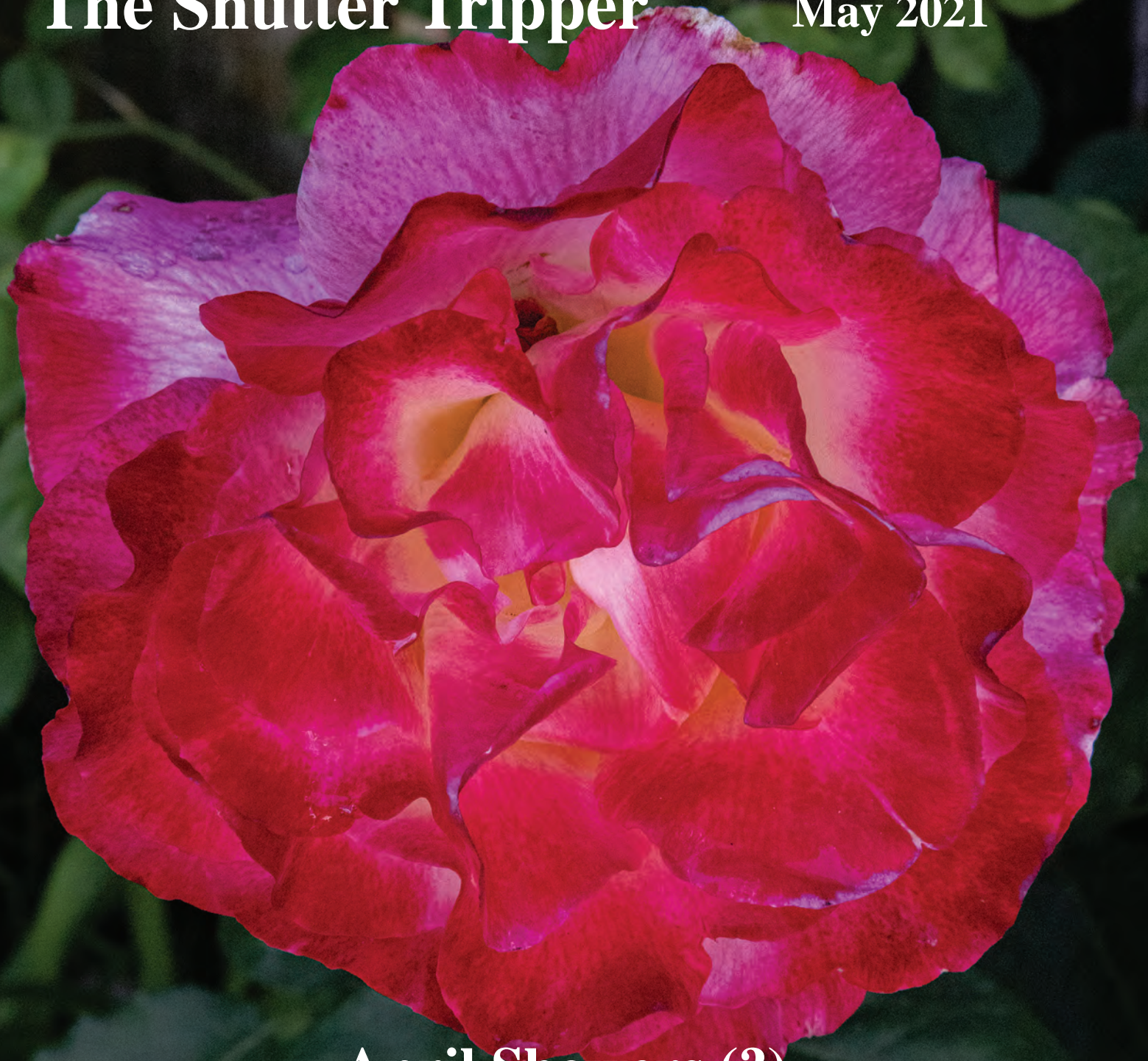


# Stockton Camera Club

**The Shutter Tripper**

**May 2021**



**April Showers (?)  
Brings May Flowers!**

## SCC Officers 2021

### President

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## President's Message

May 2021

By Heide Stover

Last month I gave the club my PSA image analysis workshop. I hope everyone learned from it and enjoyed the class.

As you all know, I am working on getting another PSA presentation for us. The presenter will be calling me on Thursday to work out dates and times. I will get back to you with that so we can see what works best for most of our group. Most of us have probably had our vaccines by now and are ready to start doing things again. We still need to play it safe though. I did contact the bowling alley but they have not opened the rooms yet and I was told to check back in August. So, for now we will still be doing the meetings via zoom.

I hope you all are getting a chance to get out and do some photography.

