

# May 2023 Newsletter

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## April PhotoShow Winners "Photographer's Choice"



1st Place – Ken Sellers

### APC ACTIVITIES

Next Meeting

May 15, 2023 7:00pm First Baptist Church

Programs

May 15, 2023 David Hall  
(Street Photography)  
July 17, 2023 Bob Finley (Critiquing Guide  
to what makes a good  
photograph)  
Sep. 18, 2023 Cassia Rivera  
(Right of Passage)  
Nov. 20, 2023 Ciara Wilder Massingale  
(Wilder Uwharrie Photography)

Exhibits

Apr. 7 - July 21 Center for Creative Leadership

2023 PhotoShows

June 19, 2023 Macro/'Up Close'  
Aug. 21, 2023 Action  
Oct. 16, 2023 People at Work

Field Trips

Q2 2023 Burl. Arboretum/City Park  
Q3 2023 Duke Homestead  
Q4 2023 TBD

## President's Comments—May 2023

By Keith O'Leary

Thanks to Chris Ogden for moderating last month's PhotoShow and sharing some very informative and helpful advice on improving our skills.

Our first 'Table Talkers' social this year was enjoyed by 6 club members at Southbound Sandwich Works and I encourage more of you to join us in the future if you can. Since Wednesday is their busiest day, we are planning May's social to be on a Thursday.

By now the CCL Exhibit reception will be over but the exhibit itself continues into July. As of this writing, at least 1 piece has been sold. I encourage you to make plans to attend soon if you missed the reception. Personal showings can be scheduled for Fridays thru 7/21 by contacting CCL at 336-708-2495.

Earlier this year, I sent out info re: photo submissions to the Cone Health Art & Healing Partnership who was looking for new artwork to hang in the newly expanded Norville Breast Center in the Grandview Specialty Clinic. I am proud to announce that at least 2 members of our club have had their photos selected to permanently hang in this facility! How awesome is that?

Please join us at our May meeting where our own David Hall will be presenting a program on Street Photography.

Thanks for your participation in making this a great club. Happy shooting!

Keith

## APC BOARD

|                 |                |                     |                  |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| President       | Keith O'Leary  | Exhibit Chair       | Angela Bostek    |
| Vice President  | John Reich     | Outings/Field Trips | Hugh Comfort     |
| Secretary       | George Siple   | Membership          | Ken Sellers      |
| Treasurer       | Dianne Sellers | Web Master          | Christie O'Leary |
| PhotoShow Chair | Dick Schenck   | Editor              | Ray Munns        |

# April 2023 PhotoShow



2nd Place – Ray Munns



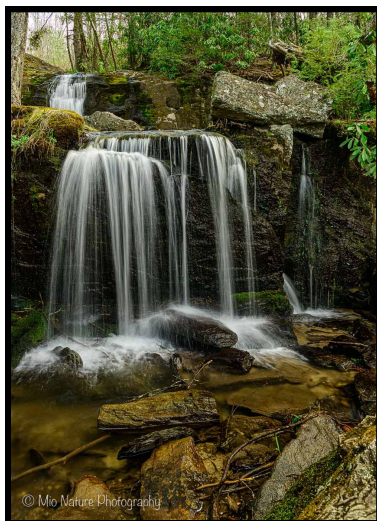
HM 1 – Mio Winkle



3rd Place – Ed Haynes



HM 2 – Ed Haynes



HM 3 – Mio Winkle

Chris Ogden, thank you for your time and effort in assembling, studying, and judging the APC March PhotoShow! Your experience, comments, and suggestions were very helpful in developing our photography skills. Also, thanks to Dick Schenck and his team for collecting the photo entries and making the PhotoShow possible.

