



BE CREATIVE
CREATE BEAUTY



THE GUIDE TO PRETTY FLOWER PHOTOS



BY JEN BRADY

Start smelling the flowers

The majority of us don't take time to stop and smell the flowers.

From gorgeous petals, to a firefly sitting on a leaf; everything can be a work of art. You can create photos that make people happy, while doing something you enjoy!

I love that nature allows us to look around and celebrate the not so little miracles around us everyday. Think about how the spider perfectly weaves their web and how birds know just what twigs to use for their babies homes.

I am truly amazed at the spiritual experience afforded to me from noticing these details. It allows me to rejoice in things we see everyday.

Thank you for your time and attention, I feel that what you learn here will inspire you and those you share your work with. Photography has a way of doing that!



What do I need to start?

The big question asked by every aspiring photographer, “**Do I need a DSLR?**”

You **can** use a phone camera if you do not want to spend money on a DSLR. It is a great way to learn composition and color.

The quality of the image, especially for printing, will vary depending on your choice.

I spent a long time wondering if I should buy a DSLR and even though that is what I work with, I didn't go out and buy the most expensive camera or lenses.

If you invest in a fancy camera, know that there will be a learning curve. An expensive camera does not make anyone a better photographer in the same way that expensive paints and brushes do not make someone an amazing artist. This is exactly why this guide is about lighting and creativity, instead of technical instructions about cameras.

Equipment based on your budget



Frugal and fun:

A cell phone camera

A lens kit for your camera (I like Pocket Lens and CamKix)

Editing apps (I like VSCO and Lightroom)

Bonus: reflector, mini tripod/Gorillapod, white umbrella

A little more expensive:

A DSLR camera (I like Canon)

A Macro Lens and any other lenses for your desired effects based on your taste

Editing software (I like Lightroom)

A tripod

Bonus: tent for wind, reflector, plamp, Gorillapod, white umbrella or soft diffuser



Tip: It might be best to try your phone and other cheaper cameras while you learn the foundations.

I started with smartphone photography. I got really into it when I found out you could buy affordable macro lenses, telephoto lenses, and wide-angle lenses, all for your phone!

This is an affordable way to get started, having a limited tool can make you be more creative.

If you learn anything, it's this: Lighting makes a photo

Natural light looks great and it's free.

I am a huge, huge fan of “the golden hour” when taking photos outside. This is the hour before sunset and before sunrise.

It's interesting how images look beautiful to our eyes in full sun and with shadows, but it doesn't work when creating an image in the camera.





Golden hour is when you can find even, golden light. This kind of light does not have harsh shadows or over-exaggerated highlights.

Let's say you can't wait for golden hour, no problem!

Try to take pictures in the shade or create shade. You can do this with your hand, an umbrella, or even a piece of paper.

The main idea is to avoid harsh light on your subject

You can also work inside using a window. If you are using a window and it's sunny, you'll want to diffuse the light with a sheer curtain.

I do not personally use flash or other lights.

The light source can be really beautiful inside when you place it to the left or right of your subject.

Definitely experiment and find out what works for you.

To recap! Here are some of the best light settings for photos:

Shade

Cloudy days

Golden hour

Window light

Diffused window light



Where do we find flowers?

So where do we find flowers anyway?
You don't have to do anything fancy!