Heide

## A Big Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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## 2021 Calendar of Events

Every 3rd Thursday (Except April, June & Aug) 6:30 PM	West Lane Bowling Alley Stockton	Membership Meeting Contact Heide Stover <a href="mailto:h1stover@aol.com">h1stover@aol.com</a>
Thursday May 20	Zoom Meeting Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Macro/Close-up
Thursday June 17	Zoom Meeting Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject)
Thursday July 15	Zoom Meeting Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Creative
Thursday September 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	September General Meeting Special Subject - Textures
Thursday October 21	Zoom Meeting Stockton	October General Meeting Special Subject - Black & White/Monochrome
Thursday November 18	Zoom Meeting Stockton	November General Meeting Special Subject - Prints (if meeting) if not Open
Thursday December 18	Zoom Meeting Stockton	December General Meeting Special Subject - Trees

## 2022 Calendar of Events

Thursday January 20	Stockton	Annual Meeting/Banquet
Thursday February 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	February General Meeting Special Subject - Amore/Love
Thursday March 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	March General Meeting Special Subject - Prints (if meeting) if not Open
April	TBA	April Workshop/Photo Opportunity
Thursday May 19	Zoom Meeting Stockton	May General Meeting Special Subject - Ice
Thursday June 16	Zoom Meeting Stockton	June General Meeting Special Subject - Prints Only (No Special Subject)
Thursday July 21	Zoom Meeting Stockton	July General Meeting Special Subject - Kids at Play

**Stockton Camera Club  
2021 Competition Standings**

Please check out the website <http://www.stockton-cameraclub.com/home.html>”

<b>Class A Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
Reginald Lee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lanny Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Susanne Nichols	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charlene Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brenda DeRoos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adrian Ferreya	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ricky Ortiz	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Albert Rivas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackie Berryessa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
David Wireback	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Class AA Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>NOV</b>	<b>DEC</b>
Doug Ridgway	77	58	19	38	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ron Wetherell	77	58	19	38	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christine Blue	76	58	18	36	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wayne Carlson	72	53	19	34	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheldon McCormick	71	52	19	36	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elizabeth Parrish	66	49	17	33	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joan Erreca	65	49	16	33	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karleen Gansberg	65	55	10	33	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Darrell O’Sullivan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Class AAA Standing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>FEB</b>	<b>MAR</b>	<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUN</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>SEP</b>	<b>OCT</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>DEC</b>
Dean Taylor	78	58	20	39	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trey Steinhart	77	58	19	38	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharon McLemore	77	58	19	39	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heide Stover	76	56	20	38	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Joanne Sogsti	76	58	18	39	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Em McLaren	75	57	18	37	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## 2021 Competition Policy

### A. GENERAL RULES

1. Only paid-up members may enter club competition.
2. Regular print and digital image competition period: Once each month except January. A competition year is February through December. Current regular meetings are February, March, May, July, September, October and December. The number of meetings may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and approval of the general membership as facilities permit. The Annual Awards Dinner will be held in January.
3. A total of four (4) images (all prints, all digital or a combination of both) may be entered each competition month. A total of three (3) images may be entered in the Open Division and a total of one (1) in the Special Subject Division. The number of entries may change from time to time at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the approval of the general membership.
4. Each image will be scored from 6 to 10 points. All prints or digital images receiving 9 or 10 points will be classed as an honor image. The title of each print or digital image entered will be read before being evaluated. The name of the maker will be read for 9-point honor winners. Maker's names will be announced for the 10 point images after the Print & Digital Image-of-the-Month winners are chosen.
5. A print or digital image that does not receive an honor score, may be re-entered one more time in the same division.
6. A print or digital image may be entered in all divisions for which it qualifies; i.e., an honor image in Open may also be entered in the Special Subject Division at another competition. A print or digital image that receives an honor score may not be re-entered in the same division.
7. Any print or digital image that appears to be ineligible for competition or not qualified for a specific division could expect to be challenged. The Competition Vice-President shall decide whether or not the image is acceptable.
8. The exhibitor must have exposed each negative, slide or digital image entered. All images submitted for judging must be the work of the photographer/maker including the taking of the images and any digital enhancements and/or manipulation of the image. This does not apply to the processing of film or printing by a commercial processor.
9. The same image should not be entered both as a print and a projected digital image in the same competition.
10. In the event of absence or barring unforeseen circumstances, a member may submit make-up prints or digital images for one competition night per competition year; and whenever possible must submit all make-up prints or digital images at the meeting immediately following the month a member failed or was unable to submit the prints or digital images. Make-ups in the Special Subject Division must be the same subject as the month missed. Also, in case of absence a member may assign the responsibility of submitting his or her prints and/or digital images for competition to another member.
11. A club member who serves as judge cannot enter his or her own prints or digital images in the same competition. The judge's make-up prints or digital images can then be entered in another competition during that competition year. This is in addition to the once-a-year make-up provision already

allowed.