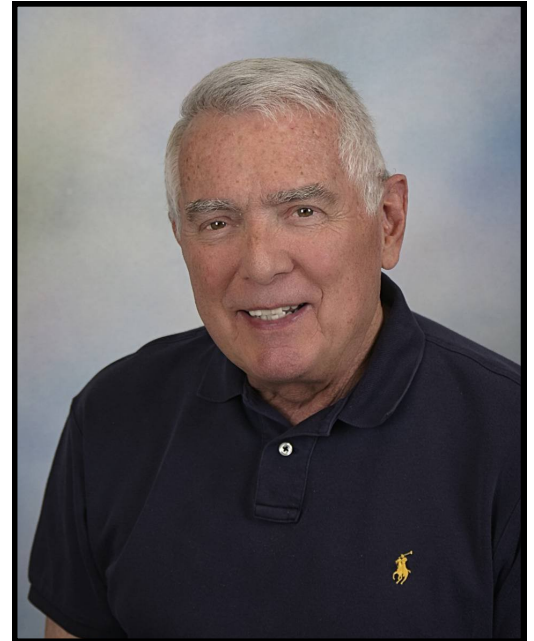
## May 15<sup>th</sup> Program - "Street Photography"

By David Hall

Bio—David has been around photography in one form or another from an early age. His father was a professional photographer doing primarily studio portraiture with some commercial work. Growing up he spent a lot of time watching his dad take the photos and then do all the darkroom developing and printing. He now wishes he had paid attention and learned something. He still has his dad's old Speed Graphic.

David's interest in photography was rekindled about 20 years ago but he got serious after he retired. After retiring and traveling overseas, he found street photography was his primary area of interest. David now enjoys post processing as much as taking the photographs and considers himself a photography enthusiast. Most of his shooting is what he would call "opportunistic" – seeing a shot and taking it. He rarely does advance scouting and setting up to get just the right shot. You will see that approach reflected in the photos that will be shown.

Before moving from Cary he taught beginning photography and photo editing classes at the Cary Senior Center and was instrumental in building two photo clubs.



*"My favorite photography is the one I am going to take tomorrow."*



Photos by David Hall

# APC Trading Post

Submit brief descriptions of photography items you would like to sell, swap or purchase to Ray Munns ([raymunns@bellsouth.net](mailto:raymunns@bellsouth.net)) no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please include your name, contact info (phone and/or email) and if each item is for sale or something you are looking to purchase. Also notify Ray when items should be removed from the newsletter.

## For Sale

Manfrotto tripod and ball head with quick release. This combination cost over \$200 new. A used one on eBay starts at \$135. I will consider any reasonable offer.

**Contact Dick Schenck 919-968-8757**

## For Sale

8" LED Ring Light with 3 light modes and variable brightness control. Includes large velvet drawstring pouch, tripod stand, clamp-on base, mobile phone holder and remote control. Charges via USB.

**Contact Keith O'Leary @ 336.693.8268 or [videoman@triad.rr.com](mailto:videoman@triad.rr.com).**

## For Sale

Nikon D5000 Camera with 2 batteries \$300

**Contact Mio Winkle 787-587-5989**

## Membership Corner

### Ken Sellers

As we begin a new membership year, think about this, "How can we let others know about the APC and all the opportunities that accompany a membership?" One easy way is to invite a friend to attend. Anyone can visit up to 2 months without joining. Encourage others to view our website and Facebook page. Either suggestion will give potential members a good overview of what we do such as exhibits and field trips. Some of the events we, as members, get to share our photographs with others.

**Ken Sellers**

**Membership Chair**



## WEBMASTER NOTES

Check out our website @ <https://www.alamancephoto.com/> for:

Updated [Members' Galleries](#)

[First Quarter Field Trip photos of Duke Chapel](#)

List of [Events](#) for the year including speakers and judges

Information on the [CCL exhibit](#) being held now through July 21st



Alamance Photography Club is also on [facebook](#)

**NEW!** We now have a **Private Facebook Group** (*only for members via invitation*). This is a place you can share your photos with others in the club. If you are part of facebook and would like to join this private group please email me at [alamancephoto@gmail.com](mailto:alamancephoto@gmail.com)

**Christie O'Leary**

**Webmaster**



## Table Talkers



Join us for lunch on Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>  
Southbound Sandwich Works, Correct Time Plaza  
3328 S. Church St. in Burlington at 12:00 noon!

