

## Macro Photography Notes

Rick Church.APAC Seminar 2005

**Macro Photography can open up a whole new world around us. Common, everyday, seemingly boring items can be brought to life in interesting ways with the use of Macro Photography. All it takes is a bit of specialized equipment, some time to use it, and the imagination to find this great new world.**

### Problems related to Macro Photography:

Depth of field is a constant obstacle when shooting up close, requiring very small apertures. Typically I shoot at f22 or smaller.

When shooting flowers, a favourite macro subject, wind movement of subject is always an issue, especially when stopping down for DOF and the resulting slow shutter speeds.

The same applies to another favourite subject, fast moving insects and spiders.

Use of tripod can sometimes be difficult when close to the ground or the subject.

Control of backgrounds is a big part of fine macro photography.

Many of these issues can be dealt with by using flash for macro use. Use of flash allows normal shutter speeds with small apertures, but lens can sometimes block flash access.

Off camera flash alleviates to some extent this problem. Higher shutter speeds can allow hand held macro work in some cases.

### Equipment:

**Camera of choice.** All modern cameras, and many older ones are capable of superb macro work.

**Tripod:** A tripod with independent legs and removable centre post is an asset.

**Right angle viewfinder:** Not absolutely necessary, but a real help with ground level shots.

**Close up filters or diopters:** Do the job but can't match a dedicated macro lens.

**Macro Lens:** Modern macro lenses are superb! My images were shot with a Tamron SP 90.

**Teleconverters:** A good teleconverter can very effectively bring you even closer.

**Extension Tubes:** A great tool to have for non macro lenses and for very close work.

**Reflectors and shades:** An inexpensive way to help control illumination.

**Bean Bags:** Cheap and effective low level support for your camera.

**Clothes Pins:** Cheap and effective also, for control of wispy flowers and grasses.

**Various sticks to support long flower stems:** Push into the ground up against the flower stem.

**Cable or Electronic Shutter Release:** A must if you don't have mirror lockup capabilities.

**Electronic Flash:** Really helps control illumination and backgrounds.

**Off camera Flash cable if needed:** Get that flash away from the camera for creativity.

**Polarizing filters:** Can be used on lenses and flash to control highlights.

**Tarp and/or Knee Pads:** Keep dry for the drive home.

**Background cloth:** Helps control backgrounds.

### Features:

**Depth of Field Preview:** If you have it, use it. If you don't consider it for your next camera purchase.

**Mirror Lock-up:** Separates the good images from the great ones. If you have it, use it!

**Image Stabilization/Anti Shake:** Limited to Digital Cameras. Turn it off for tripod use.

**Off Camera Flash Capabilities:** Gives much greater control of illumination and backgrounds.  
**Use of Viewfinder cap or Shutter:** Keeps extraneous light from effecting exposures.

### **Subjects for Macro Photography**

Anything that interests the maker.

### **Things to Consider:**

**Ambient light:** *On sunny days, usually too harsh or blue cast in shadows.*

**Reflected light:** *Bounce in just the right amount. Colour reflectors change tones.*

**Shade out the harsh light.** *(Shade background as well as subject)*

**On Camera Flash:** *Not practical for most macro work.*

**Off Camera Flash using different angles:** *use flash compensation if available to control output.*

**Use of very small apertures and flash:** *Driving backgrounds dark to eliminate distractions.*

**Cross Polarized flash:** *Eliminates harsh highlights. Takes lots of flash power.*

### **Common Problems:**

Subject Movement.

Shallow depth of field. (Remember, the smaller the f stop the better)

Shade affects on colours. Blue skies show up in shadows.

Extension Tubes and Teleconverters effects on aperture. Both reduce effective aperture.

Flash control problems TTL & Manual. Controlling intensity of flash.

Unusual subjects for macro work. (Only limited by your imagination!)

Common household items and cooking ingredients.

Dismantle discarded electronics and photographic components.

Feathers.

Buttons.

Coins.

### **What to do with your macro work:**

Enjoy them yourself, and show your friends.

Printing and displaying.

Slide montages using identical images back to back.

I hope this presentation has opened your eyes to the Macro World, and encourages you to spend some time exploring this wonderful area of photography. Please feel free to send me some of your work, or email any questions you may have at

[rchurch@telus.net](mailto:rchurch@telus.net)

Thanks for coming!

Rick Church,  
Langley Camera Club.