

# 7 Tips for Autumn Macro

© 2021; Jeff Parker / [ExploreinFocus.com](http://ExploreinFocus.com)

1) **Abstract in autumn.**

Macro's great for creating abstract art, and autumn leaves make one of the best subjects for making that happen – not simply because of the character of their veins and edges (*as you'd expect*) but also for the interesting manner in which their colors appear. As the seasons change and chlorophyll vacates it results in leaves with interesting transitional patterns in varying shades of yellow, orange, and green. These three are analogous colors, which is icing on the cake when it comes to creating the perfect abstract motif!

2) **Parallel pleases.**

Maximize your depth of field by placing your camera on a parallel plane with your subject. Be sure to square the sensor to the subject. This is especially important when you want to accomplish something such as getting both of a butterfly's wings in focus. (*By the way: in many locales the fluttering insects are just as abundant in fall as they are in springtime—in some places even more so!*)

3) **Get intimate.**

While your macro lens gets you up-close and personal, it's up to you to communicate something special about your subject. Think about why it caught your eye in the first place, and how to infuse your image with that. Changing your perspective—seeing it from a different angle, under slightly changed lighting, or with something else in the background (*so that maybe even the color behind your subject would be different*)—can make a big difference when it comes to highlighting the unique essence that “spoke” to you.

4) **Add light.**

The closer your lens is to the subject, the less light will be available. Since we usually stop down to maximize depth of field, the loss of light puts a serious damper on your shutter speed. To compensate, raise that ISO and/or use flash. I also often use a flashlight when working in macro. I like this option because it allows me to pinpoint exactly where I need light—even lighting my subject from behind if I desire.

5) **Focus with your feet.**

While most say a tripod is a macro must, try telling that to the butterfly you're trying to get in focus before it flutters away! In such situations, rather than trying to autofocus, use manual focus, shooting in high-speed burst mode, while—ever so slightly—moving the camera (*and your body*) forward and backward until you achieve focus.

6) **Eliminate movement.**

Not only is the subject magnified with macro, but so too is every mistake you make. Windy days and macro don't usually mix, but if you have no other choice, be sure to bring along something to block the wind for a bit (*a piece of cardboard can do wonders*). Clothes pins and other such clamps also come in handy to stabilize spindly subjects such as a blade of grass heavy with seed.

7) **Composition & color count.**

Minutiae can mesmerize when working in macro, often causing us to hone in our subject without considering its surroundings. But, just as with any other image, composition counts. So too does color. If you have a choice, give your subject a background comprised of a complementary or analogous color. In the fall, you'll have an easier time finding analogous colors.



*Award-winning naturalist photographer, Jeff Parker, leads friendly & informative photo tours & workshops focused on the flora & fauna of North, Central, & South America.*

Call (512) 378-3355 ~ Or ~  
Click [www.ExploreinFocus.com](http://www.ExploreinFocus.com)