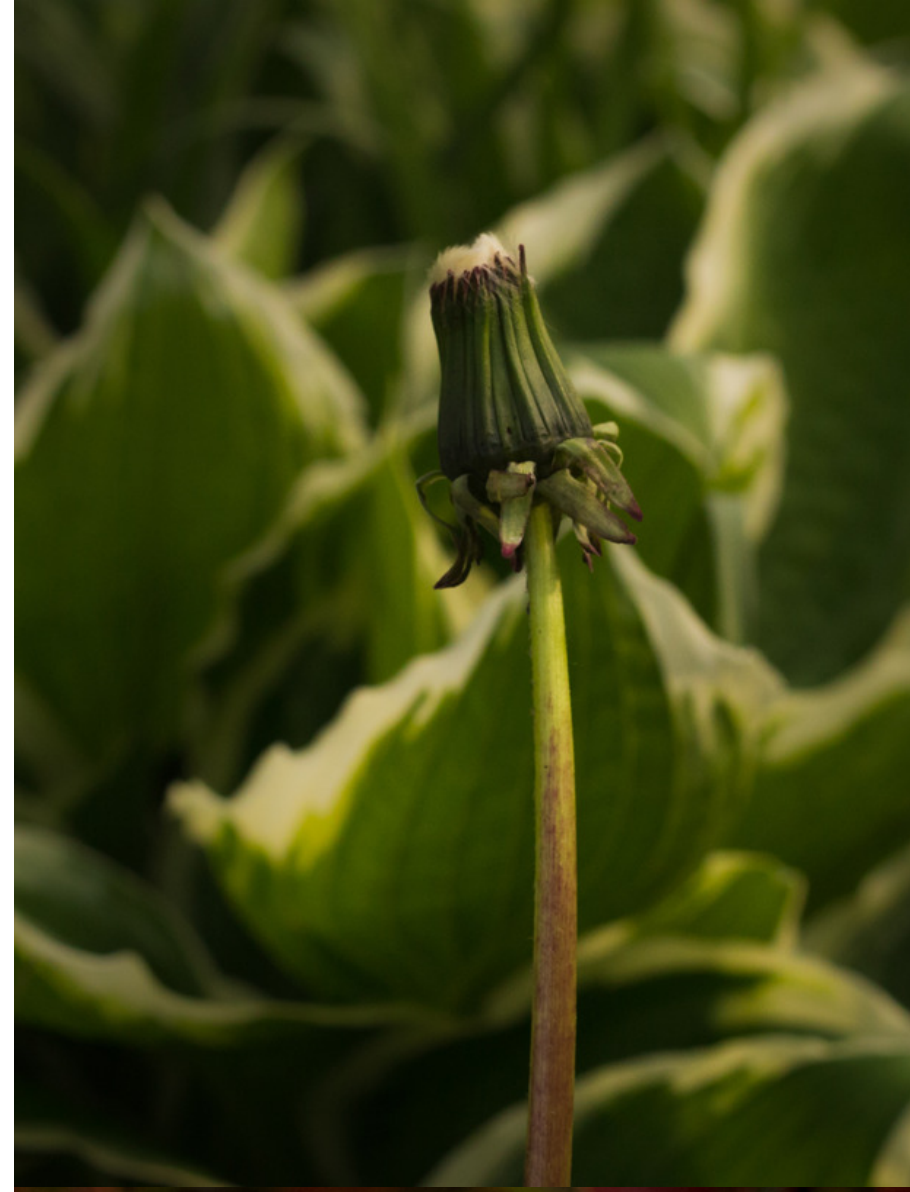
You can go to your own backyard,
or even take photos with flowers from
your local florist. Be careful not to use
any plants that are toxic to pets!

One of my favorite things to do is to go
into our yard and find beauty that
I would not have otherwise noticed.

Photographing subjects I see every day
gives me a true appreciation for their
impressive beauty.

I am not living on a botanical garden and
yet I can find so much to appreciate.

It's quite amazing!





Bugs

Let's talk about bugs.

I was able to get really creative with my phone camera when I discovered macro lenses for my phone. This gave me the ability to take photos of peony-eating ants.

I started getting feedback from people who were interested in my ant and flower photos, to be honest it really encouraged me to keep going.

I'm now a big believer in telling people when you love what they are doing. You never know if you'll encourage them to pursue something they are passionate about.

I love how people tell me they feel happy looking at my photos and I feel happy creating them!

If you go into your backyard (please avoid ticks at all costs) you can find spiders, lightning bugs, caterpillars, ants, and all kinds of bugs for interesting photos.



Photography makes you appreciate the little things.

Spiderwebs, flowers, and bird nests illustrate the amazing intelligent designs within nature.

If bugs are not your thing, I completely understand. It's alright to stick to flowers.



Photo editing

Thanks to apps and software, editing is now very simple to do.

Free and paid programs can help make your pictures look great.

My personal favorite is Lightroom. They have a mobile version in addition to desktop programs.

A lot of people like Photoshop, I personally find Lightroom easier to use for my style of photography and thought it was quite easy to learn. Alien Skin is also very interesting. Apps like Snapseed and VSCO are very popular too.

Find one editor that seems intuitive to you, that is the best one!

Common adjustments in editing include contrast, clarity, shadows, highlights, and much more!

Color can be adjusted in many ways. Hue, saturation, vibrancy, and luminance are all possible adjustments you might make.





Your options for editing depend on your app,
but one thing is very important:

White balance is essential.

White balance can make your photo look too yellow,
underexposed, overexposed, too green, too blue.

This can be adjusted with a dropper tool and by
editing your exposure. Editing your image to be
warm or cool will help a lot too.

I recommend playing around with a sample photo to
get familiar with all of the options. Your adjustments
will depend on each photo and the lighting you use.

If you're using a DSLR you will be able to adjust in
camera by choosing the white balance.



You can also use presets and filters to try different styles. I believe flowers look great with some simple adjustments in vibrancy, sharpness and white balance.

When you start editing, take a day off and then look at your photos again with a fresh perspective. Sometimes you'll love photos you thought you didn't like!

It's quite possible that it will take you a year or two to really know what your style is. I wouldn't even really try to label it since this will naturally happen over time. This learning process is frustrating and wonderful all at once!

Once you know what your editing style is, you'll be able to make your photos look cohesive. This is a great way to make your collection look high quality.



Tip: Back up your files!

This can make the difference between losing all of your hard work or saving it.

Save high-quality files that you care about in three different places when possible. You can use an external hard drive, Amazon, Google Drive, Dropbox, thumb drives, and more.

Make sure that these are easy to access if you need them later.

Don't depend on saving them in one place, especially not on your camera.



Sizing

What do I mean when I say high-quality sizes!?

Anytime you download photos, you're going to need to know the correct export settings for your use.

