

Learn to Shoot Spectacular Close-up Photographs

with **John Gerlach** & **Dixie Calderone** www.gerlachnaturephoto.com

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<https://robertscamera.com/education>



Figure 1 A fritillary butterfly spreads its wings to warm itself on a cool morning.

November 4, 2023 9 am to 5 pm

Intensive Macro Class with wonderful in-classroom setups of appealing subjects to enhance your macro skills

Limited to 24 Participants * **\$150 per person**

November 5, 2023

Field workshop at the Garfield Park Conservatory

2 Sessions Available

11 am - 1 pm or 5 pm - 7 pm

\$70 for a two-hour session

For Details and to enroll, contact: <https://robertscamera.com/education>

What you will learn:

- Achieve the optimum exposure easily
- RGB histogram
- Highlight alert
- The precision and ease of manual exposure
- Shoot super sharp images
- Best Tripod and Head
- Remote release or touch shutter
- Plamps-what they are and do
- The benefits of Live View
- Best way to focus manually
- Touch shutter
- Focus stacking with Helicon Focus
- Why autofocus fails for close-ups
- Camera quick release plates
- L-brackets
- Ways to make your background diffused
- LEDs for indoor photos
- The difference between close-up photography and macro
- Basic photo processing and running Helicon Focus to stack the images
- Image format choices – JPEG and RAW
- Ideal macro lenses
- Composition guidelines that help enormously
- Learn what it takes to make the ideal indoor macro studio

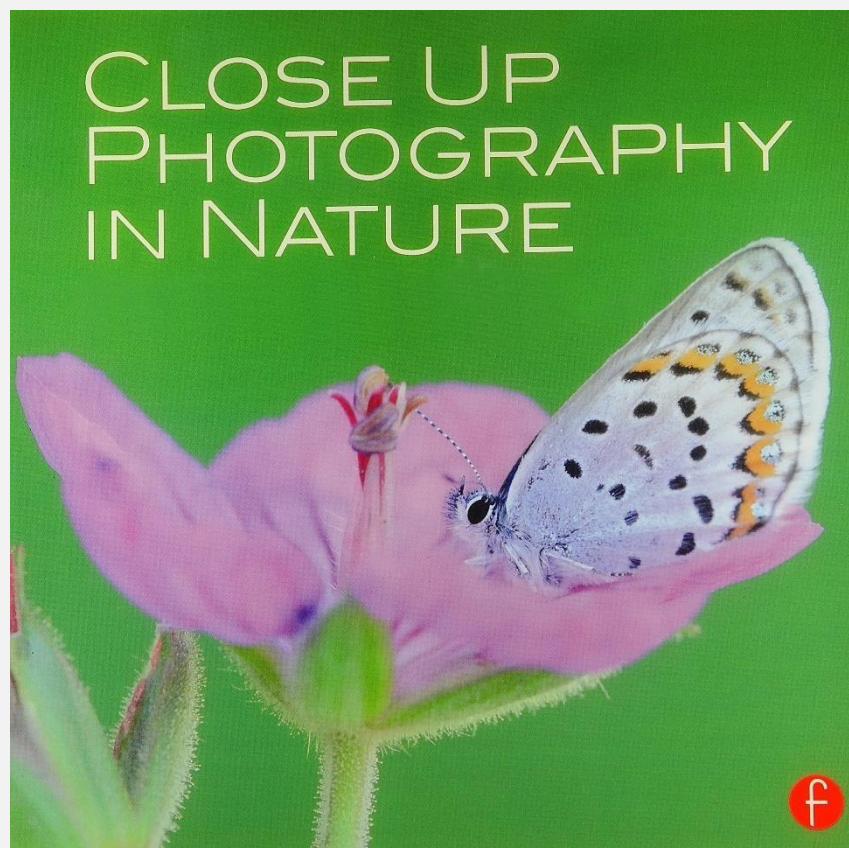


Figure 2 Notice the wing tips on the right side of the green damselfly are out of focus in the left image. By using f/8 and focus stacking the right image, the damselfly is entirely in sharp focus.

