

Tips for Photographing Roses from the April 30, 2008 Program

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With some tips revised from www.ars.org/contests

Those of us who attended the April 30th meeting learned a lot about photographing roses and gardens. We also got to look at photographic equipment, lighting options, and non-reflective backgrounds. You will probably be using equipment, principles and techniques of close-up photography in Photography Classes 1-5 and 7-8. You might use supplementary close-up lenses or a macro lens for close-up work. It helps to know the capabilities of your equipment.

- Use a tripod and cable release to help eliminate camera movement.
- Use a small aperture (f11, f16, f22, etc.) to increase depth of field, but be sure you use a shutter speed fast enough to freeze the movement of blooms caused by wind.
- Remember to plan each shot and to carefully search the viewfinder for any distracting objects or reflections before snapping that shutter. A written record of each exposure is helpful for later review.
- The winning photographs usually are the ones in which the bloom or subject fills as much of the frame as possible, but care should be taken so petals or parts of the desired image are not cut off.
- The rule of thirds for off-center placement should generally not be used in Classes 1-5 as one-bloom or spray photos should be as close to center as possible.
- When that really great specimen comes along, take a number of shots, bracketing the exposures. It often is a good idea to use both a vertical and a horizontal format if the subject is suitable.
- When photographing a one-bloom specimen at close-up range, a camera angle of 30 to 45 degrees to the bloom will usually produce a better photograph.
- Grooming is very important as slight defects are magnified when the photographs are enlarged.
- A gray card may help you determine exposure when photographing difficult-to-capture true colors such as white, mauve, and some red blooms with a dark background.
- Use reflectors to help eliminate dark areas and uneven lighting. Reflectors can be used to eliminate shadows in arrangement photographs. Low-cost reflectors include white matte board or foil.
- Use a non-reflective background to eliminate distracting background objects and block out other blooms. Inexpensive non-reflective backgrounds include colored matte board, felt, and velvet. These materials can be purchased at Michael's, Ben Franklins or other craft stores. I have a dark green velvet skirt that would work, so I do not have to even buy fabric.
- With digital photographs, use a higher pixel rated camera and use the highest resolution setting. A camera with 3 mega pixels or larger is recommended. Save photos as high resolution jpeg files.
- Keep notes so you can correctly name the roses you photographed. This really helps when you go to fill out the entry tag at the show! You can also get entry tags before the show by contacting Rebecca (971-0777), Nancy (425-2363), or Ann Marie (746-1140).
- Do not forget that you do not have to confine your photography to just your own roses. You can enter photographs of other people's roses. RRS members are invited to photograph in the Harris's garden in Caughlin Ranch. As a courtesy, please call to let me know when you will be there.