

Macro / Close Up Workshop notes

The purpose of this evening is to follow up on the talk by Beth Baker and give members some preparation for the upcoming wildflower season. There should be plenty of opportunity for wildflower photography during the Northam Expedition.

Macro / Close Up Photography

- Technically, a macro photo is made when the size of the subject on the sensor is at least the same size as the subject in real life: 1:1 and upwards.
- IMHO, high pixel count cameras have made this definition effectively meaningless!
- Think instead of an image that shows detail not visible to the unaided human eye. It's better to label this as close-up photography.
- Be aware of competition rules. If the word macro appears it may really mean it!

Lenses for CU photography

- Your favourite lens
 - Cropping. High pixel count cameras make this a feasible method.
 - If your favourite lens still can't focus sufficiently closely, you may want to look at one of the following options.
- Reversing ring
 - Lets you turn the lens back to front. Gives magnification at the expense of automation (you must use manual settings).
- Close-up lens
 - Fits on the front of your favourite lens. Available in different strengths.
- Extension tubes
 - Fit between your lens and the camera. Some models allow automation so check.
- Macro lens
 - The most expensive option, but arguably the best.

Difficulties in CU photography - 1

- DOF
 - Note that Beth Baker used shallow DOF as a creative tool.
 - Remember that cameras always have the lens at maximum aperture when focussing. Find and use your DOF preview button.
 - BG awareness. This is partly to do with DOF, and partly to do with a human's tendency to concentrate on the subject and miss the empty beer can on the ground.
- Focussing
 - Some cameras have a mode that highlights in-focus elements (focus peaking).
 - Some cameras let you use live view to magnify during focussing.
 - Focus bracketing followed by stacking.

Difficulties in CU photography - 2

- Camera shake
 - A stable tripod. Ideally the tripod should have a means of getting close to the ground.
 - Remote shutter release to avoid camera shake (or you can use the time delay feature of your camera).
- Subject positioning
 - A tripod head that is easy to adjust. For really close up work a geared head is preferred.
 - In place of a geared head, consider a focussing rail. Make sure that the rail can support the camera if it is angled. A rail is good for getting close to the subject, but not for shooting a set of images for stacking.

- Subject motion (think wind or an insect moving about)
 - There's a trade off between fast shutter speed and available light. Flash may be appropriate to freeze motion.
 - Stabilisers like string, pipe cleaners or bulldog clips.

Getting light onto the subject

- Reflector(s).
- Flash. At close distances, pop up flashes are often obscured by the lens. You can use a pop up flash to trigger an external flash.
- A ring flash or similar.

Some References

- <https://beingmark.com/macro-illustrated/> - lots of images PLUS about halfway down - his setup.
- <http://www.fredmiranda.com/forum/board/45> - Fred Miranda's forum on macro stuff. And http://www.fredmiranda.com/forum/Macro_links.htm
- <https://chaoticmind75.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/my-technique-for-snowflakes-shooting.html> - not applicable in WA but shows technique.
- <https://robinwong.blogspot.com.au/2015/08/insect-macro-photography.html> - he shows his setup in between lovely insect images.
- <http://www.bmpt1.com/> oldish style, diy CLOSEUP web page.