



By Alli Rael, LC/DBM

Installing the lighting at a four acre estate in La Jolla, Calif., is no easy feat on its own. Add in a flair for dramatic lighting and an ever-changing plant palette, and the task becomes daunting.

The lighting was originally put in place about 15 years ago, but Mike Geier of LightScape Designs came to the project five years after the initial installation. Within the first three weeks of work, a crew of five updated the aging, deteriorating fixtures to give new life to the lights and the landscape. They installed over 300 LED fixtures, including well lights installed in the lawn, first generation bollards along pathways, tree mounted downlights, high-powered spotlights, and more.

### Changing Things Up

It could be said that the only constant on this property is change. The homeowner is a plant aficionado, who is very involved in the landscaping. He regularly imports different plants from around the world to be showcased.

Of course, when new plants are brought in, oth-

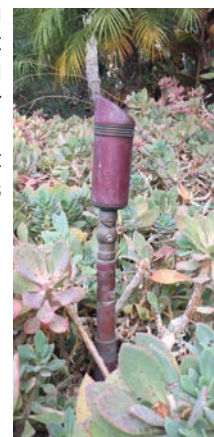
ers must be removed or relocated to make room for them. Anytime this happens, the lighting has to change. To make room for all those plants, the homeowner recently expanded, adding a full acre to the property. With more land, the lighting had to be redesigned and moved.

To accommodate the constant changes, the LightScape team comes in a few days a year to make adjustments and maintain the fixtures. In fact, the biggest challenge on the property, says Geier, is the fact that it's constantly evolving, and because of that, it will never be finished.

### Focal Points

At the front of the home, ten Meridian wall lights highlight the stairs and walls around the entrance. Ten integrated LED spotlights bring out the smaller ferns and robellini palm trees in planters and the driveway. Fifty telescoping risers are attached to spotlights in planters around the property, which can be adjusted to accommodate plant growth and seasonal plantings. The backyard pergola is illumi-

**Above:** The owner of this estate in La Jolla, Calif., regularly imports new plants from around the world. He needed the right lighting to properly showcase his ever-changing landscape: that's where Mike Geier of LightScape Designs, San Diego, Calif., came in. Overall, more than 300 landscape lighting fixtures were installed across the multi-acre property. Some of the planters have spotlights installed on telescoping risers (right) that can be adjusted for plant growth or seasonal plantings. The pergola is lit with ten mini LEDs used as downlights.








nated with ten Cyclops mini integrated LEDs. First generation bollards, which the manufacturer no longer produces, line the paths throughout the yard.

The primary focus, however, is the trees. Twenty high-power Sitka spotlights illuminate the large sycamores and Canary palms located around the property. Six Telluride integrated LEDs, each 12 watts, were installed on the large ficus. Twenty well lights further illuminate the trees from their position in the lawn: here, they can be mowed around without affecting the adjustment on the fixtures. Thirty tree-mounted downlights with various wattages and beam spreads were placed on the large sycamore in the center of the driveway, as well as on various other trees on the property and in the rose garden.

Finally, about 150 spotlights with 3 to 8 watt ranges were placed all over the property to highlight everything from small plants to large queen palms.

Following the constantly changing landscape, the next biggest challenge in maintaining the lights is keeping the lighting of the entryway and the sycamore tree as beautiful and dramatic as the owner would like it to be. The LightScape crew needed a lift to install those lights initially, and they sometimes bring one in for their scheduled maintenance.

With a landscape as grand and flexible as this, the homeowner's pride and desire to show it off are rightly placed. Though the lighting is never finished, Geier and his team at LightScape Designs continue to meet the owner's standards: clearly, they are the right team for the job. 

**Top:** LightScape Designs originally took on this client about ten years ago to upgrade the deteriorating lighting that had been installed about five years prior. Over the course of three weeks, a team of five replaced much of the old lighting with LEDs. The homeowner specifically requested that the trees be a focal point; LightScape installed spotlights, well lights, and downlights in and around the dozens of trees on site to illuminate them, with the help of a lift where necessary.

**Bottom:** Change is a constant on this property – and a constant challenge. Beyond that, the main difficulty was illuminating the sycamore trees in the center of the driveway to the owner's specifications. Sitka spotlights, tree-mounted downlights, and well lights with drop in LED bulbs all play a part in making the trees stand out. A team of three from LightScape regularly goes to the property to perform maintenance on the lighting and to update the design based on the owner's latest plant and decor acquisitions. Since the landscape is always changing, so is the lighting: it will never be truly finished.