12. Prints or digital images may be projected/viewed briefly before the judging of each division if the judge indicates he/she would like a preview.

### B. PRINT ENTRY RULES

1. Each print entered must have a completed label attached to the back of the print including; name of maker, title, date entered and Division (Open or Special Subject). The writing or printing on the form must be legible. Labels must be attached on the back of the print in the upper left-hand corner for correct viewing of the print.
2. All prints must be matted or mounted with a total size (including mat board) of no larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10". Exception: One side of a Panorama Print may be no larger than 36". Prints that are smaller than 5" X 7" will not be accepted. The maker's name must not appear on the viewing surface of the image. Framed prints shall not be entered.
3. Prints accompanied by entry forms should be submitted no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.
4. Prints receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Print-of-the-Month honors. Print-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.

### C. DIGITAL IMAGE ENTRY RULES

1. Digital images must be submitted in a format and by the deadline specified by the Competition Vice-President. Digital images may be submitted by email, mailed (CD) or delivered (CD) to the Competition Vice-President. Definition of Digital Image: An image taken with a digital camera, a negative, slide or print scanned into the computer and processed digitally.
2. Images must be in a format compatible with the projector. The key thing to keep in mind when formatting photos for submission is that the projector we use in the competition has a (maximum) resolution of 1400 x 1050 pixels. This means that any photo that exceeds this size in either dimension, could end-up being cropped by the projector. In other words: the image width cannot be more than 1400 pixels and the image height cannot be more than 1050 pixels. If your image is horizontal, only change the width to 1400, if your image is vertical, only change the height to 1050. Do not change both. Down-sizing the image from the "native" resolution coming out of your camera also significantly reduces the file size. This helps when emailing the files and takes-up less space on our hard-drives.
3. The maker's name, title of image, date entered and division (Open or Special Subject) must be included as the title of the image. When you have finished re-sizing your image save your image with a new title. For example do a Save as: Smith Sunrise Splendor 05-15 O.jpeg. (O-Open or SS-Special Subject). Specify whether you're Beginner, Advanced or Very Advanced.
4. Digital Images receiving a score of 10 points, in each class, will be regrouped and judged for selection for the Digital Image-of-the-Month honors. Digital Image-of-the-Month honors will be given in Class A, AA & AAA.



## Macro Photography: Sculpting & Shaping Light

By [MATTHEW CICANESE](#)

**"Understanding how to sculpt and soften your light, and practicing it enough that it becomes second nature, is a cornerstone in becoming more proficient in your foundational skills as a macro photographer."**

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of macro photography is lighting. Light is the essence of photography itself, and the way that the light falls on your scene (and subject) plays a critical role in capturing compelling images. Understanding how to sculpt and soften your light, and practicing it enough that it becomes second nature, is a cornerstone in becoming more proficient in your foundational skills as a macro photographer. This article will outline the principles behind working with natural and artificial light (including Speedlites and LEDs), and enable you to approach your macro photography lighting with a newfound level of control.

A quick note about accessories & additional equipment mentioned in this article: While these additional accessories are what I find works well for me personally, there are many other options out there as well, and you should do your own research to determine what will work best for you.



### SCULPTING & SHAPING NATURAL LIGHT

I believe that there is a certain quality to the right natural light that can't be replicated by people or machines. The magical light of dawn and dusk are natural light's "je ne sais quoi," and they only make up a small percent of your available time to shoot. When working with this type of natural light, you've got to be in the right place at the right time to potentially make the image you're hoping for. This can be a very challenging endeavor to achieve in many cases, because of the scarcity and rarity of this light. The dreamy, golden-hour light may only be around for less than 10% of the day if all the conditions are just right.

The other category of natural light dominates the day, and isn't typically desirable for macro photography. This harsh, stark sunlight can cause blown-out colors and highlights (in addition to extreme contrast). When you can't luck out with timing the magical light, this section will help you approach less than ideal situations in natural light, with confidence.

