

FOXROCK & DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

Taking Better Photos – Tips for Beginners

Read the manual. Boring maybe, but essential reading if you want to get the best out of your camera.

- Turn on the grid.
- Set IMAGE to highest quality jpeg.
- Clean the lens with a lens cloth. Never use tissue, kitchen towel, or ordinary cloth. Never blow on the lens.

iPhone and iPad photos

- In SETTINGS, turn on HDR and the grid (see Composition below).
- Landscape style often works best on iPhone and iPad photos, but try portrait style too.

Lighting

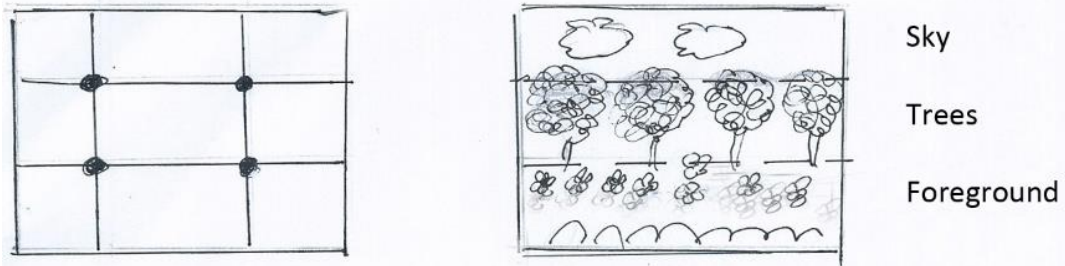
- Generally speaking, the sun should be behind you.
- Try to avoid taking photos where the sun is shining directly on the subject (i.e. at high noon).
- Move around the garden or flower, try the shot from different angles.
- Dawn and dusk are best for garden images (the light is soft, no harsh shadows).

Visualise before you click

- Put your thumb and forefinger together to make a square/rectangle.
- Close one eye and look through the rectangle, see where the central point of interest is.

Composition (but there are no rules which can't be broken)

The rule of thirds states that the most important elements in the scene should be placed along the gridlines or at the intersections where the lines meet.



- Photo should be sharpest at the main point of interest (i.e. at the centre of a flower).
- To reduce distractions in background, go in closer to the subject. Take photos from different angles.
- Look for pleasing colour contrasts, patterns and textures.
- Try photographing the same subject in landscape and portrait style.

Camera shake = out of focus

- Stand with feet well apart, or brace yourself against a tree or pole or anything solid.
- Tuck your elbows in. Take a deep breath and hold it until you've clicked.
- This is especially important when the light is low.

Processing photos

- Don't delete anything until you've seen it on the computer.
- You might be able to rescue a bad shot, or crop out an area, to make a photo within a photo.
- Must start with high quality image. Not always possible with photos off camera phones.

Homework

- Become more observant.** Go for a walk. Count how many red objects you can see in five minutes, then orange, etc around the rainbow. Look at them on your computer screen and decide why some shots worked and others didn't. Save the ones you feel are the most pleasing; critique them all again in six months.
- Pick a flower. Pull off half the petals on one side, to expose the central area (anther, stigma, pollen etc). Spend a few minutes looking at the structure with a magnifying glass. Think of this central area before you click; it's the part that needs to be in sharpest focus in flower photography.
- Free downloads for editing: Photoshop Elements, Snapseed for phones and tablets. See YouTube for tutorials.