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Tips for Better Flower Photography

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Flowers are naturally beautiful, and easy to find in the warmer months of the year, and so make a great subject for a photo. This article covers the top tips to get great photos when photographing flowers in their natural surroundings.



Photo by [Wade Brooks](#)

Choose interesting angles

If you want your flower photos to stand out from the crowd, try taking photos from unusual angles, such as looking up.

Generally when taking natural flower photos, you will want to take the photo at slightly above eye level with the flower, ensuring that the centre of the flower can be seen. This will mean crouching down, or for smaller flowers getting the camera right down at ground level.

When photographing flowers at ground level you may need to flatten or remove blades of grass or leaves that would otherwise be in the way between the camera and the flower.

Use natural light and a tripod if needed

For taking photos of flowers in their natural environment you will be best using natural light, and not flash. Natural light will generally give less harsh shadows, and should also ensure that the background behind the flower is lit well.

The best time of the day for photographing flowers is early morning or late afternoon, where the light will be warmer and less harsh than it gets later in the day. The wind is also generally lower at the start and end of the day, meaning you are less likely to get the flower blowing about while you try and take photos of it.

Depending on how well your flower is lit (e.g. if you're shooting a bluebell in woodland then it's probably relatively dark), then you may need to use a tripod to stabilise the camera. When placing the tripod try to be careful not to squash other nearby flowers and not to knock the flower you are wanting to photograph. You don't want to find the perfect flower and then knock all its petals off while trying to position your tripod!

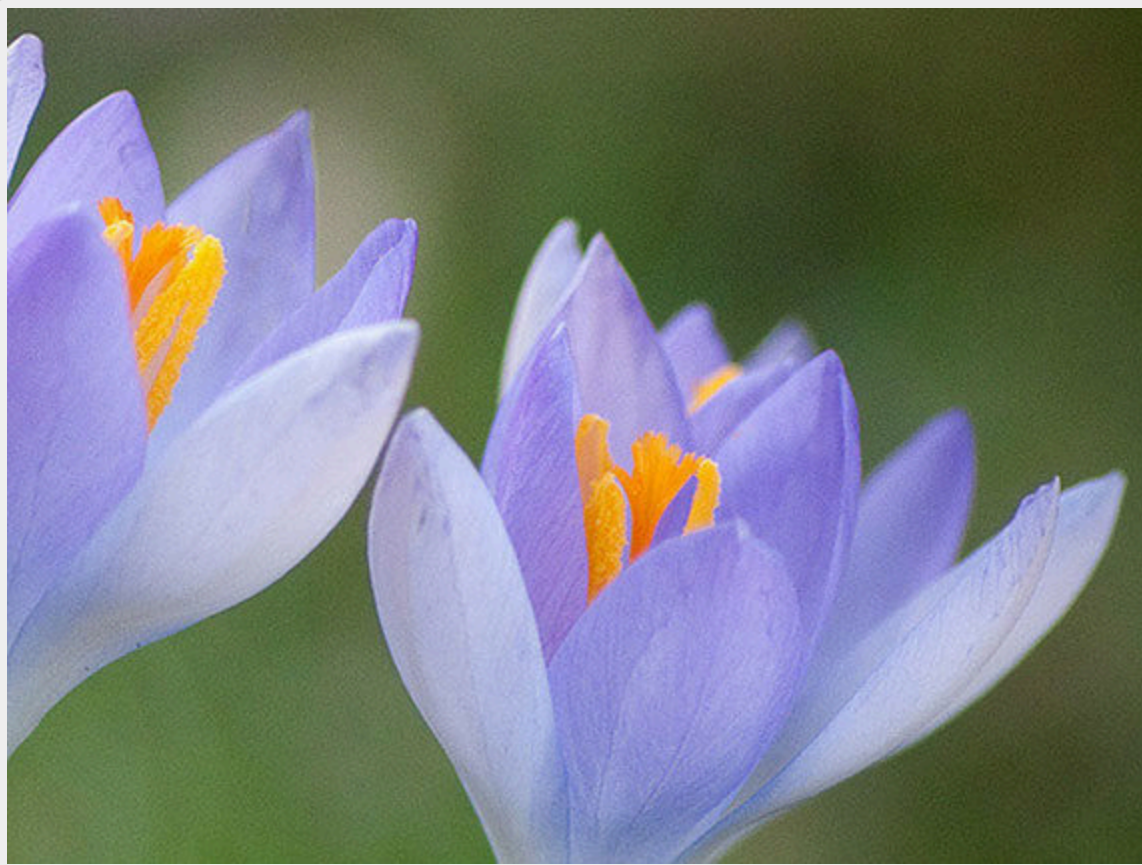


Photo by [Old Stone Photography](#)

