

TIPS FOR TAKING SUCCESSFUL PHOTOS OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

With so much activity in the flower arranging world having moved online, I have been asked a few times for help with photos. I don't think that I can do a lot better than to reproduce advice from the NAFAS website, but I will add some comments at the end.

From NAFAS

- Try to photograph the arrangement against a plain or un-fussy background. (You could use a drape behind the arrangement to help cut out any unwanted background, but be sure to iron it first to remove any creases)
- Try to photograph in natural light, which produces the best colour balance. Different light sources will produce different colour effects. If your camera has the ability, choose a setting which matches your light source (e.g. tungsten, fluorescent, etc)
- Use a tripod if possible for the sharpest image, but if you don't have one, the back of a chair or something similar will help to support and keep your camera steady
- Observe closely what is behind or next to the arrangement and be sure to remove any objects which detract from it
- Remove any debris from the base of the arrangement such as fallen leaves or petals, or other bits which can fall off flowers and foliage
- Don't photograph against a strong light source (such as a window) as this will make your photo too dark unless your camera has the ability to change your settings to compensate
- Try not to use a flash. This creates strong shadows and a colour change which detract from the arrangement. If your camera is set on auto flash and you don't have a choice, hold a white card just below the flash to deflect it upwards and soften the light, or tape some tissue paper over it
- Stand directly in front of the arrangement and bend slightly so that your lens is level with the centre of the arrangement and you can clearly see most of the container. Don't take the photo from above (unless it is obviously meant to be viewed from above)
- Zoom in to the arrangement to cut out as much as the background as possible, whilst still leaving a reasonable amount of space around it. (Make sure that you don't zoom in too much and cut off any part of the arrangement)
- Be sure that you are focussing on the arrangement, and not on the background
- View the photograph when you have taken it, and crop any unwanted parts. Most modern computers, tablets and phones have a photo app already installed with a crop feature
- If you are taking your photograph for an online competition, make sure you are emailing it at full size. Many email applications will automatically send at a small size and lower resolution to make it quicker and use less data, but this will affect the quality of your photo so select "full size" or "original size"

Steve's comments: Having seen quite a few D&G photos recently I think the most important messages are:

When taking the photo: Always take time to consider the four vital elements of **BIFF**

- **Background** – uncluttered and as plain as possible
- **Illumination** – plenty of natural light where possible (flash causes shadows)
- **Focus** – make sure the focus is on the arrangement (not the background)
- **Framing** – make sure all the extremities of the arrangement are in the picture

When sending the photo: The last NAFAS paragraph is important and something you may need help to get to grips with. The settings of some systems may need adjusting to make sure you are sending "full" or "original" size pictures. If in doubt, experiment by sending pictures to a child, grand-child, or tech savvy friend, who knows about these things.