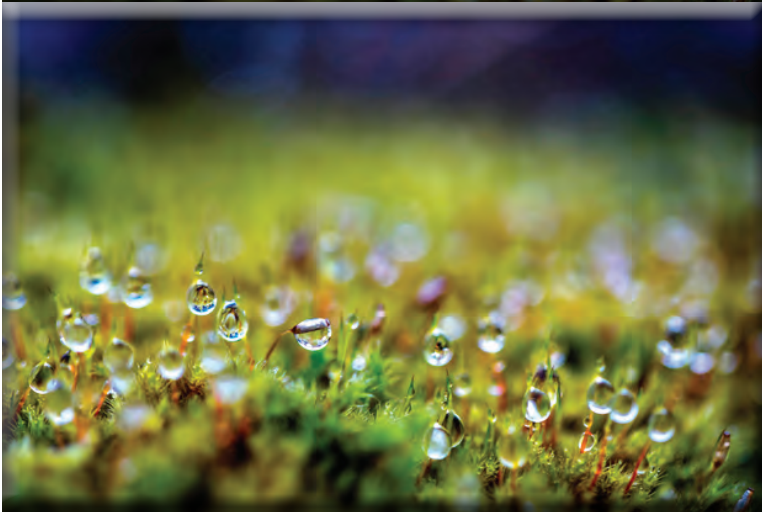
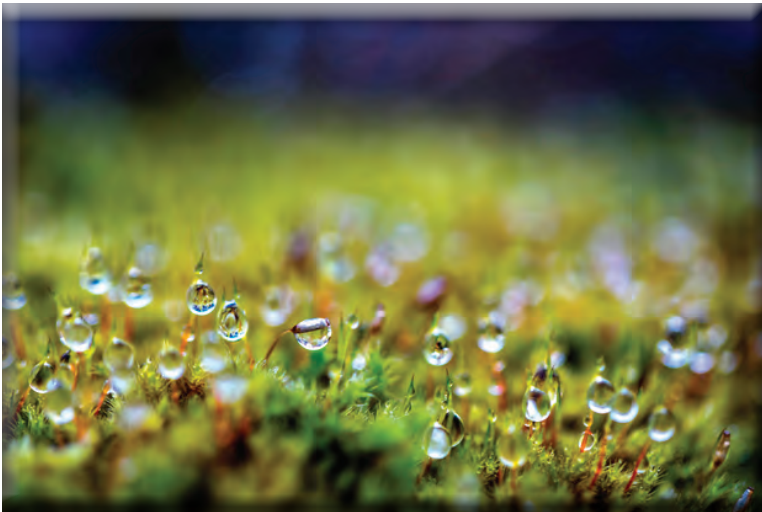
Now that we've reviewed some of the basic challenges of using natural light for macro photography, let's look at some ways to take control of it. Since we can't easily control the strength of the light source, our goal is to utilize tools that will allow us to control where that light goes (and how it spreads).



## **SOFTENING NATURAL LIGHT**

Softening natural light can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The most effective way to achieve this is by using a scrim. A scrim is a lightweight, translucent material that allows light to pass through it. When this happens, the light is dispersed over a wider area and appears softer as a result. A scrim for a close-up of a small subject can be as simple as a paper towel or a sheet of printer paper. Most modern reflectors for photography (“5-in-1” reflectors) have a scrim or diffuser built-in. However, I’ve found that plain, white shower curtain liners accomplish the same thing, and take up a much smaller space in my pack when I’m on a fieldwork expedition. Because these are so cheap, I can pack a couple of spares in my suitcase for just a few bucks, and cut them up into different sizes for different situations. Another perk to using the shower liner is you can very easily control the amount of light that passes through, by adjusting the thickness of the material. For example: if I was shooting in the midday sun with a shower liner as a scrim, and a single layer wasn’t softening the light enough, I could simply fold the scrim in half until I’ve reached the desired amount of diffusion. One challenge with using this method is getting the material to stay where you need it to. An alternative to this that has more rigidity would be a thin, plastic cutting board. Another good option would be a small white umbrella. The nice part about using an umbrella is that you can lean it directly on the ground and work underneath it, and if the weather turns bad you’ve also got a way to keep your gear dry!

Also keep in mind that often times, the environment itself can soften the natural light on overcast days. These cloudy days can be your best friend if you’re trying to achieve a nice, even light from natural sources.



## **SHAPING NATURAL LIGHT**

When it comes to shaping natural light, I turn to methods that allow me to bounce the light I’m working with onto my subject or scene. The easiest way to accomplish this is with a pre-made reflector. I like to keep a small pocket-sized reflector in my everyday kit; it’s a silver/white 12-inch (0.3m) disc that folds up really small, and can help in many situations. These are relatively cheap, and are my go-to for bouncing light. However, when I was a student I found ways to use household items to achieve the same effect. Some of the common things I have used to reflect light include aluminum foil, sunshades for car windshields, silver or gold crafting paper, and even shiny fabric! Whatever you have around the house or local general store, if it’s shiny it will work!

Using tools like the ones above to control where your light lands on your scene is extremely beneficial when it comes to working with natural light. They allow you to illuminate parts of your scene that wouldn’t otherwise be reached by available light. Let’s take a look at this in action.

A small, white disc reflector helped bounce just enough natural light into these water drops on the moss. When combined with a wide aperture and cloudy day, the image resulted in even light and some extra glow to the water drops.