For taking photos of flowers during the daytime, try shooting when there is hazy cloud, as the cloud helps diffuse the sunlight. This makes the shadows less harsh and produces a more pleasing photo.

Use a diffuser to diffuse harsh light

If you're trying to photograph a flower under bright daylight, you can use a diffuser to soften the light, and reduce harsh shadows / highlights on the flower. A diffuser is just a thin piece of material or paper that spreads harsh direct light out over a larger area.

You can buy commercially produced diffusers, or make your own. You need some white translucent material, like a plastic bag, tissue paper, or an old T-shirt. Stretch the material over a frame (an old coat hanger bent into a diamond shape works well), and attach it securely.

When photographing the flower, hold the diffuser between the sun and the flower. You should immediately see the reduction in harsh shadows and highlights on the flower.

Landscape style flower photography

When you find a large area covered with flowers, you'll probably want to take a photo of the whole scene. The same rules as standard landscape photography apply here. Try and include some foreground, middle-ground, and background to create a sense of depth and scale. Try and use leading lines and the rule of thirds when composing the photo too.

If it is windy, make sure you set the camera to use a fast enough shutter speed to avoid the flowers coming out blurry.

Dew covered petals

Flowers covered in early morning dew make an attractive photo, but if you missed the early morning, or there wasn't any dew, you can create your own. If you have a misting bottle or spray bottle, you can use this to create a false dew on the flower.

Flowers are a popular subject for photographs, but how can you take good photos that really show off the beauty of a flower? Continuing on from part 1, this article covers several more tips to help you take amazing flower photos. The tips cover photographing flowers in their natural surroundings, rather than photographing flowers in a vase or a flower arrangement, which is quite a different affair.

Use a reflector or flash to fill in shadows and help light the flower

If you are photographing a flower where the front of the flower isn't directly lit by sunlight, you can use a reflector or a small amount of fill-flash to help light the flower. You can purchase commercially made reflectors, or make your own by sticking a large sheet of kitchen foil to a piece of cardboard.

Place the reflector so that it reflects light back onto the flower. As well as helping to light the flower, since the light will be reflected from a different direction to the main light, it can help fill in harsh shadows on the flower.

As an alternative to a reflector, or in addition, you may also consider using fill-flash to help light the flower and fill in dark shadows. Make sure you have your flash set at low power, as you only want the flash to contribute a small amount of light to the scene, not become the main light source.

Get in close

If your camera has a macro mode, or you have a DSLR with a macro lens, try getting in close and filling the frame with the flower. And then try getting even closer to isolate just part of the flower. You can find some great abstract compositions when focusing on only a very small part of a flower.

When taking close-ups or macro photographs of flowers, you may need to use flash or long shutter speeds to illuminate the flower. At these very close distances, flash will usually appear relatively soft, and more like natural light.

Prevent the wind from ruining your photo

A big problem when taking photos of flowers is that they blow about in the wind. This can cause problems in composing your photo if the flower is constantly moving about. And it will also result in a blurry photo if your shutter speed is not high enough to freeze the motion of the flower.

One thing you can do is to set up a wind break between the flower and the wind. You don't need to lug a full size wind break around with you though. If you have a tripod and diffuser or reflector with you, you can place the tripod between the flower and the wind, and then rest the diffuser or reflector up against the tripod's legs. So long as you're not photographing a tall flower, this should act as a decent windbreak.

Another thing you can do is to secure the flower using an accessory known as a clamp (short for plant clamp). This is a small bendable arm with clamps on both ends. One end clamps to your tripod leg, and the other end clamps onto the flower. This stops the flower blowing about in the wind.