No agenda, no program, no music, just friendly conversation with fellow photographers. Spouses of members are always welcome.

Come in, order and join us in the side room.

**Looking forward to seeing you May 18 at noon!**



**Mark Austin**

## Q2 Group Field Trip: Burlington Arboretum/City Park

This group field trip will take place on **Saturday, April 29** at the Burlington Arboretum (408 E. Willowbrook Drive) and The Burlington City Park and Amusement Area (located nearby off South Church Street). While most of us are familiar with the Park, the Arboretum may not be as well known. With good weather, both sites should provide ample opportunities for interesting and beautiful photos.

The Arboretum at Willowbrook Park features a wide, paved walking path that meanders the length of this 17-acre park. The arboretum is full of plant collections including daylilies, hostas, azaleas, roses, hydrangeas, camellias, wetland gardens and more. A creek runs through the park with a wide vegetation buffer brimming with native plants and grasses that provide habitat for wildlife and filters storm water runoff protecting the water quality of the creek.

The flagship of the Burlington Parks System, City Park, offers more than 75 acres of activities for the entire family. It serves as the home of an amusement area, one of only a handful of municipally operated in the state. A fully restored Dentzel Carousel is the highlight of the amusement area.

More information for both can be found at <https://www.burlingtonnc.gov/1316/Parks>.

**If you were unable to participate in the group field trip or wish to take additional photos, you can still submit them to the field trip photo album. Instructions for all submissions will be sent in a separate email.**



Photo by  
Dick Schenck



Photo by  
Tom Jamison

# Useful Composition Tips for Aspiring Macro Photographers

By Kalyan Kumar

When viewing images, do you notice that close-up shots evoke a feeling of intimacy more than those taken at a distance? It's the fact that they were taken at close range to the photographer that creates this effect.



*Photo by LadyDragonflyCC*

This is what macro photography is all about. It's taking photos up close and personal.

A close-up shot provides more details. As such, any photographer needs to make sure that his or her camera is focused well before snapping.

## Camera Settings

For those using a point and shoot camera, the first step to capturing objects in close range is to set your camera to macro mode. Surprisingly, not many digital camera owners know about this. The macro mode is normally symbolized with a little flower, and once this is set, your camera will automatically know that you want to focus on a particular subject closer to your lens. This setting will also tell your camera to choose a large aperture to ensure that the subject is more in focus than the background.

Experts also point out the importance of composition. This means knowing how you're going to compose your shot with your subject in place. You may have the most expensive digital camera, lens, and other accessories, but if you don't know how to frame your subject, you won't succeed in your goal of capturing quality images.



## *Useful Composition Tips for Aspiring Macro Photographers . . . Continued*

### **Lead Room**

One aspect of composition pertains to lead room, which is vital in nature and wildlife photography. This refers to providing extra space in your frame. As an example, you need to have extra room or space in the direction in which an animal's eyes are looking. This will help create balance in your photo. So if a frog is looking towards the left, the left side should have more space compared to the right.

*Photo by Eric; ISO 400, f/7.1,  
1/100-second exposure*



On the other hand, if you're shooting an insect, the eyes of which are not that prominent, you can always base your lead room on the shape and body structure of the subject.

### **Rule of Thirds**

Another tip for macro photographers is following the so-called rule of thirds. The goal of this is to keep the balance in your photos depending on the subject's position. You have to determine then whether the subject is looking straight at the camera or sideways. So if a frog, for instance, is looking straight into the camera, the best way to achieve balance is to center the subject in the frame.



*Photo by erlend*

## *Useful Composition Tips for Aspiring Macro Photographers . . . Continued*

### **Diagonal Lines**

To keep your photo more interesting, experts recommend creating diagonal lines. Parallel lines can be boring and unappealing. But if you give it some diagonals, you create a great effect such as that of action.