## **WORKING WITH ARTIFICIAL LIGHT**

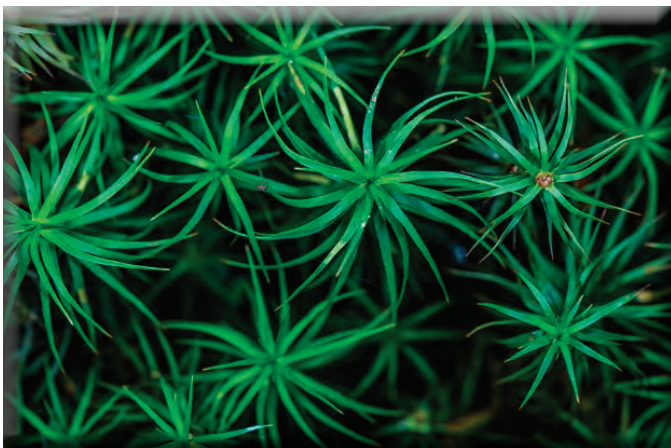
For my work, having absolute control over how light interacts with my scene and subjects is crucial. This means that a majority of the time, I'm working with artificial light. Having a consistent power output that is extremely controllable (and dependable) means less fussing around with getting my light just right. Lighting systems like the Canon Speedlite 600EX II-RT paired with a Canon ST-E3-RT Speedlite Transmitter can give you full control of your lighting without the need for wires or complicated setups. This type of kit setup is small, portable, and can get into places where natural light can't. I do a lot of work in dark forests, and using this style of lighting gives me the best of both worlds for control and outcome. When used correctly, you can mimic the look of natural light where it may otherwise never be present (such as a dark forest understory or the inside of a cave).

Another excellent source of artificial light for macro photography is constant (artificial) lighting. Constant lights are considered any light source that has a consistent (and constant) output onto your scene. They can be as simple as a flashlight, to a Bluetooth-controlled smart light that is color-corrected. Constant lights are great for seeing exactly how your scene will be illuminated, and in many cases allow for the most flexibility for sculpting your light in a scene. I personally use the Litra Pro — a 1200 lumen LED unit that is color-balanced, rugged, and waterproof. It's small enough to fit on a camera's accessory shoe, and has a built-in, rechargeable battery.

Let's have a look at how to utilize artificial light sources in macro photography, and how to transform an initially-harsh light into a smooth and desirable form...

Diffused Speedlite sample image





Softbox-diffused artificial light sample



Softbox-diffused artificial light sample.  
Mixed with reflector-bounce.

## **SPEEDLITES**

Speedlites offer a large variety of power, portability, and consistent light output. I always have at least a couple in my kit, along with a wireless triggering system. The benefits that this setup offers outweigh the limitations of battery-life and possible issues with weather sealing. Those limitations are fairly easy to overcome by carrying some extra batteries and plastic bags for inclement weather.

Diffusing the light that your flash produces is critical to achieving a soft, desirable light for your scene. Most Canon Speedlites have a built-in diffusion screen and bounce card, which can provide a small amount of extra control over how your light behaves. However, I recommend starting with a small softbox that attaches directly to your flash unit. These types of modifiers typically cost around \$20, and fold flat for easy storage when carrying them in your kit. They come in a variety of sizes and quality of materials, depending on the brand that you go with.

When I need to spread my light over a larger area than what a small softbox can offer, I utilize a larger softbox or reflective umbrella. These types of modifiers allow a much wider spread of light, and softer gradation of shadow over the subject. Conversely, if I want to concentrate my light into a particular area, I would use a honeycomb grid. This device acts as a way to narrow your flash into a single beam (versus a cone) and results in a spotlight effect. This can be great for highlighting one particular element or avoiding light spill into unwanted areas in your scene.

If you're looking for makeshift ways to achieve the same dynamics of your flash, there are lots of household items that can help you achieve similar effects. A white food storage container (like the plastic container that Chinese food often comes in) makes a great softbox in a pinch. Just cut a hole for your flash to fit through on the bottom, and place a paper towel on the underside of the lid. If you want to go bigger, try doing the same thing with a plastic dishwashing tub from a general store, or a styrofoam cooler for an even larger spread. Another DIY modifier for this type of light is a paper lantern, but I've found that this method is too fragile (as they break fairly easily, due to the thin paper).

## LEDS

In macro photography, knowing where and how your light will interact with your scene allows you to make creative decisions that lead to the final image. Of all the light sources available for macro shooting, the source that provides the greatest amount of insight as to the dynamics of your light is a constant light source. Constant light sources (such as LED panels, designed for photography and video) are offered in a large variety of sizes, build qualities, and features (such as color temperature control).

Most ready-made products can include a variety of accessories to help control the characteristics of the light that the unit produces. Diffusion panels, grids, and color gels are the most common forms that these accessories come in. Tools like this are designed for photography and videography, and many are equipped with features that cater to these types of shooting (such as threaded mounting holes).

