages for it over conventional lighting methods. For one thing, the voltage is low enough that it is safe for anyone to install; that the voltage is low enough that portable, outdoor systems can be installed outside without the use of protective underground conduits...although other permanent installations also can be buried with a minimum of fuss.

With a portable outdoor system the homeowner can vary his lighting setup as often as the spirit moves him.

The initial outlay for a typical system...including transformer, five fixtures and 100 feet of wiring...runs about $80.00.

If you want to know more about low voltage lighting, consult your local garden supply store, electrical goods retailer or department store. It is not difficult to "do-it-yourself." The following instructions the writer had tucked away in a file marked "Garden." They were taken from a magazine article. You may want to go to the library for same or hire or consult with an electrician, or some good neighbor!

An installation consists of two parts. First you connect a 12-volt outlet in any location that's convenient. Second, you run the low-voltage wiring out from the transformer to low-voltage light fixtures you have bought or made.

It's best to choose a transformer of about 100-watt capacity for your garden and patio...so you can run 6 to 10 lights (depending on size) from it. If you have a large lot, you may want to have a second garden transformer on the front side of the house, perhaps smaller for two or three lights. Avoid using doorbell transformers; most of them are made only for intermittent use.

Try to install each transformer at some central location so two or more short cords can run from it to your lights, rather than one lengthy cord (there is more line-loss of current at 12 volts than at 120 volts). With the two-wire No. 12 cord generally used on low voltage garden lighting, a run should not exceed 100 feet. If it needs to be longer, use heavier cord.

You can install a transformer several ways. The simplest is to obtain one with a weatherproof case and plug-in cord, and just plug to a convenient outlet on the patio, house interior, or in the garage...as if it were a lamp.

If the outlet you choose is not controlled by a switch inside the house, you can use a transformer with a built-in switch. But this means that you will have to step outdoors to turn the lights on and off at the transformer, so it is usually better to rewire that outlet for a switch indoors. If you are not familiar with house wiring, have an electrician do this small job. He may run 120-volt wiring back indoors to a switch. Or, he may place a low voltage switching relay at the outlet, and run door-bell wiring back to a switch.

There's still another answer to an unswitched outlet: automatic switching. You can buy 1-v garden light transformers today with built-in timers that automatically turn the garden lights on and off at any desired hour each evening. Or you can include a photo-electric switch at the outlet that will turn the lights on at sundown and off at dawn. With either, the efficient 1-v lights use so little current that the expense of their being on for some extra hours is negligible.

If there is a convenient "dry" location inside the house, you can wire in a low-cost transformer (about $15.00 for 100 watt size). This usually requires a wiring permit; a weatherproof garden transformer with plug-in cord does not.

When you first install a 100-watt transformer, it may produce a noticeable hum. After a few weeks, it "wears in" and the hum disappears or greatly diminishes.

The Low Voltage Wiring:

The 12-volt cables running from the transformer to your garden lights are usually a "zipcord" type, similar in appearance to the cord for an electric toaster, only slightly heavier (two #12 wires) and with more weatherproof insulation.

You can simply bury these cords in the ground (in fact, it's best, as they are then protected from the sun). Place them 6 inches deep where possible, and try to run them alongside walks, fences, planter-bed edgings, and water lines, so you will not did them up when cultivating.

Where a cord needs to cross a lawn, simply cut a slit-type trench, wedging it open with your shovel. Push the wire down into it and then tamp the turf back in place.

As shown in the drawing, you can connect your garden lights along the main cords (some fixtures simply snap on), or you can run stub lines to different fixtures. The latter is preferable when you wish to install a fixture up on a fence or above an entryway, because you do not need to run the stub line further to other lights and it can be a small cord, even the #18 zipcord used on table lamps. You can hide this cord quite easily along wood and masonry joints, and along moldings.

For a fixture in a tree, just staple a cord up the back side of the trunk. Attach it losely to allow for the tree's growth.

You can connect a stub line to a main cord with soldered joints, or screw-on or crimp-on connectors. With the latter two, coat the finished connections with any rubber seam compound....not for shock protection, but to prevent fertilizers and the like from corroding the connections.

