



Tips for photographing flowers

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Smartphone?

We all use these as we are often out without our camera

But... the pictures are often too sharp and not well composed

They typically look like pictures from a plant catalogue

Tips to help - try to zoom in close, use portrait settings, some of the following tips can work for smartphones too

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Typical faults



Distractions



Focus not shallow enough

A photograph of a dense, flowering bush of pink roses. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The leaves are dark green and glossy. The background is a bright, overexposed sky. The text "Poor lighting and colour balance" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Poor lighting and colour balance



Auto settings neutralises the green



Strong sunlight over shoulder
makes image look flat



Background distracting

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So what if you do want to take great images?

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Equipment

- Lens choice - longer focal length better and macro / close up
 - However wide angles can give interesting effects
- Camera support - tripod, bean bag and groundsheet
- Reflector - silver/white, large foil tray lids work well
- Diffuser - Manfrotto/Lastolite or curtain netting on wire frame
- LED torch
- Some sticks and garden twistwire for manipulating the flowers
- Small spray bottle with water and secateurs

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Best time to shoot

- A fairly still day - wind is a problem
- A bright day so that blooms are fully open - light cloud best light
- If full sun avoid middle of the day

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Camera settings

- Fast shutter speed and wide aperture for shallow depth of field
- Adjust ISO to suit
- Raw files give more post processing control
- Careful focussing, vary slightly and take several shots and review, if hand held then you can adjust final focus by moving camera forward and back

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Composition & execution

- Look to isolate best blooms
- Low viewpoint is often good, also plan top view is good
- Use sticks to manipulate stems
- Tidy away distracting things, cut out any dead blooms
- Spray with water to emulate dew
- Use reflector or LED torch to 'fill in' dark shadows
- Use diffuser in harsh sunlight
- Don't forget - pattern, symmetry, line, rule of thirds, 3 points of interest, etc

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Creative ideas

- Focus through blooms to add colour blur and interest
- Multiple shots of same scene with different focus can be layered up in post production for interesting montage
- In full sun try back lighting with silver reflector to 'fill in'
- Silhouette flowers against the skyline
- Some plants are interesting at dusk, leaves can be back lit
 - Flash can be harsh and you cannot see the effect till you review, may be better diffused or bounced off a surface
 - Try longer exposures on a still night with camera on tripod, you can also wave your torch about to create a soft light
- Use of flowers as a frame for other subject

















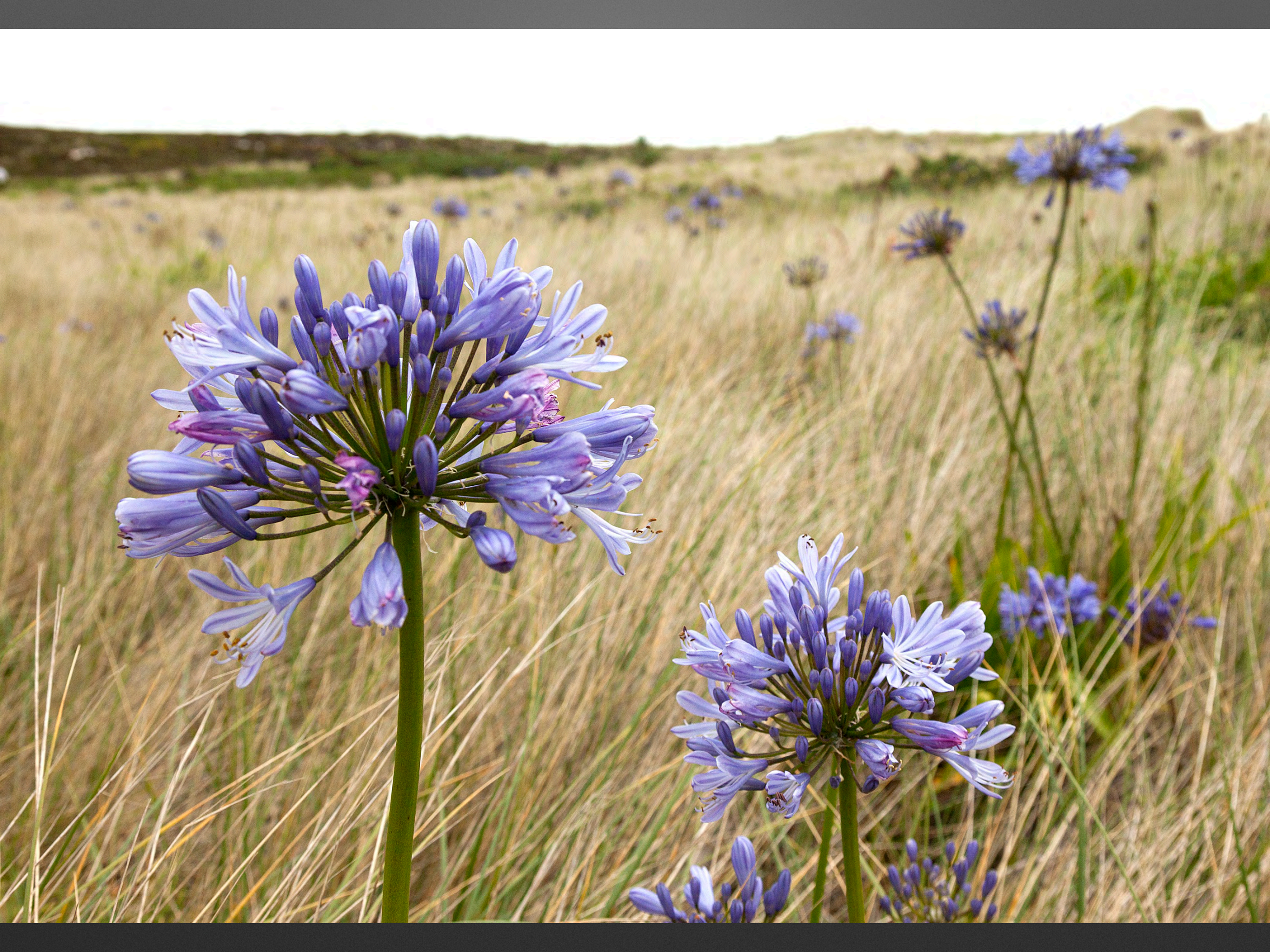












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Problems with saturated colours



Detail can blow out on strong colours



Check for detail by converting to mono



1. jpeg as shot



2. 1 stop less exposure



3. highlight recovery



4. reduce contrast



5. Finally add back in a touch of vibrance

RAW image with average settings



Final after post work



Focus Merge

