

SEVEN TOP PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS TO SHOWCASE YOUR GARDEN

Julie Skelton

It's a truth universally acknowledged that good photos drive garden visits! So, roll up the hose pipe and put away the washing line and follow our top tips from professional garden photographer Julie Skelton. They will help make your garden listing on the National Garden Scheme website not only stand out from the crowd but draw one too!

1. TIME OF DAY

If there's one huge rule I aim to apply in my garden photography, it's catching the space in the best light of the day. This is almost always at either end of the day before the sun is too high in the sky. When the sun is creating its longest shadows, the light is much more flattering and warm, with sidelight giving structure and form to the plants and landscaping.

2. SEASONS

Is your garden to be open to the public in summer? Be sure to photograph it in summer, showcasing the best of what visitors may see. Don't upload photographs of snowdrops if your garden is celebrated for its dahlia display! Equally, you may want to show the seasonal variety offered by your garden if it is to be open at different times of the year.

3. WEATHER

In general, people are always attracted to the pictures where the sunlight is enticing – not so much to images where the sky is a big grey washout. Keep an eye on the forecast and plan to take your photographs on a good-weather day with some interest in the sky (or leave the sky out altogether!).

4. COME & EXPLORE

Sometimes the most successful images do not show the entire garden, but offer a glimpse of an intriguing corner that visitors would want to discover. The aim is to invite people with a scene of somewhere they can imagine themselves into – a pathway to walk along, a water feature to relax beside – so that they are keen to explore more for an uplifting couple of hours.

5. SHOWCASE YOUR STAR PLANTS

Do offer photographs of the plants that your garden is known for. Whether it's a torrent of tulips, wisteria hysteria or inspirational allotment ideas, garden lovers will seek out the places that cultivate their favourite plants and produce.

6. CLEAR THE DISTRACTIONS

Your garden is an aspirational space for many visitors, so do take a moment to make sure that your photo composition avoids off-putting distractions. A little tidy-up such as deadheading, moving a green sack or taking down a washing line will exhibit your hard-earned haven at its absolute best. And while photographing, do experiment with taking a little step left or right, up or down, to see if it improves the framing of your picture.

7. BEWARE THE ACCIDENTAL SELFIE!

While we're on the subject of distractions, I often find that I have to check that I'm not accidentally featuring in a photograph! Reflective surfaces are obviously the worst for this, but do remember to also check that you or a family member are not casting a shadow into your picture. In general, adding people will draw the eye of the viewer away from the features of the garden, so for your showcase photographs, it's usually best to leave them out.

