

## **MACRO WORKSHOP- PRESENTED JANUARY 8, 2018**

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**DEFINITION:** Technically Macro is really only used to describe a photograph with a 1:1 or higher (ie: 3:1, 5:1 etc.) magnification. But the term "macro photography" is more commonly also used to describe any close-up photography as well. This is really what most photographers do and call Macro.

### **SOME BENEFITS:**

- accessibility – can be done anywhere indoors or outdoors
- most lenses can take close-up/macro shots
- many items - including usually ignored items- can make very interesting subjects- so it is not just flowers, bugs and critters
- Macro is really only as limited as your imagination
- Does not have to be realistic- can just be creative
- Helps you to view things differently as a photographer
- Very different than what many other photographers do
- The same subject can constantly change and look new

**EVERYTHING IN MACRO IS AMPLIFIED:** Everything is more noticeable because it is closer and enlarged - you more easily notice and see movement, hot spots, textures, patterns, bright colors, imperfections, poor focus, distraction, etc.- It's a double edged sword.

### **RECOMMENDED IMPORTANT EQUIPMENT:**

- **GOOD TRIPOD-** Consider investing in a good one that is: stable (maybe spiked feet, can hold stabilizing weight via a hook or add on cradle), good head that can manage weight of camera and lens, provides many shooting angles, is very height adjustable, can get low to ground. Strongly consider.
- Alternatives to tripod- bean bag, gorilla pod
- Cable release – even with a tripod pushing the shutter manually will add some camera shake which is amplified in macro -a cable release reduces camera shake- they are individual to each camera and can be attachable or wireless.
- Flexible Knee pads – and maybe a mat to kneel on.

- Lens spray bottle- gets that wet, just rained on look
- Diffuser and/or reflector- collapsible are the best to carry
- Bulb air blower and pre-moistened lens cleaning cloths/towelettes and/or soft lens cleaning cloth
- Wimberly Plamp 2 - can see this using URL listed below:

[https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1047197-REG/wimberley\\_pp\\_200\\_the\\_plamp\\_ii.html](https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1047197-REG/wimberley_pp_200_the_plamp_ii.html)

- Hoodman Loupe- varied sizes available to cover you camera's back screen - can see this using URL listed below:

[https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1353031-REG/hoodman\\_h32mb\\_hoodloupe\\_3\\_2\\_outdoor\\_loop.html](https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1353031-REG/hoodman_h32mb_hoodloupe_3_2_outdoor_loop.html)

(I am not endorsing any one vendor but its well explained at URLs above)

**IF USING A TRIPOD:** Turn off Image Stabilization (I.S.) - I.S. this is only really helpful when you are hand holding your camera and often for a static subject. Image stabilization uses an internal motor which will cause some camera shake – more noticeable in macro work - even in many steady handed photographers.

**LENSES:** I feel a good lens is even more important than a good camera- Almost all lenses have a close up or macro setting. A dedicated macro lens is very helpful- they come in 60mm, 90mm, 100mm 180mm depending on the brand. The longer the lens the shallower the depth of field. (DOF) The shorter the length the closer you have to get to subject to get truer macro but slightly bigger DOF.

**ALTERNATIVES TO MACRO LENS:**

- Bellows or focusing rail
- Front attaching close up lens (go on like filters)
- Extension Tubes – come individually or as a set of three- 12mm, 20mm & 36mm most common

**LIGHTING:**

- Natural Light- this is what I use- I do not like flash while others swear by their flash
- Natural lighting can be augmented by employing a diffuser and/or reflector
- Regular Flash
- Ring Flash- one round or two twin side flashes- both attach to you lens
- Indoor flash or studio set ups

**DEPTH OF FIELD:** This probably the most important core factor effecting macro photography. Unlike other types of photography, depth of field, especially with a dedicated macro lens, will be VERY limited.

- when they shoot most photographers live in the f5.6-f11 range when shooting- consider going down to apertures of f16-f32 if you want to increase your effective DOF in macro photography.

**SIMPLE SUGGESTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHING BUGS AND “CRITTERS”:**

- They are fast, try not to get frustrated
- Shooting in earlier and cooler morning- they are often more docile and “sleepy”
- Patience, patience, patience
- Remember, if you can, everyone looks for eyes to be in focus or stressed in animal photos

**SOME FACTORS THAT EFFECT HOW I SHOOT MACRO:**

- aperture preferred
- manual focus
- spot or central area focus
- I use live view a lot for critical focus and framing
- I always use a tripod and cable release

**THE SAME SUBJECT CONSTANTLY CHANGES:**

- If you see a subject you like take the shoot, take many shots from different angles or perspectives and sides, and even

bracket your shots. That subject (flower, bug, nature item, etc.) will never be exactly the same ever again- don't pass it by

- Revisit the shot, subject, item, etc. in different seasons, times of day, with different lighting- it will always present differently and have it's own creative offering.
- Lighting Always Changes: Consider the direction of the light around you – shadows, a translucent effect, how bright you want the subject, are there hot spots, how does the background look, etc. You can always help this with a diffuser or reflector or flash.

### **SOME OF OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER IN MACRO:**

- Determine what needs to be in focus and what doesn't
- What is you main subject- feature it and keep the background faded (bokeh) and/or very simple so it does not distract from your main subject.
- Background – unless you are filling the frame- in macro photography is very important to consider.
- You do not have to include an entire subject (flower, insect, etc.) in a macro photo- consider what you want the viewer to see and just compose wisely
- If shooting outdoors- wind is your enemy – some things even fast shutter speeds cannot fix!
- Relationship between aperture, ISO and shutter speed is same in macro as is other types photography- what do you want to stress for this specific photo and set camera accordingly
- Most basic rules of photography apply to macro- but much more okay to center your main subject and there is really no rule of thirds as it is too close up.
- It is also okay to intentionally blur the whole image and make it more artistic or interesting stressing colors and/or patterns rather than realism.
- Remember with composition a design – everything is amplified and more noticeable ion a macro photo.
- And as always, are you just documenting or making an interesting image- what sets you photo apart from, for example 100 other rose or butterfly photos.