The correct export will vary based on your editing program. Google is your friend when deciding what settings to use if you're exporting from Lightroom or Photoshop, apps may have a simple option for large and small sizes.

You can always make a large image small, but you cannot make a small image large.

Always do test prints. You need to know how the lab you're working with prints your work, it always looks slightly different than your screen.

Try different labs and see where you can get the best quality prints. I was amazed at the difference when I started trying printers online.

What makes a photo “good”?



It's good to play with all of your editing options and then present a consistent look that you enjoy.

Look to other photographers for inspiration, but be you!

Here are some things to keep in mind:

Texture can add dimension.

Using lower exposure can enhance details.

I like people to feel like they can touch the flowers in my photos.

Contrast is also a powerful way to create dramatic artwork.

Color is important and can be defined in many ways.

Play with contrasting and complementary colors, which are proven ways to add beauty.

I recommend exploring a color wheel and learning about color theory.



Composition will also make or break your photo.

Try to crop in camera and not in editing,
so you do not lose any pixels.

I also recommend looking into the Rule of Thirds, Leading Lines, Symmetry, Rule of Odds, Fill the Frame, and Negative Space.

Play with different angles to provide different perspectives.

You can also make a photo more interesting by adding drops of water, a bug, a bird, and complementary colors!

Always use a tripod when possible, the sharper your image, the better the quality. Blur can also be fun when working on something artistic, but always have your main subject in focus.

Those are just a start, there are many more! Refer to these ideas any time you are looking for inspiration.

Black and white



Black-and-white is a well known way to create classic beauty.

I adore a good HDR black and white photo. I also like the softness of a black and white photo with lighter gray tones.

See how I just described two completely different things even though they they are both black and white?

I think everyone should experiment in black and white, even if that's not what you think your style is.

You may surprise yourself and learn a lot about contrast.

Tip: Keep a variety of tones while still maintaining some true whites and some true blacks on your image.

I like to refer people to the work of Ansel Adams to show the importance of contrast and tone.

Sharing your work with others

Flower photography can be a delightful hobby to share in many ways!

You'll find that if you share your photos, people might really like them. It's a beautiful thing!

Let's talk about how you can bring joy to people through art.

Here are some ideas:

Cards (thank you, birthday, etc.)

Stickers

Photo prints (canvas, framed, etc.)

Mugs

Calendars

Buttons

Magnets



Selling your work



What about selling your work? There are some ways you can make a side income from this amazing hobby.

I believe it would be very hard to do full-time, but there are many possible streams of income:

You can teach classes, create a photography book, sell artwork online, sell prints to coffee shops and other businesses, sell stock photos, go to art fairs, and much more.

Selling your artwork in person means less competition. This could be a good way to start, unless you are willing to put in the time to market yourself on social media. Some organic ways to market yourself in person or online can include: *sharing tips, telling personal stories about how you got into photography, and anything that connects people to more than just your photos.*



Authenticity



Be yourself, don't copy others.

Do what feels right and don't change yourself for the sake of selling.

We're living in a world where authenticity and transparency is what attracts consumers.

Do the type of work that makes you happy whether you're getting paid or not. You will find a following and those are the people you want to be part of your Fanbase.

Sharing your art online



We are so blessed to be able to share art now more than ever before. No longer do you need to know a rich person to get your work in a gallery or to get it published somewhere where people will see it.

It's quite astounding.



I personally think Instagram and possibly even Facebook are great for this.

Definitely create a website of a curated the gallery of your photos, along with a blog or newsletter sign up.



Tip: A small gallery is best. Too many images are overwhelming to your audience.

Part of being a photographer is being picky and curating only your best work, even though you may feel emotionally connected to all of it.

What are some photography styles that are popular right now?

One very popular style is “light and airy.” This is very bright, with light whites and a lighter exposure. It is very common in wedding photography and looks beautiful with pastel colors. It is much lighter than true to life colors and sometimes look muted.

Dark and moody is another style, this doesn't just refer to lighting. In fact, if you try to take photos in the dark with some cameras, you'll find that a lot of noise is added to the black tones.

The dark and moody photos have rich colors, often with a gold or blue tone to them when in color.



Painterly is another interesting style. Painterly is very artistic and will take your work into the fine arts. Alien Skin is a popular editor for this. You can play with blur, colors, and overlays in Photoshop. It's a whole other animal, but very special because it puts an artist's spin on how you would like an image to look.

Vintage styling can take on many tones and sometimes even look matte.

If you look at old photos from the 60's, they can have an orange or yellow cast, photos from this style are edited to be matte and grain is added.

Try all the styles to see what you love.

Now take some photos!

I recommend using the fundamentals you learn from this book to get started, but photography always begs to learn more.

You can find out if photography classes in garden photography are offered at your local botanical garden, garden club, or nature center. If not, this could be a community you create!

We all start somewhere. The longer you do this, the more you should dislike like your old photos!

When you're embarrassed by your old work, you know you've grown and learned. The main thing you can do is keep taking pictures and keep editing. Keep surrounding yourself with inspiration.

Thanks for reading, enjoy!

