

## Tips for Photographing Flowers

- 1. Have a simple background:**

Find a position that provides a plain, non-competing background. Watch out for bright highlights. Or, place a black or pleasingly colored cardboard or other material behind the flower. Blurring the backgrounds allows the subject to be prominent.
- 2. Get close:**

If your camera has a close-up focusing mode, use it and get as close as the camera lens will allow. With a digital camera, use the display screen to compose the picture. Accessory close-up lenses are mandatory for dedicated flower photographers. Macro modes in many cameras will also allow for nice close-ups of flowers.
- 3. Shoot at different angles:**

Vary the level of your viewpoint. Shoot straight down to create attractive pinwheel patterns of daisies; kneel to shoot at flower level, such as tulips and daffodils.
- 4. Use creative lighting:**

Observe the lighting on your flowers. Backlight shining through flowers gives them an appealing glow. Cloudy-day lighting reveals subtle hues. Side lighting creates depth.
- 5. Control the wind:**

Breezes will be prevalent. Wait till there is a lull in the breeze. Support the flower with a small piece of wire or use a twig to reduce movement.
- 6. Use a tripod:**

A sturdy tripod is a must. Close up photography has very little depth of field. In order to focus upon a specific part of the flower, use a tripod. This will allow you to keep the subject in proper and steady focus. Moving the tripod slightly closer or farther away may also help composition.
- 7. Use a large aperture:**

A large aperture (f2.8) will have a smaller depth of field as compared to a smaller aperture (f16) that will have more depth of field. Use the largest aperture that is possible to achieve the effect you want. Large apertures will also allow a faster shutter speed that will help freeze the motion of flowers that are outdoors. It will also keep the background softer, allowing the subject/flower to not compete with the background. Also, macro mode focusing naturally has a smaller depth of field.

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**8. Be careful with your exposure:**

The exposure meter in your camera wants to expose everything as a neutral gray. White flowers will need to have an additional one half, one, or two stops added exposure. And, dark flowers may need similar compensation by under exposing. For digital users, check you pictures and histograms. Bracket your photos, by exposing over and under in a couple steps.

**9. Use these camera settings:**

Flower photography is one type of photography you should not use the camera in the program mode. Use the aperture priority mode for exposure. Do not use auto-focus. Use manual focus only. And, if your camera has a macro mode, experiment using the macro mode feature.

**10. Be patient:**

Early morning and late afternoon are ideal times to take flower pictures. Noontime lighting, with full sun, many times provides too much contrast for pleasing pictures. Wait until later in the day for less contrast lighting. Cloud cover will help reduce high contrast during the brightest part of the day. With blue sky and white clouds, wait until a cloud passes over the subject. You need to have your exposures preset in advance for the proper settings you want. Clouds move quickly allowing only a few moments of shooting in shade until the sun pops out again. Sometimes you will see a flower that looks nice, but you may previsualize the lighting to be better at a later or earlier time of day. For example, the background is in sunlight and shade would be better, side lighting would be better, etc.

**11 Using a reflector:**

A reflector will have many uses. It can shade a flower subject in bright sunlight. It can reflect natural light on the subject evening out shadow areas. Aluminum foil will work as a reflector. Reflectors may have a cool silver side and a warm gold tone on the opposite side. The warm tone will provide warmer color for red, orange, and yellow flowers. The silver side may be good for the blue and green flowers. Use your imagination. You can see the effect prior to exposing. The reflector may also be used as a windscreen blocking the air movement helping the flowers remain still in light breezes.

**12. The most important advice:**

The most important advice I can give you about flower photography is to have fun and enjoy yourself. Relax, take your time and do not try to take pictures of everything. Keep the picture simple. One perfect picture will always be better than ten or twenty so-so pictures.