

## Some Tips for Great Flower Photography

**Use the right light setting.** One of the first things to do with digital photography is to make sure you are using the correct white balance settings. If your camera has the option, I recommend that you use the manual white balance function. If not, then use whatever setting is appropriate for the lighting you are shooting with.

**Get a polarizer filter.** The great thing about a polarizer is that it will eliminate or reduce image degrading reflections. This helps to improve color saturation and contrast. At the proper angle it will also dramatically darken a blue sky. This effect is adjusted by rotating the filter until the desired effect is achieved. There are 2 types of polarizer's available, circular and linear. Most of the advanced metering systems today that are built into your camera will not function properly with a linear polarizer. So I suggest you get a circular polarizer to play it safe. I have also seen warming polarizer's.

**Always use a tripod.** Not only will a tripod steady your camera and help you achieve a much sharper image, but it will also force you to think about your composition. You will have to place the flowers in your photographic image much more deliberately instead of just pointing your camera and shooting away.

**Don't just take a snapshot** of a flower that interests you and then move on. Set up your first shot to include the whole flower then concentrate on the details of the flower that attract your eye. Focus on the color or small details of the flower.



**Control your depth of field.** Depth of field is a way of describing how much of a photo is in focus (from front to back of a scene). In this photo the daffodil in the foreground is in crisp focus and those behind blur into the distance. This **crisp foreground and blurred background** helps the lone daffodil at the front to stand out in the scene. To do this you have to set the aperture on your camera to it's smallest number (the number will usually be preceded by the letter *f*, and the numbers are called *f-stops*). Once you have set your aperture, focus on the flower in the foreground. Then hold your shutter button down half-way (to lock the focus) and then reframe the scene. Here, I reframed the scene to ensure the in-focus daffodil was to the right of my shot

**Look for the unusual.** Some examples would be snow or ice on a flower, a flower growing out of concrete or even a dead flower that has an interesting look.

**Don't put your camera away just because it's cloudy** or looks like a storm is coming. Colors really pop at this time and you can get some amazing photographs in these conditions. I have even photographed in rainy and foggy weather with great results. Be sure to use a tripod and keep your gear dry.

**On a bluebird sunny day,** soften the harsh contrasty light by placing a diffusion screen between the flower you are photographing and the sun. You can purchase a portable diffusion screen or use something you have on hand. You can completely block the sun and put your flower in shade, then redirect some light back on the flower with a reflector. This reflector can be a commercially made reflector or just something reflective like a white T-shirt or a piece of foam core. Another photographic technique would be to use fill flash. If your camera has an automatic fill flash function then give it a try. Experiment with the lighting ratio if your

camera will let you change the flash output. I find reflectors to be a better option than fill flash most of the time.

**Photograph your flowers from different angles.** Shoot straight down, from the side or from underneath. **Lie or kneel right down low** so that you are at the same level as the blooms. Then, pick one, just one, flower that will be the focus of your attention. Once you have your flower - be patient. The problem is that, because these flowers are outside, they tend to move in the wind. The solution to this is to wait for a calm spot, and focus on the flower.

**Photograph the flower with dew** or mist it with a water bottle. Drops of dew and water drops are delightful and visually refreshing.

**Don't get too close.** Unless you have a macro lens for your camera, the closer you get to the flowers, the percentage of having distortions and blurry pictures goes up. Take six or more images of each flower (from different angles). Try some with the flash on and others with it off. Also, try to leave a natural green frame around the flower. The greenery sets off the flower's color.

**Use software to do some post processing.** Crop the photo if it needs it. Increase the contrast to make the colors appear more saturated. Increase the saturation if the colors are a little weak. Sharpen the photo, if necessary.

Sources:

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