Your Instructors

John Gerlach began his career as a professional wildlife biologist before switching gears in 1978 to pursue a full-time career in nature photography. Growing up in Michigan, his first love was photographing wildflowers and insects. Close-up photography launched his photo career and that remains a passion, although he is accomplished at wildlife and landscape photography too. John has taught photo workshops, seminars, and led tours to all corners of the earth over four decades. In addition to teaching thousands of photo enthusiasts over the years, John is an avid writer with hundreds of nature photography articles published in various magazines, writes a regular column for **Nature Photographer** magazine, and five of John's detailed articles appear on the Canon website. John has authored five best-selling books on nature photography. These books include **Digital Nature Photography: The Art and the Science**, **Digital Landscape Photography**, **Digital Wildlife Photography**, **Outdoor Flash Photography**, and **Close-up Photography in Nature!**

Dixie Calderone has been avidly shooting photos all of her life. Recently John and Dixie have joined together to present incredibly informative photo workshops throughout the world. Dixie has a unique talent for creating attractive close-up displays that beg to be photographed.



I authored the book on close-up photography – literally! This popular book has profoundly changed the way many shoot outstanding close-up images today.

Workshop Goals

John teaches with an amazing passion for nature photography. His enthusiasm, incredible camera knowledge, experience, and ability to explain photo techniques in an easy-to-understand manner makes him a highly effective teacher. John shoots Canon cameras and thoroughly investigates them to use the camera easily to achieve outstanding close-up images. While there may be several ways to do things, John **teaches you** the best and easiest way to shoot superb close-up photographs. John now primarily shoots Canon mirrorless cameras- currently the R5.

And with Dixie working hard to create splendid subjects for you to practice your new-found close-up skills, this indoor photo workshop guarantees you will learn a lot and make fine images! And Dixie is a life-time Nikon user who is now shooting the Nikon Z9.

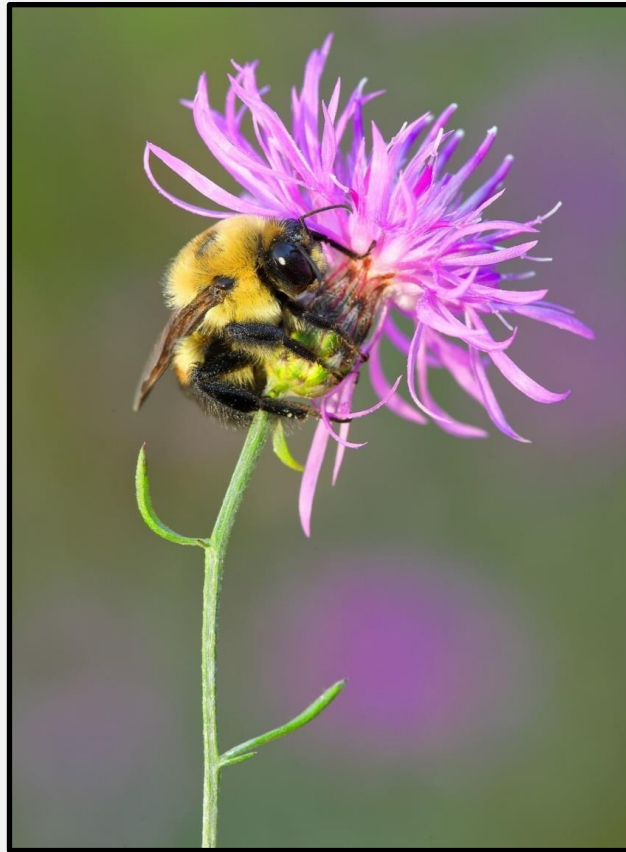


FIGURE 5 - THIS BUMBLEBEE SPENT THE NIGHT SLEEPING ON THE SPOTTED KNAPWEED BLOSSOM. JOHN'S 180MM CANON MACRO LENS NICELY ISOLATES THE BEE AGAINST THE OUT-OF-FOCUS FLOWERS IN THE BACKGROUND. A TRIPOD SUPPORTS THE CAMERA WHILE A PLAMP HOLDS THE FLOWER WITH THE BEE PERFECTLY STILL.