DIY solutions for constant light are fairly straightforward. The standard LED flashlight or headlamp are limitless in variety, and different designs result in different effects on your scene. Flashlights with a zoom focus are very versatile for adjusting the characteristics of how the light spreads. You can use this like a spotlight (similar to a honeycomb grid). LED cob lights (“chip on board” LED lights, which typically are single color illumination) emit a very even, soft light (almost like a softbox). These are great for a wider spread and softer shadow gradation. Small pen lights are wonderful for getting light into very specific places, or for placing in areas where traditional lighting wouldn’t fit.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

No matter if you’re working with natural light or artificial light in macro photography, there’s always a unique solution to sculpt and shape your light for any situation.

I like to keep my light modifiers in their own little box or bag. It’s kind of a mishmash of go-to tools for a variety of situations. Try to always keep an open mind in thinking about ways to soften, shape, and sculpt the light for your subject. This can be an artform in itself, but your practice will pay off with stronger macro imagery as a result.

A note on ethics...

Remember to be courteous of all lifeforms, and respect their well-being. Don’t over-stress animals in order to get the shot you want, and don’t pick plants or other species that may be sensitive or endangered. Always show your subjects the best respect, and you will come out with the best images possible.

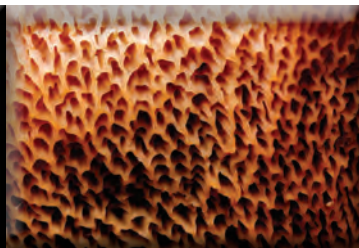


[MATTHEW CICANESE](#)

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As we rush through the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's sometimes easy to forget the importance of slowing down. Too often we find ourselves consumed by the "big picture" — deadlines, exams, presentations, meetings, and so on — that we unconsciously ignore the little things begging for our attention. The early morning dew on a flower petal, the intricate details of a spider web, the tiny insects buzzing around ... you get the idea.

Macro photography allows us to slow down, open our eyes, and capture the miniature details all around us, many of which are overlooked, underappreciated, and simply unnoticed as we hurry through our day-to-day routines. It's a concept American photographer, Aaron Siskind, so eloquently stated about living, seeing, and appreciating the moment: "Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving," he explained. "What you have caught on film is captured forever...it remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything." It's these little things — life's tiniest details — that make macro photography so special.

A true macro lens features a ratio of 1:1 magnification, offering the ability to capture life-size representations of insects, flowers, jewelry, and other small objects in super-close detail. This means it's possible to explore the miniature world around us as full-scale creations — allowing photographers and viewers to get within inches of the critters, bugs, patterns, and textures we so often take for granted.

Look around and you'll find tiny subjects just waiting for their larger-than-life transformation. Follow these tips to get up-close-and-personal with photography's hidden gems:



### Search for the Unexpected

Household items make the perfect, and perhaps the most unexpected, subjects for macro photography. Consider the intricate details of a wooden spoon, a tooth brush, a house key, or a box of crayons. While these items may seem like regular, mundane objects, in macro photography, they reveal interesting shapes, colors, and textures that instantly spark the imagination.



### Create Enticing Scenes

Food photographers shoot in macro to highlight the mouthwatering details of a meal. When photographed up close, ingredients such as butter, syrup, and melted cheese turn into abstract works of art. Don't be afraid to get creative — search around the kitchen for textured fruits and vegetables like corn kernels, asparagus spears, pea pods, and tomato slices to add a touch of (macro) magic to your photos. Even non-food items such as glassware, utensils, salt and pepper shakers, and tea pots make powerful statements.



### **Stop and Smell the Roses**

Yes, really. Soak up some fresh air and sunshine with a macro lens at hand. Nature is the ideal backdrop to experiment with close-up photography. Take a dandelion, for example. Captured with a standard lens, the dandelion is simply a small part of the main scene. But as a close-up photo, the delicate shapes and lines of the dandelion's seeds easily become the main focus. Similarly, leaves, flower petals, feathers, seashells, water droplets, and snowflakes — when snapped in macro — uncover beautiful imperfections and intricacies that are nearly invisible to the naked eye.



### **Capture a Bug's Life**

Ladybugs, bumblebees, butterflies — and yes, even spiders. Macro photography makes it possible to explore the adventures of a bug's life. The good news? You won't have to venture far! Step outside and you'll find countless insects ready to shine in the spotlight. With a little patience (and some cooperation on the bug's part), a macro lens can magnify the antennae, wings, whiskers, and hairs of an insect's body — giving unique perspectives and personalities to these sometimes feared and misunderstood creatures.



