

Photography Tips
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Improve your shots: Take many photos of your chosen subject Up close, far away; from top, bottom, side; different times of day; remember what draws you to subject? Move camera a little left, a little right, a little up, a little down; zoom in & out. At least look at it in different ways.

Is this a vertical or horizontal shot

Usually obvious, sometimes both work.

Focus, focus, focus

Make sure your main subject is in focus. Actually, in garden photography, unless it is very close-up, you want as much as possible in focus. How to do this?

More light means more depth of focus. Zooming-in takes away light, so try moving closer.

If your main subject is not in the middle, put it in the middle, push button down part way (it should lock-in focus and lighting), recompose, and then push button the rest of the way. . . works for most cameras.

Use a tripod, (or even a table helps). It holds camera still so you can take photo at slower speed which increases focus.

Rule of 1/3, or don't bull's-eye your subject

If you divide an image into thirds both horizontally and vertically, the intersection of the lines will be the most pleasing place for your subject. Plunking your main subject in the center is boring! Makes a nice postcard but it's not the artsy look we are looking for . . . usually.

Sky or no sky

Eliminating the sky makes an image more intimate. A gray sky can be boring. If sky is in the photo, do not put the horizon in the center!

Fill the frame with your image

Almost. Make it obvious what we are looking at. Think about what draws you to your subject and don't include the whole world, just because it too is nice. You can take a separate photo of the other stuff.

A diagonal line is more dynamic than a straight, horizontal or vertical line . Think path or stone wall or fence. (In addition, vertical line indicates strength & power, horizontal indicates calm & quiet *old Chinese proverb*)

Lighting is oh so important

Especially for outside garden shots. Trust your eye and look for: Long shadows of late afternoon or early morning; warm/soft light of early morn and late afternoon; light after or during a rain can be luscious, soft & even, with raindrops still there, hard to go wrong! Or, just a cloudy bright day.

Light to avoid (usually)

Midday sun light -- very harsh, blows out color, very contrasty Shade can make photos with cold colors, very blue, lacking depth Gray days with haze can be very dull. Close-ups might work, but landscapes often don't.

Turn off flash for garden shots (usually)

Flash can do weird things in a garden.

Make sure subject (flower, person, animal) faces toward you, not away . If a flower or

person is looking right, put it on the left side of image.

Be aware of distracting clutter and avoid it

Imagine taking a lovely early morning photograph of a meadow pond, with a shiny aluminum ladder (or a piece of trash) in the foreground. What will draw your eye?

More about lighting :

If you want to darken or lighten a photograph as you see it in your digital screen, use the little +/- button (plus lightens, minus darkens). But don't forget to change it back.

Watch out for bright back lighting, it can throw off the light meter. Sometimes eliminating or reducing the sky (particularly a bright cloudy one) will correct this.

Things that make a photo over the top . . . for me

Fantastic lighting; unusual, funky; viewpoint; Mood; tells a story; strong image (you would like the image even if it wasn't your backyard, your grandchild, or your favorite rose. You might even pay \$\$\$ to own it).

Read your camera directions

It's amazing what the thing can do if you know how!

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