The Schedule

10:00 am

We introduce the class and present an instructional slide program on close-up photography

10:00 – 12:00pm

John and Dixie demonstrate key photo skills using their equipment. They will cover tripod handling, L-brackets and quick release plates, exposure determination with the live histogram and the highlight alert, how to fire the camera to produce sharp images, and how to precisely focus manually. A key demonstration is shooting a focus stack that delivers incredible sharpness and covers any depth of field, and how to process the stack using Helicon Focus. This is a game-changing technique you can easily master with our guidance. John will process a stack of images using Canon's free Digital Photo Professional software, and then stack the images together using Helicon Focus. You can follow his easy step-by-step procedure by viewing the process on the projection screen.

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch Break

1:00 – 5:00

It is time for you to use your gear to shoot photos. We will have everyone shooting and rotating through the many photo stations with wonderful subjects to photograph against attractive backgrounds. Each station offers a different subject and background to give you variety as you practice the skills explained earlier. Potted flowers, feathers, shells, pinecones, and many other subjects are used to provide you with appealing subjects that produce fine images while mastering the skills explained in this workshop. Both instructors help you achieve fabulous results during the afternoon session.



FIGURE 6 We have rows of subjects with backgrounds and LED lights for you to use. Shown here is a portion of the setups we use.



FIGURE 7 – CALYPSO ORCHID



FIGURE 8 – YELLOWSTONE CHECKERSPOT

What to do before the Workshop

1. Clean the lens you will use
2. Make sure you have everything you need to connect the camera to the tripod. If your lens has a tripod collar, make sure you have the proper plate on it to attach it to the tripod.
3. If you use a cable or remote release to trip the shutter, bring it.
4. Make sure you have the highlight alert active. Photographers often call these the “blinkies,” and every camera has the capability to show them, but often they must be activated. These are the flashing areas that appear when you view an image where some areas might be overexposed.
5. To learn how to process a focus stack, download the Helicon Focus software at <https://heliconsoft.com>. It offers a free trial period. You can do this after the workshop too. We teach you how to shoot the stack and process it during the morning session.



FIGURE 9 - A WHITE ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY WAITS PATIENTLY TO WARM UP BEFORE BECOMING WHAT WE CALL A "FLUTTER-BYE!"

What to bring to the Workshop?

This workshop is perfect for anyone seeking to improve their close-up photos with a DSLR or mirrorless camera.

Items to bring:

- Camera with fully-charged batteries and memory card
- A lens that can focus awfully close. John uses his Canon 180mm and Dixie a Nikon 200mm macro lens, but any macro lens will work. The more common 100mm macro is super for this. There are many other ways to get close. Just contact us or Robert's Camera for ideas. Using extension tubes on a short zoom lens works fine too.
- Tripod with head and mounting plate on your camera to attach the camera
- Flash is handy, but certainly not necessary. To use flash, though, you must use flash gear that allows you to do off-camera flash. Flash mounted on the camera does not do you much good. You need wired or wireless off-camera flash and know where your flash exposure compensation (FEC) control is located. Sometimes that is on the flash, or on the camera, or both.
- We have two LED lamps at every station to provide excellent light for the close-up subject provided. You do not need to bring any LED lamps.

John's Gear

If I were a participant, I would bring the following:

- Canon R5 mirrorless camera
- Canon 180mm macro lens (100mm macro works well for studio work too) with a Kirk quick-release plate attached and the **hood** for the lens and I need an adapter to use it on the mirrorless camera I use
- Gitzo tripod with a Really Right Stuff ballhead
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FIGURE 10 – Nineteen images are stacked together to sharply focus on every spot in this clump of northern Picture Plants. We will teach you how we shoot and process the stack, and then merge them together using Helicon Focus.

Learn the close-up photography skills to make images like the following quickly and easily!

