

## **Ten Tips to Improve your Garden Photography**

Tip 1. -- Location is NOT everything, Shoot in your own backyard.

- There is absolutely no reason travel afar – your backyard has great subjects, great critters and great opportunities we all too often overlook

Tip 2. -- If you can - shoot in RAW.

- Cameras will often offer both jpeg and RAW (Nikon = NEF) file options. By choosing the RAW option you afford yourself greater latitude in processing images on your computer, greater color options and tonal ranges
- Jpegs are also compressed image files – Raw images are not. The simple act of opening (uncompressing) and closing (compressing) affects the files and causes data loss. Over time you will see losses in color, contrast and other things that degrade the overall image quality.

Tip 3. -- Get Closer – Use a Long Lens or zoom at its maximum length but work at the minimum focus distance

- The narrow angle of view allows you to focus on the subject
- The short distance compresses the image blurring distracting background elements

Tip 4. -- White Balance – Light has color! Tell Your Camera what type of light you are shooting in.

- Light has color – incandescent lights cast yellow, shade will create a blue cast. This all affects your images – select the white balance choice for the light you are working in for the best color reproduction
- By changing your white balance to the shade setting when shooting sunsets, you will enhance the red/yellow color spectrum for a more vibrant image

Tip 5. -- Diffuse the light – Shoot on an overcast day or bring your own shade.

- Small specular light sources create harsh shadows and tend to wash out colors – when the sun filters through clouds the natural colors are better reproduced and shadows are softened in a more diffused light.
- Diffusers can also be purchased for work when the clouds are not cooperating

Tip 6. -- Make it rain - Bring along a Spray Bottle

- A spray bottle for adding water droplets will create additional points of interest in your image

Tip 7. -- Explore Black and White

- Black and white is an abstract – we see the world in color
- Black and white images have different contrast requirements
  - Contrast in dark and light – light images on dark backgrounds and vice versa
  - Contrast in sharpness – a wide aperture creates a blurred background while the camera focuses on something sharp in the foreground
  - Contrast in texture – large smooth areas with a rough texture in the middle is one example

Tip 8. -- Change your Point of view

- Simply walking up to your subject and making a photograph presents the normal eye level view we are accustomed to. Crouch down, lie down or look down from above. I give my beginner photographers a homework assignment – shoot one object from 25 different ways of looking at it. It starts them thinking outside of the box.

Tip 9. -- Watch your backgrounds

- Close and solid backgrounds pick up shadows.
- Use a black sheet or matt-board to create an unobtrusive background

Tip 10. --Think about composition –

- The Rule of thirds
- Diagonal Line
- Patterns