Take Beautiful Photos of Snowdrops

PUBLISHED - 07 FEB 2018

Keep comfortable



IMAGE BY ANNIE SPRATT - NIKON D4S

Close-up shooting will yield photos with impact, which means getting down more or less at the same height as the flowers themselves. A waterproof sheet, or at the very least a

gardener's kneeling pad, will keep you from getting soaked on the ground and comfortable enough to stay the course. (Do take care not to squash any of the snowdrops while you're getting down and dirty with them, though!)

Go steady

For the best results, keep the camera as still as possible. Either balance it on a beanbag or mount it on a tripod with the legs spread and, if possible, the centre column switched to horizontal to get the camera close to the ground. Either way, use a remote release or the self-timer to reduce the risk of camera shake when the shutter fires.

Play with the light

To minimise reflections from a snowdrop's shiny leaves and boost the colour saturation, use a polarising filter, while a reflector can be handy for brightening up darker areas of the image.

Live View

When shooting close to the ground, it can be tricky peering through the viewfinder, but activate Live View and checking your images will become a whole lot easier. You can also use Live View in conjunction with manual focus mode to ensure your close-ups are critically sharp. Simply zoom in on the screen to the key area of the frame, and focus manually to get the focus spot on.

Lens choice

Wideangle shots are perfect for capturing drifts of snowdrops and bringing some context to your images. For closer shots isolating one or two blooms, use a macro lens like the NIKKOR 85mm or 105mm to fill the frame, or the long end of a telephoto (you'll probably need to move back to ensure you don't go beyond the lens's close-focusing distance).

Watch the weather

Close-up photography creates a very shallow depth of field that is perfect for isolating the subject against a defocused background. However, the lightest of breezes will move your snowdrop out of focus, so unless you are after an abstract effect, choose a day that is wind-

free. Overcast conditions are ideal for flower images, acting like a giant diffuser to soften the light for perfectly saturated colours, so don't be put off by dull conditions – bright sunlight will actually be too harsh for your delicate subjects.

Finding snowdrops

Top spots including Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire, Surrey's Winkworth Arboretum, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, Leicestershire's Gunby Hall, Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire, Dunham Massey in Cheshire, Wallington in Northumberland, Castle Ward in County Down, Bodnant Garden in Conwy, Dyffryn Gardens in the Vale of Glamorgan, Kingston Lacy in Dorset, Trengwainton in Cornwall, the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh and Cambo Estate in Fife.

© NIKON U.K.