

The Art of Wildflower Macrophotography

David Gubernick • July 20–22, 2012



\$250 per person / \$225 for Committee members
enrollment limited to 8 participants

Welcome to our field workshop on the art of photographing wildflowers of the Mono Basin and upper reaches of the Sierra high country. Through classroom instruction, demonstrations, and individual coaching in the field, you will learn to take creative and beautiful close-up images, further develop your artistic vision, and enhance your photographic skills in a warm and supportive learning environment. Macrophotography takes us into a smaller world of more intimate detail. It entails moving in closer and magnifying the subject beyond our normal perception of it. This workshop emphasizes the artistry of macrophotography and the technical means to render such images. This is not a course in botanical identification.

David Gubernick, PhD, is an internationally and nationally published and award-winning nature photographer and workshop leader. Some of his exhibition prints can be seen at Gallery Sur in Carmel and the Ventana Inn & Spa in Big Sur. His first photography book, *Wildflowers of Monterey County*, was published in 2002 and has been a best-seller, garnering rave reviews.

ITINERARY

On **Friday, July 20 at 7:00pm**, meet at the **Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore** in Lee Vining. After registration and brief introductions, we will review participants' prior work. Because macrophotography requires slowing down and paying careful attention to detail, we will use a slide show to illustrate various artistic and technical details to consider when composing and capturing your macro images. We will also go over camera functions and controls important for macro work, so please bring your camera and the lens you will be using. Discussion throughout the weekend is encouraged.

On **Saturday, July 21**, our day-long field session will begin at **9:00am at the Mono Lake Committee**. We will car pool/caravan to our first location where David will demonstrate how he thinks about and composes a close-up shot and his thoughts regarding what to look for and what considerations are involved to obtain the best image possible. He'll also demonstrate the use of diffusers and reflectors, two of the most important tools for macrophotography. Participants will then begin to photograph flowers. David will help coach each participant individually with his/her photography throughout the day to help develop personal artistic vision. After a lunch break, we will move to another location. Specific wildflower locations will depend upon what is blooming at the time. Some possible locations include the Mt. Dana trail, Tioga Tarns, Slate Creek/Saddlebag Lake, the Bennettville trail, the Warren Fork of Lee Vining Creek, Lundy Canyon, and the shores of Mono Lake. We will break for dinner around 5:00pm. We will convene

again at 7:00pm at the Mono Lake Committee to review participants' images taken earlier in the day, and to continue our discussion.

On **Sunday, July 22** we will meet again **at the Mono Lake Committee at 9:00am** and then caravan to another wildflower location. We will photograph throughout the morning and break for lunch in the field around noon. Our field session will end around 2:00 or 3:00pm. We will return to the Committee and show various options and equipment for capturing macro images. We end by 5:00pm with final discussions, feedback, and farewells.

Altitude and Dehydration Cautions: This photography workshop will take place at elevations ranging from about 6,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level. It is a good idea to acclimate at the elevation of Lee Vining for at least 24 hours prior to the start of the workshop. Please bring lots of water and drink it often because your body loses more water at high altitudes. Please bring and use sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat to protect yourself from the sun's intensity at high elevations.

TO BRING

- ___ 35-mm camera, film or digital (no point-and-shoot digital cameras unless they have separate controls for f-stops and shutter speeds and can focus close up); medium format welcomed
- ___ rolls of slide film (Velvia or Provia recommended) or compact flash cards
- ___ lenses (macro lens if you have one, but you do not need to buy one; telephoto lens)
- ___ extension tubes, close-up diopters, teleconverters if you have any of these (you do not need to go out and buy them for this workshop, although getting an inexpensive +2 diopter for your telephoto lens would be worthwhile if you do not have macro capability)
- ___ tripod (see below) and cable release (essential to reduce any vibration affecting the camera)
- ___ diffuser (see below)—one of the most important tools for macro work
- ___ reflector (see below)—gold on one side, white or silver on the other
- ___ warm clothing—dress in layers, be prepared for variable weather
- ___ sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, insect repellent
- ___ small notepad and pen for taking notes in field
- ___ plenty of water

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

If you do not have a diffuser, please purchase one. A diffuser is a piece of stretched white nylon on a collapsible hoop that is translucent, helps soften light on bright sunny days, and is an indispensable tool in macrophotography. A 32" LiteDisk (by Photoflex) costs about \$38 and should be available at most good photography equipment stores or on www.amazon.com. Do not get a smaller size. You may also wish to purchase either a 22" or a 32" gold/silver (or white) reflector (solid gold on one side/solid silver or white on the other—do not get the *soft* gold reflectors) to help add a warm color and provide light into shadowed areas (this also is extremely useful if you will continue in macrophotography). Do not get any 5-in-1 reflectors/diffusers.

For macrophotography, a good tripod that allows you to get low to the ground is indispensable. Tripods that have interconnecting spokes between legs prevent the legs from being spread out and thus limit how close to the ground the camera can go.

Most wildflower macrophotography requires that you get down on the ground. Please wear comfortable clothes you do not mind getting dirty. You can bring a large plastic bag to lie on and/or a cloth or foam-pad knee rest to protect your knees (found in garden shops and garden sections of drug stores).

There will be no slide film processing available during the workshop. If shooting film, please use slide film/transparencies because you will then be able to view the image as it was shot, rather than as a color-adjusted and exposure-adjusted processed print as obtained from color negative film. If you are shooting with a digital camera and have a laptop for reviewing work, bring your laptop.

It is especially important that you know the relationship between f-stops and shutter speeds. We expect all participants to know how to operate their own camera. If you plan on purchasing a new camera before the workshop, please do so well in advance so that you will have ample opportunity to learn the various controls on your new camera. Please be sure you know whether your camera has a depth-of-field preview button or whether it has mirror lockup capability. You must know how to use these functions, and your camera manual should describe these. The workshop is open to all levels of photographers, but please come prepared.

MEALS

Bring picnic lunches both Saturday and Sunday to eat in the field. Saturday evening we will have a group dinner at one of the local restaurants—cost of dinner is not covered by tuition.

MACROPHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS

- Shaw, John. *Closeups in Nature*. Amphoto, 1987.
Although not updated, still one of the best for learning macrophotography.
- Sweet, Tony. *Fine Art Flower Photography*. Stackpole Books, 2005.
Lovely images with emphasis on artistic techniques; clearly explained and illustrated.
- Gubernick, David J. *Wildflowers of Monterey County*. Carmel Publishing, 2002.
One of the best macrophotography books of wildflowers with descriptions and comments by expert botanist Vern Yadon. Not available at the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore.

SIERRA WILDFLOWER IDENTIFICATION BOOKS

- Weeden, Norman F. *A Sierra Nevada Flora*. 4th edition. Wilderness Press, 1996.
Field guide, identification key, and descriptions of plants; illustrations; no photos.
- Blackwell, Laird R. *Wildflowers of the Eastern Sierra & Adjoining Mojave Desert & Great Basin*. Lone Pine Publishing, 2002.
- Horn, Elizabeth L. *Sierra Nevada Wildflowers*. Mountain Press Publishing Co., 1998.

If you have any questions about the specifics of the workshop, please contact David by email at david@rainbowsprite.com. For any other questions, please contact the Mono Lake Committee.



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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