

U3A Hillingdon Digital Photo Group

“Photography in the Autumn”

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John Allen

General Intro!

- “**Photography in the Autumn**” is the first presentation (*of, hopefully, many*) based on pages found on the internet – in this case, ePhotozine.com website “Techniques” pages (*& starting from links from an emailed blog that I received*).
- However, it is only the “bare bones” of the suggestions & advice as there are **lot** of them (*with much repetition TBH!*), & “tailored” where possible to be relevant to the Members.
- Remember that many tips are applicable to multiple shooting situations, and so whilst given here in one context they can often be used in many others!
- *Hopefully someone else will now try something similar - so I'll pass on “starters for 10” (a list of possibilities at the end!)*

What Can I Photograph?

- **Autumn is full of colour:**
 - Trees & leaves - “Exaggerate” the Golds, Yellows & Reds
 - Landscape contain lots, & so use them but they won’t be directly addressed here as most of other “Tips” apply !
 - Early Mornings & late Afternoons can be “special”
- **Where do we look, and for what?:**
 - In the garden, parks, national parks, grounds of “stately homes”
 - Trees with leaves, & falling/fallen fruits/nuts/leaves
 - Tree reflections in lakes/rivers/ streams, & leaves floating in them
 - It’s “Fungi time”; many are very colourful
 - Certainly lots of spiders’ webs; maybe migrating birds?
 - “Abstract” shots: swirling/blurred water/tree branches/leaves

Fallen Leaves/Fruit/Nuts/Spiders' Webs

- Suggestions to make the most of these:
 - If appropriate, get close & use macro/close-up modes
 - Make use natural windbreaks – or take/make your own
 - Vistas with leaves in front of the trees may give “perspective”
 - Backlighting may help to bring out the veins in leaves
 - Wide-apertures (Tip 10) to silhouette against out-of-focus backgroundsIf silhouetted against sky, use low-power fill-in flash
 - Adjust the “White Balance” settings instead of just using “Auto”

Fungi

- **Where to find them:**
 - Dark, damp places (under/on trees/hedges, compost heaps, etc.)
- **Specific techniques/ tweaks:**
 - Compose your shots to emphasise the fungi (*or group thereof*)
 - Get close and low down
 - Use Macro modes or Macro/Close-up lenses if available
 - Keep the camera very still & use tripod/other camera support
 - Use wide apertures (low “f” numbers) for shallow depth of field
 - Use polarizing filters to cut down reflections from damp leaves
 - Maybe clear debris from around fungi, but with care
 - Maybe use low-level flash to illuminate the undersides – or else bounce it off other objects &/or a reflector

Reflections

- **Where to find them:**
 - Anywhere there's water – running or still
- **Specific techniques/ tweaks:**
 - Look for interesting reflections/vegetation on water surfaces
 - Adjust shooting positions, check Sun/other lighting angles to get the best reflected images & compose shots to emphasise those
 - Maximise perspective with reflections/objects in the foreground, &/or trees/valleys (etc.) at the sides
 - Maximise colour variations for vivid results
 - Use small apertures (large “f” numbers) for greater depth of field, *but, generally, keep shutter speeds high to avoid camera shake.*
 - Graduated “Neutral Density” filters can reduce sky overexposure
 - Don't use polarizing filters as these will reduce the reflections!

“Abstract” Autumn Photos

- **Why:**
 - “Punchy” shades of Autumn -> opportunities for “arty” shots
- **Possible techniques (*most are best with tripods!*)**
 - Misty/Foggy mornings/afternoons -> “dreamy” atmospheres
 - Dragging /panning the camera turns trees/leaves into strong lines
 - OTOH, moving it in a circular motion creates “circles of colour”
 - Shoot long exposures on windy days -> trees/branches are blurred
 - Shoot water streaming over branches/rocks using long exposures -> the rocks are sharp but the eddies are blurred/“creamy”
- **Create similar effects in Post Processing (*PhotoShop, etc.*)**
 - See the “Add Blur” tip here to give an “abstract feeling” without losing context
 - Maybe also do some Cropping &/or colour/lighting changes

What “Gear” Should/Could you Use?

- What “Gear”?

- Almost any camera can be used, but these can be very useful and:
 - Close-up/Macro facilities &/or [Close-up lenses/Macro lenses](#)
 - [Wide-angle lenses/Settings](#) for landscapes/confined spaces
 - Tripods, *especially if they can be set to low/near-ground levels*
 - Neutral Density (“ND”) filters for long exposures in bright light
 - Polarising filters to boost colours, or to reduce reflections
 - “Weatherproof” cameras can be most useful
 - *or else decent covers to protect cameras that aren’t!*

- Also:

- Appropriate clothing (*Obviously!*)
- Keeping a sharp eye out for the “unusual”

Getting the Correct Exposure

- General“

- Varying locations, plus weather and light changes, can make setting the correct exposure tricky.

- Tips Checklist

- Try manual/semi- manual modes if available to get more control
- Check Histograms – *get the peaks near the middles, not the ends*
- Meter from the “main interest” area of the shot
-> use “spot metering” or “*small area*” metering” if available
- Use Exposure Compensation, as metering can be fooled by “flat lighting” or large light/dark areas outside “main interest” area
- Neutral Density (“ND”) filters (*possibly “Graduated”*) can help to balance exposures in bright areas against those in darker ones
- Work on overcast days as contrast levels are lower than on Sunny ones as those make it difficult to get detail in shadowed areas.

Suggestions/Thoughts for the Future?

- Here are other subjects covered on the “Techniques” pages:
 - Landscapes
 - Flowers, Plants & Insects
 - Wildlife and Pets
 - Smart Phone Photography
 - Coastal and Beach Photography
 - Close-up and Macro Photography
 - Portraits
 - Choosing cameras/lenses/accessories” (*inc. buying second-hand*)
 - Using old cameras and lenses in the “digital age”
- **NB:**
 - Much paraphrasing needed to reduce web text to “usable stuff”!
 - Photos taken from websites or elsewhere should be accompanied by attributions to the persons (where known);who took them.