### **Reveal Personal Stories**

It's said that eyes are windows to the soul, and rightfully so. The human eye is similar to a fingerprint — it contains hundreds, if not thousands, of complexities and details exclusive to each individual person. Not surprisingly, eyes are one of the most important features in portrait photography, simply because they tell a personal story about your subject. Shot in macro, these stories are enhanced by focusing exclusively on the colorful shades, patterns, and undertones that make eyes truly pop.



## Macros and Spice and Everything Nice

By [Allan Weitz](#)

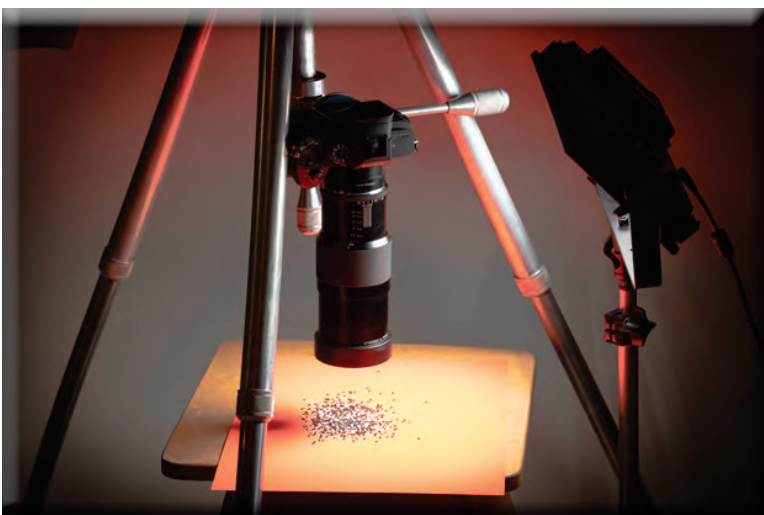
Photographs © Allan Weitz 2021



Going eye-to-eye with a praying mantis can be a trip and a half, but understandably, not everybody shares my enthusiasm for creepy crawlies. This doesn't mean you cannot enjoy the visual treats afforded by peering at everyday objects at life-size or greater magnifications. To illustrate my point, I pulled a half dozen spice jars out of my cupboard along with a few herbs from our spring garden and photographed them with full confidence that none of them would bite or sting me.



Assorted peppercorns magnified greater than life-size resemble shards of ancient pottery at a remote archaeological dig.



My setup was quite simple. My camera and lens combination was a Sony a7R III and a ZEISS 100mm f/2.8 Makro-Planar T\* lens adapted with a [Novoflex Contax/Yashica to Sony NEX lens adapter](#), which enabled focusing down to life-size (1:1). For additional magnification, I added a set of [Vello EXT-SFED2 AF extension tubes](#) (10mm and 16mm), which, together, added approximately 25% additional magnification to my existing camera/lens combination.

My system for these photographs consisted of a [Sony a7R III](#) with a ZEISS 100mm f/2.8 Makro-Planar macro lens, 10mm and 16mm extension tubes, a tripod with an inverted center post, and an LED lamp mounted on a floor stand. Nothing fancy, but very serviceable.

I extended the legs of my tripod to clear the narrow shooting platform and reversed the center column of my tripod. This configuration enabled me to shoot straight down at the spices, which were scattered just below the lens on colorful sheets of construction paper and poster board.



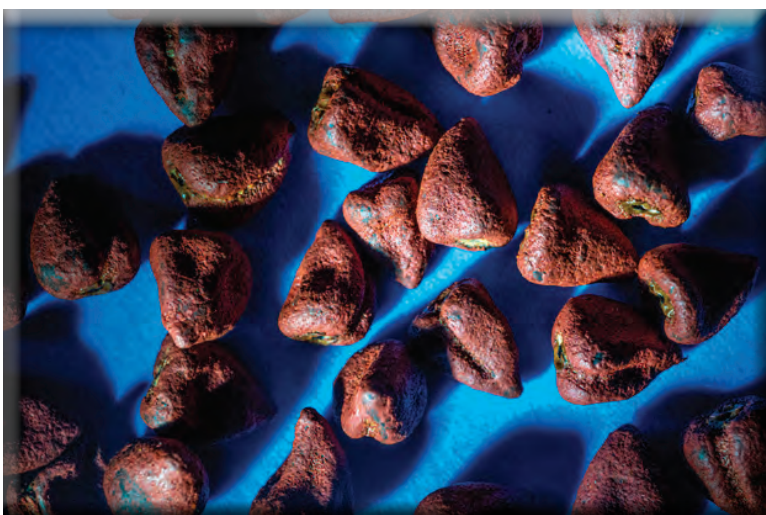
Cinnamon sticks look like an ancient form of decorative writing.

