

Taking Great Rose Photos

Part One: Your Camera and You

by Corinne Geertsen

Taking a photo of a rose is easy. (After all, they hold still for the camera!) Taking a great rose photo is more difficult.



Cameras can have a hard time with the color red. This camera doesn't. (Veterans Honor, Nikon D300 and 24-70mm f2.8 lens)

Looking at Photos

Here's the first step to those great rose photos: Take a lot of pictures. Look at them thoughtfully, while you still remember how you took them. I find I learn as much from the bad pictures as the good ones.

Look at lots of rose photos online to see what you like and what's possible. Visual research is a great photo project when your roses aren't in bloom. Here are two sites to get you started:

<http://www.rosenfoto.de/LiRosenfotoFSY.html> Christine's Photo Gallery of Roses

<http://www.pswdphotography.com/winners.html> PSWD's Winning Rose Photos

If you want to show rose photos:

<http://www.pswdphotography.com/> PSWD's photography page. The motherload!

<http://pswdphotography.com/blog/> PSWD's photography blog, relevant topics

Learn about photographing roses on these sites:

<http://digital-photography-school.com/photographing-flowers> Digital Photography School

http://www.rdrop.com/~paul/main_sept2002.html Paul Barden's great tips & photos

<http://www.rose-roses.com/hobby/phototips.html> Bob Bauer's detailed rose shooting tips



Get in close for drama (Bolero, point and shoot Canon G11 on macro setting)

Your Camera

Keep your camera by the back door, ready to grab. If you see a picture you want to take, don't wait. The rose, the light and the wind are constantly changing.

Start with the camera you have right now. Read the manual and possibly get a companion book on how to use your particular camera. Get to the point where your camera is easy to use. Then, if you want to move up to another camera, you'll know exactly what you want and need. You don't need to spend a lot of money to take good rose photos. However, you do need to know your camera.

If you are choosing a camera, digital is the way to go. After your initial investment you can take unlimited pictures, experiment and see the results immediately. Instant gratification! You also have the option of adjusting your photos on your computer later. The camera should take pictures of at least 6 megapixels if you are going to be printing out 8x10 inch prints.

There are two basic camera types: point and shoot and SLR (Single-Lens Reflex). Both types can automatically focus and choose shutter speed and lens aperture. You can find point and shoot cameras that will let you get into the menu and make your own choices. Some have better lenses. Some of them even have macro settings that allow you to take close-ups. This is a big plus for rose photography.

SLR cameras offer more control over camera settings. All the important controls have easy to use buttons and dials on the camera body. Nikon and Canon are the industry standards for SLRs. Both are excellent. SLR cameras allow you to change lenses for different purposes. A really good lens can make a big difference in picture quality.

To shoot macro with an SLR, either get a macro lens (105mm works quite well) or get a Close-up Lens. They don't cost nearly as much as a macro lens and screw right onto the front of a lens like a filter.

Leave your camera set on the highest quality file size and format. This will be either be the largest size/highest-quality jpeg or RAW format, depending on your camera. Your pictures will take up more room on your memory card and computer but they will also print better. If you want to do digital adjustments later, there will be more possibilities available to you.

Memory Cards

Make sure your memory card is up for the job. A four gigabyte memory card lets me take 398 photos in RAW format. Don't erase your memory card's photos in your computer. Put the card back in your camera and format it. Formatting improves the performance of your card as well as deleting the photos. Do double check that the photos are on your computer first.



Bring your imagination to your photos: A cane with a purple bucket as background (Canon G11, macro setting)

Most Important

More important than the camera is what you bring to the photo: your experience, knowledge and creativity. I've enjoyed and greatly benefited from photography classes. You can learn a lot online and from books as well. Learning is definitely part of the fun.

Part Two: Focus and Lighting