



Small Insect Macro Photography

General Overview: There are many ways to achieve this type of macro photography, there is no limit to how much money can be spent on bellows, extension tubes, special macro lighting and special macro lenses. This technique that is being presented is both affordable and is capable of achieving extremely high quality images. The total cost for everything in this demo can be purchased for less than \$600

Equipment used for this demonstration:

Panasonic FZ30
Raynox DCR-250 macro lens
Monopod
Sunpak 383 flash
Bounce Card



Purpose: To photograph tiny insects and reveal detail not seen by the naked eye. To achieve a natural appearing light source and retain as much detail as possible in the subject.

About the camera: This camera is not a DSLR, it's a EVF (Electronic Viewfinder) camera with a 12x zoom lens. The reason for this type of camera is that it's compact, has the 35mm equivalent of a 420mm lens and has a flash shoe. The long lens combined with a powerful close up lens will yield impressive magnification power. Since this is a small sensor camera, depth of field is increased compared to an DSLR camera. All these factors combined create a macro shooting system that's hard to beat at any price.



Take control of the camera:

Turn off the auto exposure, set the camera on manual, adjust the shutter speed to about 1/200 of a sec. and close down the f stop all the way, on this camera it's f11 to achieve maximum depth of field. Turn off the autofocus. Set the iso to your lowest setting for best quality.

Take control of the lighting:

The Sunpak 383 flash allows you to take manual control of the flash and has a head that rotates in 2 directions. Point the flash head almost straight up. Attached a bounce card (I use Velcro) and bend it as needed to light the subject. White matte board or white corrugated cardboard works great.



Shooting:

Mount the camera on a monopod
Find a tiny subject
Clip on the close-up lens
Adjust the zoom for the desired magnification
Focus by moving the camera back and forth on the monopod slightly (it takes a little practice)
Experiment changing the flash output and the position of the bounce card to achieve proper exposure.
Use the camera's histogram to help evaluate exposure.

Tips:

Try to shoot at insects eye level or below
Try to position your camera angle to get a bright background like sunlight or sky, since the flash is your main light the background tends to go dark or black.
All the equipment listed here is light weight and will fit neatly in medium sized a hip pack.

