

Get a Big Fall Payoff by Installing Lighting Cable During Irrigation Setup

The garden plan is complete. You've attended to every detail: the plants, the hardscape, the irrigation. Once the landscape plan is built, and the plants are established, you'll think about how to light them. Makes sense, right?

Well, yes and no.

The time to lay the low voltage cable is when the yard excavations are open, before the hardscapes are built. Usually this is during irrigation system installation. The cable that low-voltage lighting systems require is suitable for direct burial along with the pipe or tubing used in irrigation.

Although you may not know exactly what kind of lamps you need and what fixtures you want, it is likely that you know what garden features and areas you will want to light.

There are many reasons to install lighting cable and irrigation systems simultaneously.

Saves money and labor. The most difficult part of lighting installation is usually the work associated with burying the cable. It's costly and unpleasant to dig a trench and fill it up and then dig it up again. This isn't the Army.

Saves your plants. Putting the cable in with the irrigation system lets the plants' roots remain undisturbed during lighting installation.

Saves on maintenance. It is inevitable that during the life of the garden, digging, weeding, and replanting will damage either the lighting or irrigation systems. It's so easy for a hoe or a shovel to cut through drip irrigation tubing or low voltage cable without the gardener even necessarily being aware of it. The two together offer more formidable resistance to this threat. When that inevitable slice in the cable knocks out a few fixtures, it's not tricky to find the cut when it is installed with the irrigation lines. Simply turn on the irrigation system and look



for the water geyser or pool and you'll know where you need to repair.

Installation Tips

Consult the landscape plan and visit the installation site. Look for the areas that will require light for safe movement along stairs and paths. Then identify garden features such as specimen plants, fountains, sculptures, or other focal points that would benefit from light during the darker fall and winter season.

Use an overlay of the irrigation plan or see where the open trenches offer an opportunity to bury cable with pipe or tubing.

Identify the likely location of the transformer and fixtures. Take measurements and careful notes to estimate the distance from transformer to fixtures. Bring your notes, and have the expert staff at the Urban Farmer Store help you specify how many cable runs and what kind of cable you will need.

When it comes time to do the final lighting design, the garden will have key areas all ready for wiring to a low voltage transformer and fixtures.

Products and Services

Several inexpensive or free products and services will make this simultaneous installation go more smoothly and offer more professional results. First, you will need to include the cost of the **low voltage cable** and several other items, listed below, in your irrigation budget.

Both cut-off ends of each cable run will need to be protected with **silicone gel filled wire nuts** to protect the copper wire inside the cable from corroding before the ends are connected to the transformer and fixtures.

Equalizer hubs from Unique Lighting make it easy to connect up to five fixtures to one waterproof wiring block. It is key to centrally locate the equalizer hub in an area that will feature several lights. Each cable run from the transformer can terminate into an equalizer hub for future use and can help with adjusting for voltage drop, if needed.

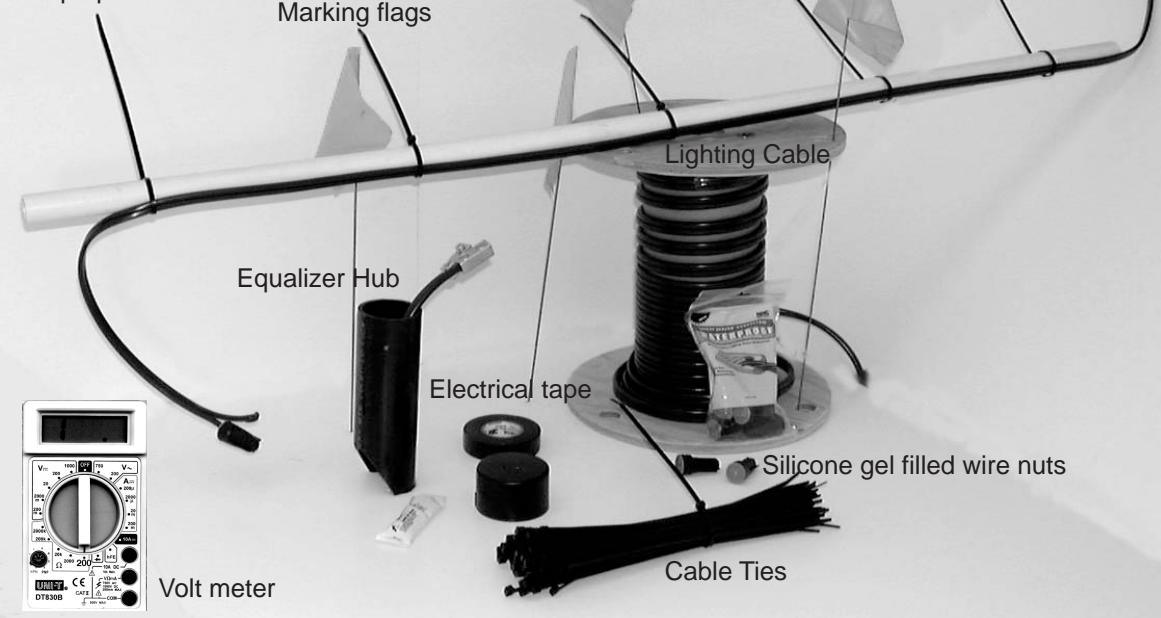
Use our heavy duty **cable ties** to secure the lighting cable to the irrigation piping or tubing. If it is hard piping such as galvanized, copper, or PVC, make sure to attach the lighting cable **under** the pipe. The hard pipe will then protect the cable from shovel and pick strikes from above. If it's flexible drip tubing, the wiring can be run alongside.

Use temporary **marking flags** to identify the desired location of future lighting fixtures or the actual location of pipe and cable runs that can alert plant installers to their location and avoid damage.

It's more practical to do the lighting design and adjustments in the shorter, darker, days of fall, using one of the Urban Farmer Store's **free overnight loaner lighting kits**. You can then experiment using a variety of fixtures and lamp types to achieve the exact lighting effect you want, and not have to be on the jobsite after bed-time.

Products used in low-voltage lighting installation

Use cable ties to tie low voltage lighting cable under pipe.
Pipe protects cable.



Our free overnight loaner lighting kits make it easy to experiment with different lighting designs to achieve the effects you want in the garden.



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