

Case Study #04

PHOTOGRAPHING FABULOUS FLOWERS



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

Knowing your objective when you shoot is key to getting the image that you want. You should always ask yourself what you are trying to achieve in a shot. Your objective, in flower photography, can be anything from trying to capture a unique shape or texture to showing your flower in context with its surroundings.

Three things drew me to the Brown-Eyed Susan I photographed: I liked the flower's vibrant yellow color; I was drawn to its shape, with the concentric circles, radiating out from the middle to the edge of the petals; and I loved the varying textures from the soft petals to the 'bristly' looking middle.

After taking the image, I realized that I needed to zoom in on my subject to really do it justice. Because this was a picked flower, it allowed me to move the flower around, in its vase and try out different backgrounds to help showcase this beautiful specimen. All the following shots were taken outdoors, using natural light.



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This image shows a cropped version of the same flower from the first image. By moving in closer, the viewer gets a better look at the flower's details and the texture of the middle of the flower. A narrow depth of field was used, as this was shot with a macro lens, so attention was needed to get the focus on the point of interest.

The background for this image was created by the leaves of a nearby tree. I often use this tree

for my flower photos as it is far enough away to create a nice soft background. I usually like it, as green is associated with nature and it tends to not overpower the flowers I am shooting. But upon reviewing this shot, I felt like the yellows and greens, being near each other on the color wheel, didn't allow for much contrast or interest.



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My next thought was to better showcase the flower with a background color that would help it “pop.” A nearby seat cushion provided a blue background for this purpose, as seen in the image above.

Again, I shot close in, focusing on those details in the texture of the flower once more. But the close crop wasn’t doing much for the shape of the flower. Our brains can fill in the missing pieces when a familiar shape spills out of the frame, but I

felt like a different composition would better show off this pretty flower.

For my final shot, I decided to opt for a centered, symmetrical image of the flower. Using the macro lens set up a bit farther away, I was able to capture more of the flower in focus, with the wider depth of field achieved from shooting at this distance. This composition helped showcase the flower’s color, shape, and texture in a way that the earlier photos didn’t.



Photograph by Leanne Cleaveley

When shooting flowers, first consider your objective and then let that purpose guide the creation of your images until you get the shot you really want. Sometimes this may mean a little 'trial

and error' as you strive to get your composition right, but it can be worth the extra bit of time it takes to get the image you really want.