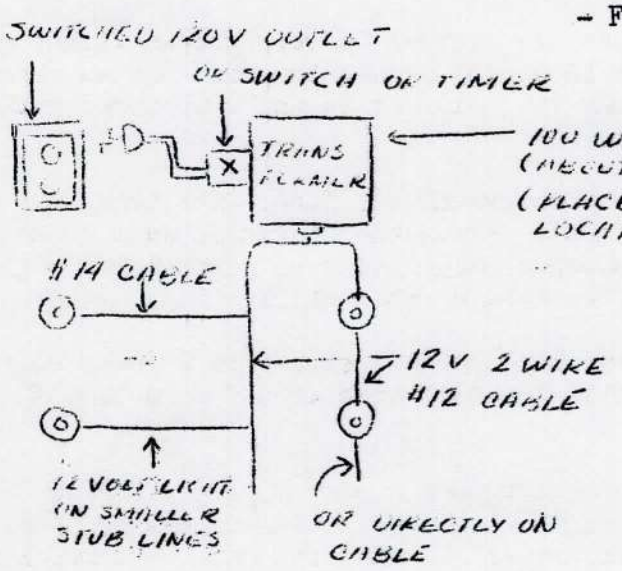
When you stake a light fixture in the ground (rather than attaching it to a wall or other structure) bury at least a foot of slack cord alongside it to provide for future adjustments of the fixture as the plantings around it grow.

Your Own Fixtures:

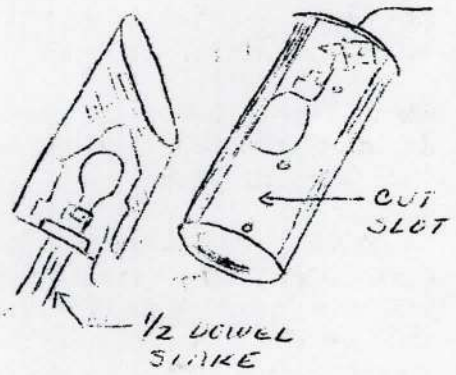
Making your own light fixtures from some wood, masonry, ceramic or metal item on hand is quite simple with one of the 1-v sockets shown in the photographs. Experiment with the light at night and then attach it permanently with screws, bolts or epoxy glue.

Very adaptable for 1-v fixtures are the small aluminum cans in which some brands of beer are sold today. Those rustproof cans can be used to add small lights in dark corners of the garden to supplement your other lights.

- Florence Strickler



SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM FOR 1-V GARDEN LIGHTING



LIGHTS FROM BEVERAGE CANS

1 Feb. 1971

To: President, HRACA

From: Chairman, Lighting Committee

Subject: Interim Report on Lighting Survey

Response:

To date 61% (216/352) of Holmes Run Acres residents have responded to the lighting questionnaire. A 75-80% response is anticipated when collection is completed on Gallows Road, Sycamore Drive, Little John, Gaddy and Marian Courts and lower Holmes Run Drive.

Street Lights:

Of this number, 25% (54/216) favor county mercury vapor lights, while only 9% (20/216) would favor a private street lighting system.

Private Lights:

24.5% (53/216) of residents indicated willingness to cooperate on an acres wide private lighting plan. Surprisingly, 17.5% (37/216) felt that no more lighting of any sort is needed in the Acres. The remaining 24% either did not respond to this question or indicated that they would "do their own thing".

Crime & Accidents:

12% (26/216) of homes responding indicated incidents of crime, generally vandalism and theft of car parts. 2% (5/216) reported auto accidents, 2 of which lack of lighting could be considered a factor.

Relative Concern:

49% of the responses indicated relative unconcern to the threat of crime and vandalism in HRA. 37.5% indicated greater concern; 31.5% serious and 6.5% extreme. 10.5% stated no concern at all.