*Photo by Dan Kühn; ISO 100, f/8.9,  
1/9-second exposure*

### **Compositional Weight**

The compositional weight is another thing. Again, this refers to positioning your subject in a diagonal manner. For example, you make sure that a butterfly standing on a small branch is positioned so its rear body part is pointing toward one corner on the bottom, while the upper end of the branch points at another corner on the top.

*Photo by Mirai Takahashi; ISO 800, f/7.1,  
1/20-second exposure*



Macro photographers sometimes get so caught up in close-up details of their subjects that they forget the importance of composition. Follow the guidelines above to put more visual interest into your macro photography.

# Outdoor Portrait Photography

## 13 Tips for Beautiful Results

By James Pickett

Capturing outstanding outdoor portraits is an essential skill, whether you're looking to create refined shots for clients or casual images of friends and family. Outdoor portraiture is also incredibly rewarding; you get to create beautiful shots illuminated by gorgeous light, and you also get to appreciate beautiful natural and cityscape scenes along the way.

That said, creating gorgeous shots is no walk in the park. You have to work with your subject, choose the right settings, handle the light, consider your compositions, and much more. It's no wonder that many would-be portrait photographers struggle to get started!

Fortunately, I've been shooting portraits for years, and in this article, I offer an array of helpful tips and tricks to improve your images, including:

- How to choose the perfect focal length
- How to focus for tack-sharp results
- The best light for outdoor portrait shooting
- Key settings and file types
- Much more!

Ready to level up your outdoor portraits? Let's dive right in, starting with:

### 1. Pick the right camera

You can create beautiful outdoor portraits using literally any camera model, from the most basic smartphone to the most complex full-frame DSLR – but if you want to give yourself the best chance of success, I highly recommend you choose your camera carefully.

First, make sure you grab a DSLR or mirrorless model. These cameras offer major advantages over fixed-lens point-and-shoot units; for one, you can use a variety of lenses to capture a variety of perspectives and looks. Whether you choose a full-frame, APS-C, or Micro Four Thirds camera is up to you and will depend on your level of interest, your budget, and your portability requirements.

## **Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued**

In general, full-frame cameras will offer the best image quality, especially if you want to shoot in low light (e.g., at dawn and dusk for ethereal blue-hour shots). But APS-C cameras also boast professional results, and Micro Four Thirds models are plenty capable (and very compact). Regardless of your choice, make sure you choose a camera that feels comfortable in your hands. Nothing is more off-putting than trying to use an uncomfortable camera for hours on end!

One additional feature to look for is eye-tracking autofocus. It'll lock onto your subject's eyes and keep your photos looking tack-sharp, even if you're photographing in fast-paced or action scenarios. No, it's not essential – and portrait photographers have worked without eye AF for centuries – but it'll certainly make your job easier.

### **2. Use the right focal length**

Focal length and lens choice may not seem important, but the effect they can have on your photos is massive. You see, different focal lengths require you to be closer or farther from your subject, and the closer you get, the more you'll end up with perspective distortion. Perspective distortion, if left unchecked, can often result in unflattering body proportions – and if you're not careful, you'll end up with a line of unhappy clients. (After all, the last thing you want to hear from a client is, "Why does my head look swollen?")

That's why I'd encourage you to avoid working with wider focal lengths, such as 28mm, 35mm, and even 45mm. Instead, pick a lens in the 50mm to 85mm range, which will allow you to capture tighter images without problematic distortion.

Note that you don't need to go out and purchase a dedicated portrait lens; pretty much every kit lens covers some of these focal lengths, so even if you only own the lens that came with your camera, you'll be just fine.

That said, if you want to really level up your outdoor portrait potential, it's worth looking to a 50mm or 85mm prime, especially if they offer a wide maximum aperture, such as f/2.8, f/1.8, or f/1.4. Longer lenses naturally provide better background blur, but the wider the maximum aperture, the more you can lean into this effect to achieve professional results.