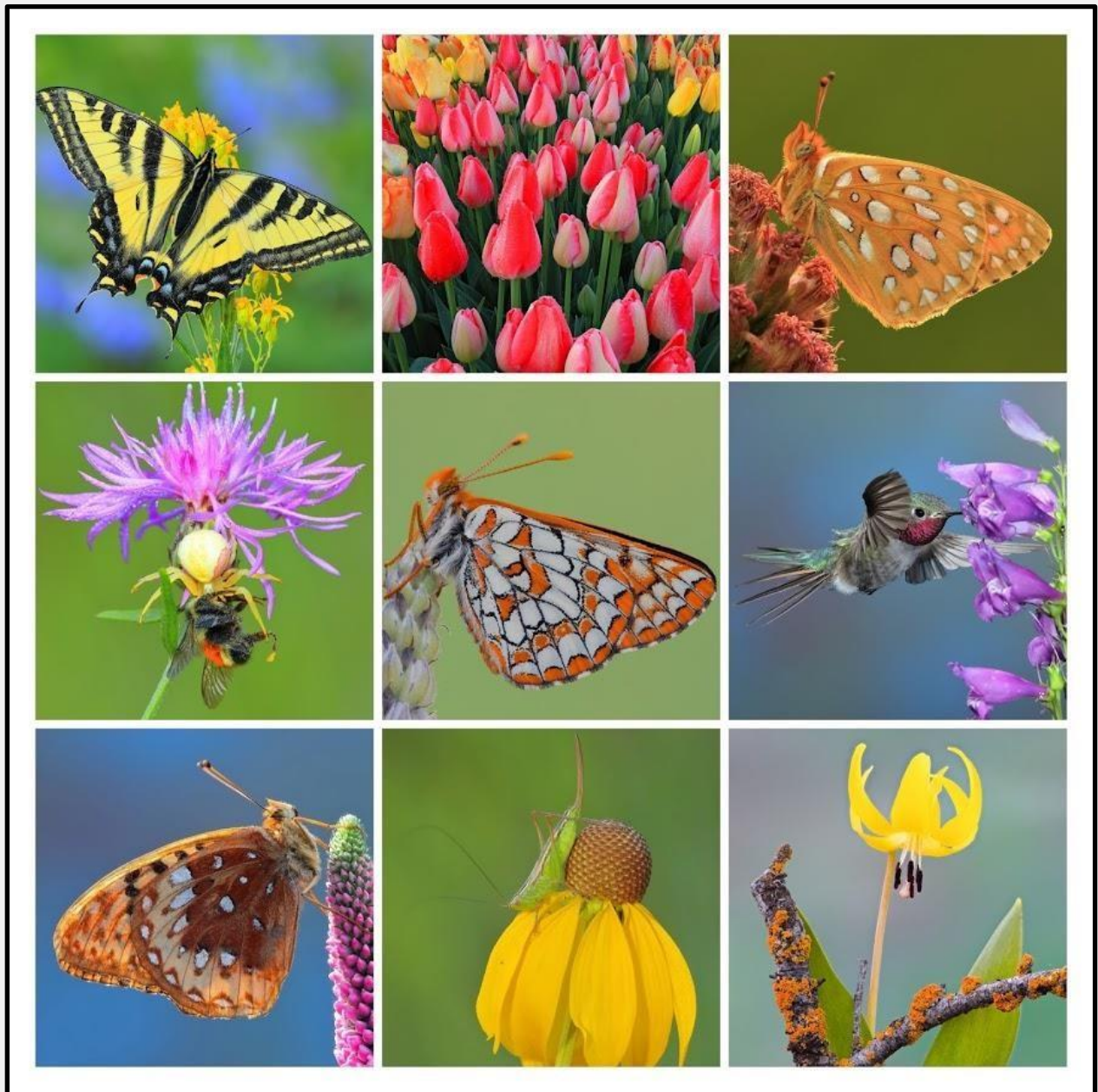


FIGURE 11 - WITH FORTY YEARS OF SHOOTING NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS FOR A LIVING, JOHN IS INCREDIBLY EXPERIENCED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE. HE KNOWS ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO SHOOT CLOSE-UPS BUT TEACHES ONLY THE VERY BEST METHODS TO MAKE CAPTIVATING HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES. WITH HIS GUIDANCE, THE ENTIRE PROCESS BECOMES EASY FOR ALL.

What you will photograph

This close-up photography class is conducted entirely indoors to eliminate the problem of uncooperative weather. By shooting indoors there is no wind, rain, or bright sun to prevent you from shooting beautiful images, and more importantly, you are able to use the new photo skills you learn to capture beautiful images.

We have twenty-four stations where superb images are ready to be made, and you will rotate through them while Dixie and John help you master photo techniques! All LED lights, backgrounds, and attractive subjects are provided.