Use backlighting to your advantage

The large majority of flowers have relatively thin petals, and so can make a great photo when backlit. The light shines through the petals, giving them quite a different look to a standard photo.

Look at the flower condition and remove any distractions

There are exceptions to everything, but in the large majority of cases, a photo of an undamaged flower will look nicer than that of a damaged one. If you are in an area with lots of the same flowers, take your time to look at a few of the flowers and try to find the one that is in the best condition.

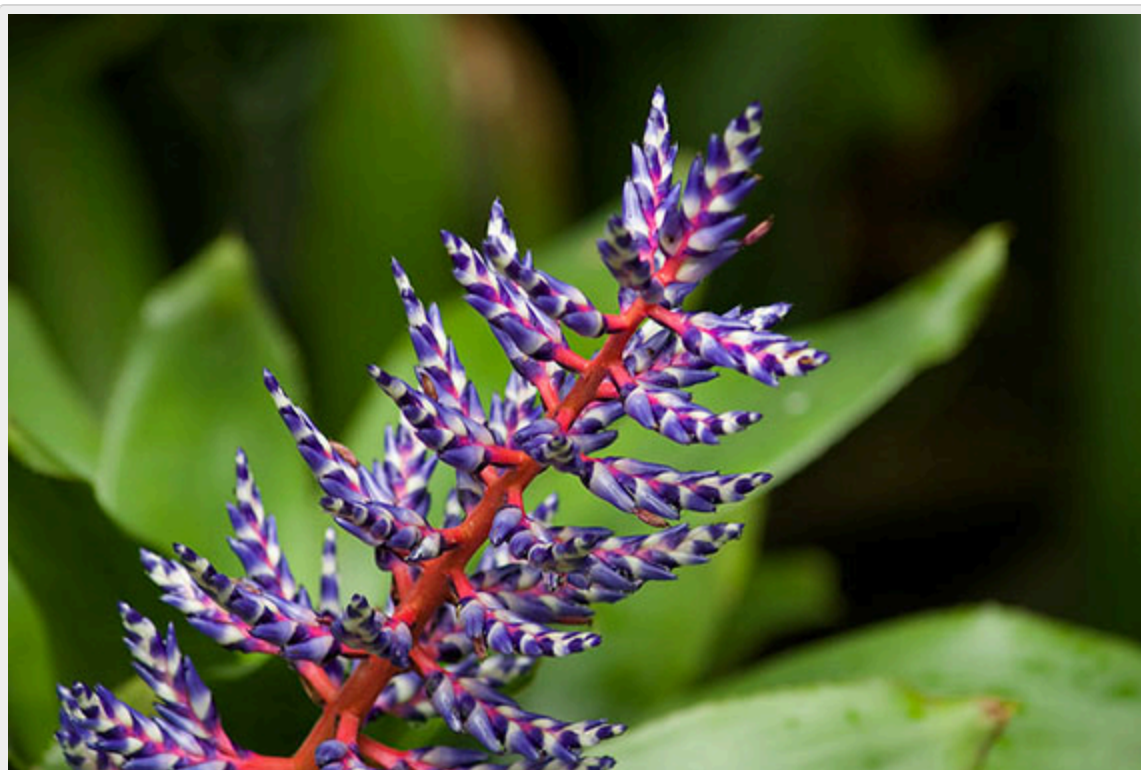


Photo by [Valerie](#)

Pay attention also to what is surrounding the flower, and try to avoid including other elements (such as a random blade of grass) that distract from the flower. Sometimes you may be able to change the angle you are photographing at to remove the distracting elements.

Other times you may need to squash down or remove the distracting elements. If you are photographing outside of your garden, be careful what you are removing though.

Isolate the flower from its surroundings

Set your camera / lens to use a large aperture (e.g. $f/2.8$) when photographing the flower to help throw the background out of focus. If the space permits, also try using a lens with a longer focal length or zooming in on your camera, and taking the photo from further away. This change in perspective helps to isolate the flower from the rest of the scene.

About the Author:

Dave Kennard writes for [DiscoverDigitalPhotography](#) covering all aspects of photography, from landscape photography to portrait photography.