And while specific portrait lens recommendations are beyond the scope of this article, bear in mind that 50mm lenses tend to be better for full-body shots, while 85mm lenses will help you capture tighter images (e.g., headshots). If you like the idea of capturing close-ups, you can also look into 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses; while they aren't cheap, the results are outstanding.

## *Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued*

### **3. Always shoot in RAW, not JPEG**

These words have left my mouth a thousand times, and they will surely come out a million more. The RAW file format is an unmodified compilation of your sensor's data during the time of exposure. It is your digital negative. And it gives you immense post-processing flexibility, not to mention improved image quality.

On the other hand, when you shoot in JPEG format, much of what you capture is stripped away. You lose lots of key information, including color nuance and tonal range. It's a recipe for disaster.

For instance, a RAW file lets you recover clipped highlights and shadows, which can be a big deal when shooting contrasty outdoor scenes. A RAW file is also essential if you want to make heavy color modifications to your shots (e.g., you want to do artistic color grading). But a JPEG won't allow for much detail recovery, and a JPEG will severely limit your photo's color-grading potential.

So stick to RAW files. Yes, they're larger and require processing. But unless you're a photo-journalist on an ultra-tight deadline, they're worth the extra effort.

(If you love the shareability of a JPEG and can't see yourself shooting without it, then consider using your camera's RAW+JPEG mode, which saves both a RAW file and a JPEG file at the time of capture.)

### **4. Shoot with a wide aperture for a shallow depth of field**

A wide aperture will produce a shallow depth of field effect, which blurs the background and makes your subject stand out. This is an essential part of the "look" that professional portrait shooters love, and it's one of those things that can instantly elevate your images from mediocre to amazing.

So if you can shoot at f/2.8 or even f/1.8, you should. Of course, not all lenses can use such a wide aperture; some fail to go past f/5.6 and beyond. I'd recommend investing in a wide-aperture lens if possible (and there are plenty of wonderful budget options, such as a 50mm f/1.8).

## **Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued**

Every DSLR and interchangeable-lens mirrorless camera will allow you to tweak the aperture in a handful of ways. I'd recommend working in Aperture Priority mode to start, which will let you select the aperture while your camera selects a shutter speed to balance the exposure. Once you become more comfortable, you might try switching to Manual mode for even greater control (though that's certainly not a requirement, and plenty of professionals prefer to work in Aperture Priority at all times).

One problem with using a wide aperture, by the way, is that you have to be very careful to get the focus right (given the ultra-shallow plane of focus). Therefore, it's important that you choose your focusing settings very carefully, as I discuss in the next section.

### **5. Never select all of the focus points for portraits**

Remember: If you want to take beautiful outdoor portraits with real consistency, then you've got to nail focus.

And a huge, huge focusing mistake I see beginners make? Using either the Auto AF area mode, where the camera picks the focus point for you, or using a large number of focus points in the hopes that one will cover the subject. Unfortunately, neither of those options works, and you'll often end up with out-of-focus, blurry shots, especially if you're working with a wide aperture.

Instead, I recommend two options:

For photographers using older cameras, pick a single focus point (the one in the center of the viewfinder works well). Then use that single point to lock focus (and recompose as necessary).

For photographers with newer cameras, consider using your model's Eye AF technology. This will hone in on your subject's eye and (ideally) nail focus. Not all Eye AF is created equal, so before you devote yourself to it, make sure your camera does a good job. But most Eye AF is very impressive, and if you do a test and come away with lots of sharp photos, then use it all the time!

## **Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued**

### **6. Always focus on the eyes**

Yes, it's important that you nail focusing in your portrait shots, but what does that mean? Keeping the eyes tack-sharp, of course!

You see, the eyes are the windows to the soul and should be the focal point of any good portrait. Plus, the eyes are the most detailed element on the face and should be carefully rendered.

(When you're shooting with a wide aperture and you're focused on the eyes, the shallow depth of field effect will soften the skin, too.)