> ---- smithdaveviv@cox.net wrote:
> > A few notes on the history of lighting in the Acres: In the 1960's, it was a big issue. The county would provide street lights if residents requested them One half of the Acres voted to have street lights, the other half decided to go the "artsy" way, with individuals encouraged to do their own creative yard lighting. The May 1968 "Holmes Runner" carried a lengthy feature (mimeographed, of course, with stylus-drawn illustrations) giving numerous lighting ideas. However, since many people never got around to implementing the ideas, that's why one half of the Acres is darker than the other side. People frequently ask about this difference - that's the answer! - Vivian Smith, neighborhood historian
> >

LIST SERV - 2012

----- Original Message -----
From: amanda Ulmen
To: smithdaveviv@cox.net , cmorton9@cox.net , hkfuller@juno.com
Cc: pgillis@cox.net , hralistserv@googlegroups.com , solarelectrics@msn.com
Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2011 9:06 AM
Subject: RE. [hralistserv]History of lighting in HRA & Landscape lighting recommendations?

Vivian- is there any way to get the May 1968 feature scanned? As the neighborhoods turn over, the new people might want to implement these original lighting designs.

I had no idea this was out there- thanks for your input!!!

Amanda Ulmen
7603 Westminister

> Date: Sat, 18 Jun 2011 19:17:47 -0400
> From smithdaveviv@cox.net
> To: cmorton9@cox.net; hkfuller@juno.com; smithdaveviv@cox.net
> Subject: Re: [hralistserv]History of lighting in HRA & Landscape lighting recommendations?
> CC: pgillis@cox.net; hralistserv@googlegroups.com, solarelectrics@msn.com
>

LIST SERV - 2012

I was president of the Civic Association when the power company started installing on our streets those "Buchenwald-type" street lights, designed for roads with 55 mph speed limit. We had seen what nice residential street lights then were being installed in the new town of Reston and--to no avails--tried to negotiate with the

From: Laura Wright <lwright@cal.org>
Subject: **[hralistserv] post lights follow up**
Date: October 9, 2013 9.18:16 PM EDT
To: "hralistserv@googlegroups.com" <hralistserv@googlegroups.com>

Hi, all,

As a follow up to my earlier message about installing post lights, I've heard back from a handful of people (some replied just to me). Most people focused on the security benefits as opposed to the architectural aspect. There is a general sense that increasing the amount of light could make homes safer and in turn, the neighborhood would also feel a bit safer for people walking in the evening.

There were a couple of people who thought that this could be a neighborhood effort-- either to "light up the Acres" (a more ecclectic approach to increasing the overall lighting people have)-- or to get a discount on materials and labor (more focused on post lights), but I don't know that there's enough interest to suggest that we have enough momentum.

There have been some helpful suggestions. I think most of these have been mentioned before, but here are the suggestions:

-add motion detector lights. These seem to be the most cost effective solution to increasing light around our houses and they are what the police recommend as a crime deterrent.
-post lights can also have motion detectors to minimize the energy needed to keep them lit at night
-consider landscaping lights as a way to light up a yard in a minimalistic sort of way
-keep your porch light, side light, etc on at night

As an aside, it sounded like a few people might consider post lights, but would want a different kind of fixture. Sites like Bellacor and Lamps Plus have great search options-- you can look for a fixture in many styles (contemporary,

mission, traditional) and different finishes (chrome, nickel, antique brass, etc). It only takes a few minutes and the search engine will find numerous options for you to choose from. Their options can be quite expensive, though.

Best,
Laura Wright
Little John Ct.

p.s. and, if by chance, you are wondering about street lights, Fairfax County does not install them by request any more. There is an online process for petitioning for street lights, but that process is not

Comments on Listserv about lighting included:

A concern about artificial light affecting migrating birds; there are fixtures designed to block light from going skyward.

A suggestion to explore solar lights, and have a campaign called "Light Up the Acres."

A reference to Amazon.com, where for less than $20, a device can be secured to make a pole light come on at sundown for 3 hours, then switch to a motion detector light.

Two people said they prefer no lights, they like it dark (though one said he would not object to motion detectors).

I don't know how many personal responses Laura got, or what they said (though we mentioned that when the copper thieves took most of the pole wires near us, our pole was spared, and we think it was perhaps because we have motion detector lights in the driveway.)

Vivian Arnold