

Snowflake Photography

By Jean Davids

Note: The Resources section at the end of this document has other information that can help you in learning the process as well as the videos on the next page.



Videos to Share

How to capture a picture of the perfect snowflake video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjBGTEK8UgE>

How to photograph snowflakes with a macro lens

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzrHLIB_5zs

Gear

- Camera or cell phone with Macro or close-up lens or capability – there are many ways to accomplish this
- Tripod and camera remote
- Lighting – LED or other that are cool enough not to melt the snowflakes
- Glove or other material that serves as a pleasing background
- Must be done in a cold environment away from continued snowfall and wind

- I have captured snowflakes outdoors on polar fleece cloth and then brought inside garage away from breeze and other snowflakes that continue to fall in order to capture photos

<https://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-photograph-snowflakes-with-a-dslr/>

- You can actually see the flake patterns with the naked eye. Search for flakes first, then work on focus.
- Focusing on Snowflakes:
- Cameras tend to have trouble locking focus when the subject is so close, so I flip the lens/camera focus mode to manual mode. Then I turn the focus so it focuses as close as possible so I can get maximum zoom. I line up the camera with the flake, and then use my body to move further and closer until I see the flake come into focus (it's like magic to me to watch this!).
- Take Lots of Shots:
- It's not always easy to see if you nailed the focus perfectly on the LCD, so take extra to make sure. If it's a snowflake I really like I will take 5-10 shots!
- Try Different Backgrounds:
- Dark colors help show the flakes details, adding color can be fun, and don't forget textures! Soft fabrics are great for snow that is falling fast, as it helps to prevent them from breaking.

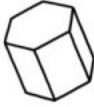
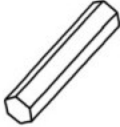

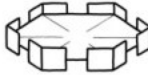

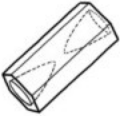

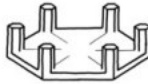
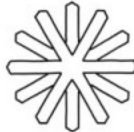

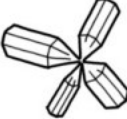


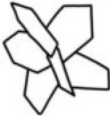

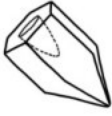
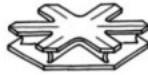

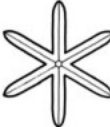


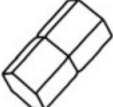





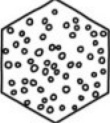





<https://www.photoshopactions.com/blogs/blog/tips-for-photographing-snowflakes>

Snowflakes are very small

They can be as small as the end of a ballpoint pen.



Types of Snowflakes

				
Simple Prisms	Solid Columns	Sheaths	Scrolls on Plates	Triangular Forms
				
Hexagonal Plates	Hollow Columns	Cups	Columns on Plates	12-branched Stars
				
Stellar Plates	Bullet Rosettes	Capped Columns	Split Plates & Stars	Radiating Plates
				
Sectoried Plates	Isolated Bullets	Multiply Capped Columns	Skeletal Forms	Radiating Dendrites
				
Simple Stars	Simple Needles	Capped Bullets	Twin Columns	Irregulars
				
Stellar Dendrites	Needle Clusters	Double Plates	Arrowhead Twins	Rimed
				
Fernlike Stellar Dendrites	Crossed Needles	Hollow Plates	Crossed Plates	Graupel

First attempts at snowflakes were shot on the lid of our garbage can.



This attempt used
polar fleece scraps



Image below used
backing from photo
display board material



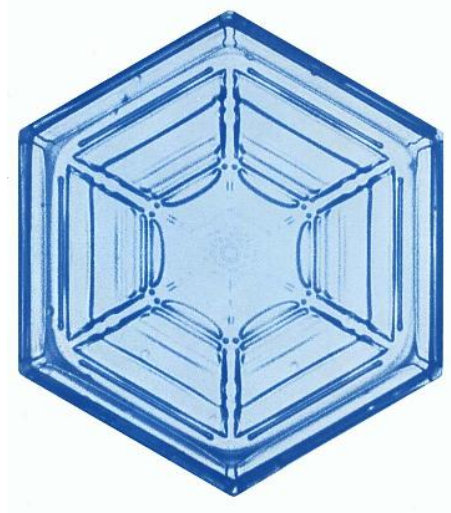
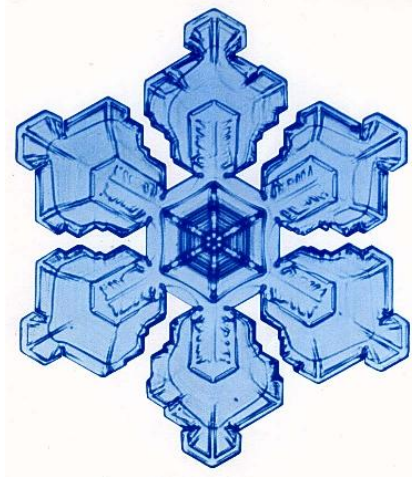
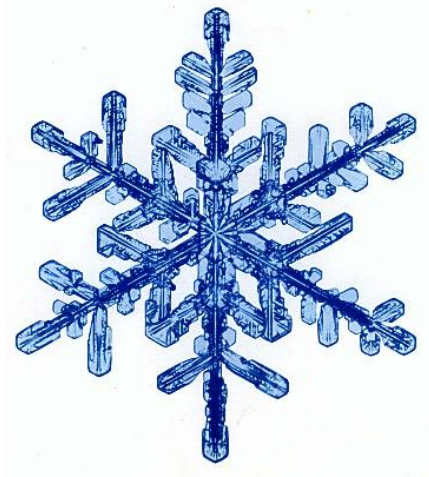
Bought larger pieces of cloth at Walmart and cut some to make rolls to use – these were shot with an iPhone 7 plus



Best first image after editing using photoshop to replace garbage can background



Steve Fowler asked me to share this information with you. “These are not my photos but belong to a friend of mine. I think it good to demonstrate the fact that expensive/special equipment is not necessary to make these photographs. He used an old Pentex film camera with a home made extension tube made from a toilet paper roll and a piece of glass. He put the snow flake on the glass and under lit it. Very simple but effective.”



Best Images So Far





What I have Learned So Far

- DSLR works better for me but iPhone is handier and takes less setup.
- I use Moment Macro for iPhone
- Lighting is important to capture the image best – contrast
- The angle makes a big difference. Shoot as straight on as possible to keep as much in focus as possible
- Backdrop material makes a big difference – contrast
- Don't shoot in wind – breaks up snowflakes
- Don't shoot in sun or warm conditions – melts them
- Keep experimenting
- Shoot, shoot and shoot again to get best shots

Additional Resources

- <https://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-photograph-snowflakes-with-a-dslr/>
- <http://www.brendabentleyphotography.com/snowflake-photography-using-an-iphone/>
- http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/class/class-old.htm?fbclid=IwAR33uywcq4W-ysMJvOuTPue6jzvKy_1JHeO80z68e9TExGizkRFHrUvDKAg
- <https://learn.zoner.com/how-to-photograph-snowflakes/>
- <https://petapixel.com/2018/01/31/shoot-macro-snowflake-photos-home/>
- <https://www.clickinmoms.com/blog/take-macro-snowflakes-pictures/>
- <https://earthsky.org/earth/how-to-take-photos-of-snowflakes>