As discussed in the previous section, you should be focusing with either a single AF point or your camera's Eye AF function. If you're working with a single AF point, place it over the eye and lock focus, then recompose if required. If you're working with your camera's Eye AF, then make sure it's finding your subject's eye, then shoot with abandon!

One more tip: If your subject is turned to the side, make sure you focus on the eye that's closer to the lens, not the more distant one.



### **7. Always use a gray card**

Some outdoor portrait photographers prefer to work without gray cards. However, I'm a huge gray-card fan, and I encourage you to use one for each and every photoshoot.

Why? To avoid confusion, I am going to explain this backward. When opening Adobe Camera Raw or any other RAW image editing application, there is always a way to select a custom white balance. Usually, it is an eyedropper of some kind that you can use to click on what you think is neutral gray in your image.

### **Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued**

Now, imagine a world where your photoshoot involved 4 locations and a total of 800 images, and all day your camera was set to Auto White Balance. You might end up with 800 different white balance values, a post-production nightmare.

But if at each location you have your subject hold the gray card on the first shot, you will save hours of work. When you open images in your favorite post-production application, all you have to do is click the eyedropper on the gray card, select all the photos from that location, and synchronize the edit. Precious hours will be saved.

By the way, it can be wise to take a gray card shot once every 30 minutes or so to compensate for the changing light of day, and if you're working in the evening or the early morning, you may want to add in that gray card even more frequently.

Note: If you forget to use a gray card, or you don't take gray-card shots frequently enough, it's not the end of the world. You can still fix any white balance problems in post-processing; it'll just take far longer.

#### **8. Avoid direct sunlight in your outdoor portraits**

Not all outdoor lighting is ideal for portraits, and while you can't always control the weather, you can carefully position your subject and set out to shoot at a time of day when the light tends to work great.

So here's my first portrait photography lighting tip: Avoid direct sunlight whenever possible. It's harsh, it'll make your subject squint, and it creates hard directional shadows and unpredictable white balance conditions. (By direct sunlight, I'm referring to the hard light of late morning and early afternoon, not the golden-hour light produced just after sunrise and just before sunset.

What light is best? I'd really recommend working in two main scenarios:

Overcast skies, when the clouds act as a softbox and create soft, diffused light.

And sunrise and sunset light, when the low sun turns soft and warm.

You can also capture great shots just after sunset, though you'll need to be careful to keep your images sharp and well-exposed in the dim light.



## *Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued*

### **9. If you must use direct sunlight, work carefully**

In the previous section, I explained why you should never shoot in direct sunlight.

But sometimes you get stuck. A client insists on a particular photoshoot time and place, or the sun comes out from behind the beautiful clouds, and you're forced to work with what you have.



And in such situations, you can take certain steps to get the best possible results.

First, pay careful attention to the direction of the light. Putting the sun directly behind your subject isn't a good idea unless you are trying to make a silhouette. Instead, try putting the sun at your back, then have the subject look off-camera (away from the sun) to prevent squinting. Another great trick is to wait for a cloud to move in front of the sun; this usually creates a very bright-yet-contrasty look.

Also, if possible, use some sort of reflector to minimize shadows on your subject. Invest in a portable, pop-up reflector, or – if necessary, use an existing reflector, which I discuss in more detail in the next section. Another option is to work with a flash, which can give great results (though it does come with a real learning curve!).

### **10. Work with a natural reflector**

While outdoor photography might seem reflector-free, there are actually plenty of natural and human-made reflectors you can use to improve your photos. So if you don't want to carry a reflector (or you forget yours for a shoot), you can always rely on the surrounding environment.

## *Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued*

Here are just a few outdoor reflector ideas:

- White delivery trucks
- White building walls
- White cars
- White sand
- White signs
- White tables

You get the idea? And if you're heading into a location where a natural reflector might not exist, then make sure you double- and triple-check your setup to make sure you bring one along. As I mentioned above, you can buy a pop-up reflector, though you can also make one out of foam core or white cardboard.

### **11. Learn the Sunny 16 rule**

The Sunny 16 rule is a classic guideline from the film days, one that lets you determine the proper exposure on sunny days – without an exposure meter.