Types of photo stations to expect:

1. Flowers – a few stations have potted flowers where we emphasize focus stacking and exposure. From single blossoms to small bouquets of flowers, learn to light them well, use a pleasing background, and focus stack them for tremendous depth of field. The lighting equipment we use in our flower setups is inexpensive and you can buy your own to use at home to photograph indoors all year long!
2. Feathers – peacock feathers are gorgeous, especially the eyespot on the tail feathers. They photograph best with sidelight to reveal the texture in the feathers.
3. Shells – colorful shells always make excellent pattern images
4. Stones – brightly colored stones make fine patterns too
5. Cacti – a small group of ornamental cacti make challenging compositions
6. Fruit – colorful fruit make appealing images
7. Working with mirrors and their reflections
8. Belt buckles



FIGURE 12 - NUMEROUS SUBJECTS AWAIT YOU IN YOUR CLOSE-UP ADVENTURES

The following images are photos we shot in the last macro class

we taught at Robert's Camera



FIGURE 13 TWO PEACOCK FEATHERS MADE IN OUR MACRO CLASS



FIGURE 14 LEARN TO WORK WITH MIRRORS AND BACKGROUNDS TO MAKE FASCINATING REFLECTION IMAGES



FIGURE 15 A SHELL THAT IS FOCUS STACKED USING 17 IMAGES AT F/8. NOTICE EVERYTHING IS SHARP!!!!



FIGURE 16 OLD BARNWOOD MAKES AN APPEALING BACKGROUND



FIGURE 17 A CACTUS PATTERN AT HIGH MAGNIFICATION USING THE MAGNIFICENT FOCUS STACKING TECHNIQUE



FIGURE 18 AN ORCHID SHOT WITH THE TWO LIGHT MACRO SETUP YOU WILL USE.



FIGURE 19 PINECONE AND ACORNS ON A MIRROR WITH THE 2-LIGHT SETUP



Figure 3 We don't normally use a polarizing filter when making closeups, but some subjects require the polarizer, especially if they are wet like water lilies.

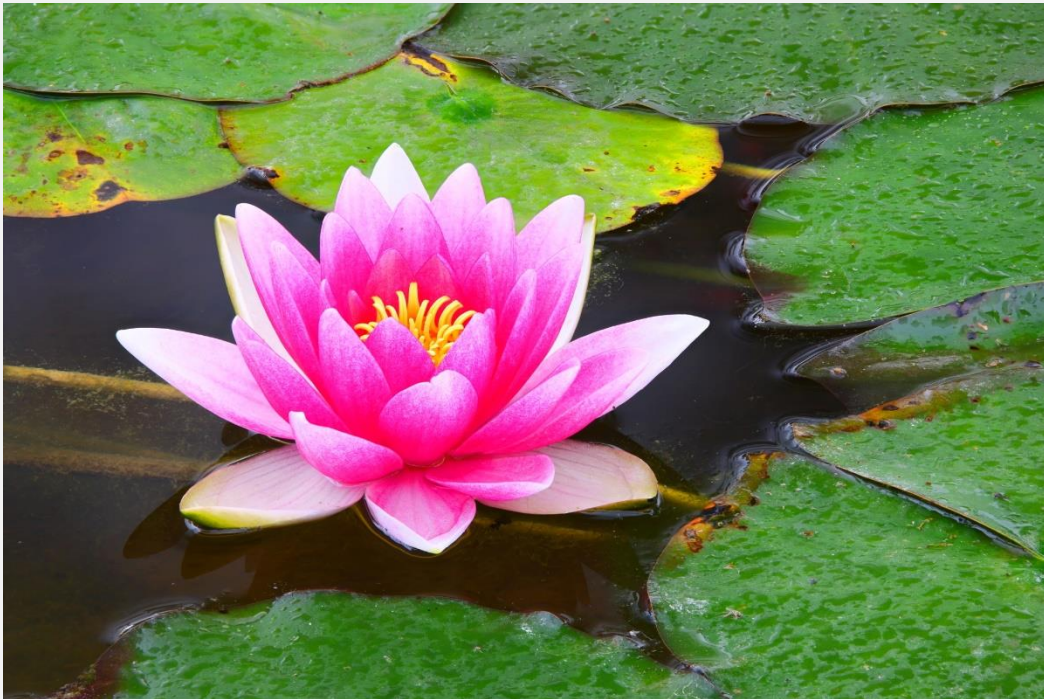


Figure 4 The same image with a polarizer in use to remove all the glare from the wet surfaces.