Two light sources were used to photograph these spices and herbs: a Genaray SP-E-365B SpectroLED Bi-Color lamp mounted on a floor stand and a small generic LED flashlight. The Genaray lamp output a broader, softer light than the flashlight, which output a harder, more focused light with more defined shadows. In a few instances, I used both lights together. The camera's AWB setting kept the colors well in check with a bit of tweaking, as usual, post capture.



Grains of annatto seeds on a sheet of blue paper make for an interesting abstract composition. Lacking any measure of scale, it's virtually impossible to determine how large or small these seeds are, and that's part of the magic of macrophotography.

In most cases, the light was positioned off to one side at a low angle about 12" from the live area of my frame lines to avoid casting shadows onto the live area of the frame. When using the handheld flashlight, I still kept to a low angle but moved the light around to maximize the "drama" of the shadows.



Same annatto seeds, same background as the previous photograph of annatto seeds, but a harder, cooler light from a flashlight in place of the softer, warmer LED lamp head creates a totally different mood and feeling than the previous photograph of the same subject.



**Black and white sesame seeds scattered on a sheet of orange poster board.**

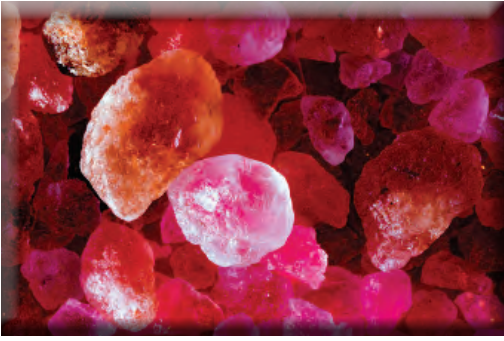


**Dried rosemary on a yellow-gold background.**

Focus and depth of field (DoF) should be considered carefully when shooting macro photographs. Some images look better when stopped down to minimum apertures for maximum DoF, while other images are far more interesting when captured at wider apertures for limited DoF. It's all a matter of aesthetics—there's no right or wrong. For maximum depth of field, focus stacking can be incorporated into the workflow process.



**Dried chamomile flowers display a wide range of textures and patterns.**



The crystalline nature of Himalayan pink salt granules make for interesting lighting possibilities.



Nope, it's not a cantaloupe—it's a nutmeg seed.



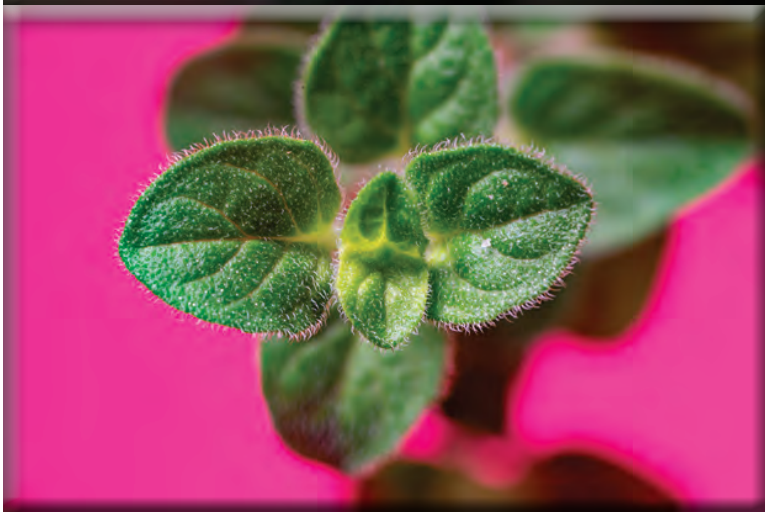
In addition to dried spices and herbs, I also photographed a few live herbs we had growing in starter pots. For these photographs I used the same setup, albeit from a higher camera position to allow for the additional height of the plants.

Sprigs of fresh dill (above) and oregano (below) are both fascinating to look at in their own ways in proximity. Shooting at wider apertures adds to the visual mystique of the photograph, especially in the photograph of the tip of the dill leaf, which in the above macro photograph resembles the toes of a green lizard.





Until I took this macrophotograph, I never knew oregano leaves had tiny fuzzies along their edges.



Finding subjects to photograph at life-size or greater is rewarding regardless of subject matter: Shooting close-ups is fun. Period. To learn more about macrophotography, check out some of the many macro-related articles available on the B&H Explora website, including:

[Essential Gear for Nailing Focus in Macro Photography](#), by Todd Vorenkamp

[Effective Aperture and Macro](#), by Bjorn Petersen

[Tools for Capturing Macro Photographs Without a Macro Lens](#) and

[Exploring the World of Ultra-Wide Macro Photography](#), by yours truly.

Do you have a favorite subject you enjoy taking macrophotographs of? If so, let us know about it in the Comments section, below.