Of course, pretty much every camera comes with an exposure meter these days, but it's not always accurate, and it can be good to have a technique to fall back on in uncertain situations.

So here's the Sunny 16 rule:

On a sunny day, with your aperture value set to  $f/16$ , your shutter speed will be the inverse of your current ISO speed. If your camera is set to ISO 100 and your aperture value is  $f/16$ ,



your shutter speed will be  $1/100s$ . And if your camera is set to ISO 200 and your aperture value is  $f/16$ , your shutter speed will be  $1/200s$ .

On a cloudy day (or when you're shooting in the shade), you can simply use  $f/8$  instead.

## *Outdoor Portrait Photography - 13 Tips for Beautiful Results . . . Continued*

### **12. Bring a sheet and a few spring clamps from home**

You know that cheap old sheet you stuck in the corner of the closet to use as a drop cloth the next time you paint? Add it to your kit and take it with you every time you head out for an outdoor portrait shoot.

(Another option is to buy the cheapest low-thread-count white top sheet you can find.)

What should you do with it? Well, a sheet is an amazing, cheap diffuser – sort of a seven-foot softbox for the sun.

So take note of the sun's position, then use the sheet to block the light. If you need a side-light diffuser, clamp an edge of the sheet around a branch. Anchor the bottom corners with rocks to keep the sheet from blowing into your image.

For an overhead diffuser, clamp all four corners to branches above your subject.

### **13. Avoid powerlines and signs**

We have already discussed keeping your camera focused on the eyes – but you must also keep the viewer's mind focused on the image as a whole, specifically on your portrait subject.

Powerlines, signs, long single blades of grass, single pieces of garbage, and sometimes even trees can be serious distractions in an otherwise great outdoor portrait photo.

So before you take a single shot, look carefully at the area surrounding your subject. Do you see any distractions? Anything that might take away from the photo? If so, either clean it up or move your subject into a position where such background distractions aren't visible.



### **Outdoor portrait photography: final words**

13 tips to take your outdoor portraits to the next level. Whether you're capturing outdoor headshots, full-body shots, or even group shots, these tips should serve you well, so commit them to memory and use them the next time you're out shooting.



# Nature Photography Etiquette in Botanical Gardens

By Anne Belmont

In this article, I would like to share some etiquette guidelines for photographing in a public place such as a botanic garden. Nature photography as a hobby is more popular and more accessible than ever before. As photographers, we have the privilege of capturing some of the most beautiful locations in the world, including some spectacular botanic gardens. We also have the responsibility to help protect and respect the places we photograph. We've all seen the news stories – the sunflower farms being overrun by nature photographers, the super bloom of wildflowers in the west being trampled by eager crowds seeking photographs, the farmers of lavender fields in Provence hanging banners saying “Respect Our Work” in response to photographers trespassing, damaging fields and picking crops. Do these same issues apply to botanic gardens where many nature photographers come to photograph the beauty of nature? You bet they do!

Global tourism has reached an all-time high and nature photography in botanic gardens has also grown tremendously over the years. This is wonderful for the gardens, as it brings increased revenue to support the gardens and helps further educate the public about the importance of nature and the environment. Many botanic gardens do important scientific research aimed at understanding and protecting the plants so important to us. The green space gives us all a place to de-stress, unwind and be in nature. The beauty and inspiration of a garden is there for everyone that visits to enjoy, making it important that we all do our part to preserve that beauty and do no harm.

*As tempting as it might be to capture those sunflowers at the back of the garden, do not step into a garden bed. Please stay on the path – Chicago Botanic Garden by Anne Belmont.*



### *Nature Photography Etiquette in Botanical Gardens . . . Continued*

Most photographers I have worked with and most visitors to gardens show great respect for the gardens. I have on occasions, however, witnessed behavior that dumbfounded me. As gardens have more visitors, the incidents have grown. I have seen people walk into the middle of densely planted garden beds to get a closer shot of flowers in the back, damaging flowers in the process. I have witnessed people laying down or sitting in a bed of flowers to get an image of themselves surrounded by flowers. I have watched parents put their baby in a bed of flowers for a photo, while the baby innocently pulls up all the flowers around her. I have seen flowers being removed from a scene because a photographer didn't want them in the composition. I have witnessed photographers risking their safety and pushing aside construction barricades, ignoring signs, all to capture a single flower in bloom in a closed garden area.



*Keep paths accessible for other guests, especially those with handicaps – Longwood Gardens by Anne Belmont*

*Check tripod policies, as they vary from garden to garden. Conservatories and indoor flower shows may restrict tripod use – Chicago Botanic Garden Orchid Show by Anne Belmont.*



### *Nature Photography Etiquette in Botanical Gardens . . . Continued*

I have had many discussions with garden staff and horticulturists about what we can do as nature photographers to be respected and seen as an asset to the garden, rather than a nuisance. With those discussions and some research into various garden guidelines for nature photography, I have compiled the following list:

1. **Stay on the path or mowed lawn areas.** Do not enter flower beds, plant displays, mulched areas or areas with ground cover. Walking through beds can seriously affect growth of plants and there may be delicate plant life below the surface of mulch about to emerge.
2. **Keep tripods on the path and out of plant beds.** It is often tempting to put tripods into flower beds to get closer to a subject, but it will do damage to plants. If you can't reach a subject, use a longer lens or choose subjects closer to the path.
3. **Check the tripod policies of each garden you visit as they may vary from garden to garden.** Some gardens allow tripods anytime outdoors but may have restrictions for indoor greenhouse or conservatory use. Tripod use at special flowers shows, such as the popular dahlia shows or orchid shows may be prohibited or limited to special hours. Most botanic gardens post their tripod policies online or it is easily obtained by calling the garden.
4. **Keep paths accessible for all guests, being careful not to block paths with tripods and other equipment.** Be especially vigilant for handicapped individuals that might need more space to navigate a pathway.
5. **Do not alter a scene to suit your needs.** Leave deadheading or clipping any plant material to the horticulturists. Carefully removing a few dead leaves or sticks from a small scene in the early spring is fine, but larger clean-ups are the job of staff.
6. **Using clothespins or clamps to move plant material out of the way is usually allowed in gardens as long as you are gentle and not damaging the plant in any way.** If you are using printed backgrounds on boards to provide a simple background for your subject or diffusers to soften the light, be gentle and place them carefully. Using backgrounds of any kind at flower shows and with more delicate flowers like orchids is usually not allowed. Save that for your shooting at home.

### *Nature Photography Etiquette in Botanical Gardens . . . Continued*

7. **Do not remove plant ID markers.** This is one of the biggest pet peeves of horticulturists about photographers. Often photographers will move a marker out of their photo and place it to the side or put it somewhere it doesn't belong. One horticulturist relayed a story to me of how such an act took him three hours of research to figure out which variety of echinopsis the stray marker belonged to. If a plant ID marker is in your way, choose another subject or move in closer to eliminate the signage.
8. **Lastly, practice patience.** If there are people in your shot, don't ask them to move. They have just as much right to be in the garden as you do. If you wait, they will move on. Shooting early in the morning or late in the afternoon will help you capture larger garden scenes without the crowds, and light is often better during those times, as well.

*Practice patience. I waited about 30 minutes for everyone to step out of my frame to get this image on Mother's Day, one of the busiest days of the year. Chicago Botanic Garden by Anne Belmont*



By following these simple nature photography guidelines we not only improve the relationship photographers have with the gardens they visit but we also ensure that tighter guidelines will not be put into place that would limit our access to opportunities to photograph. These guidelines are composed with the nature photographer in mind. Portrait and wedding photographers have other guidelines that need to be observed while doing photoshoots within botanic gardens.

Get out and enjoy the beauty gardens bring to our lives, always remembering and respecting the hard work by both the staff and Mother Nature.