

Beginning Photo Tips For Mushroom Photography

By Nan Etzwiler,
with many contributions
from Howard Goltz



Nan Etzwiler

Mushroom Photography Tips

- Subject Selection
- Context
- Grooming
- Framing
- Angle of Shot
- Focus and Depth of Field
- Lighting



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Mushroom Photography Tips

1. Subject Selection

- Striking or Unusual Colors, Contrasting Colors (Black on White)
- Indicators of Scale (Bug on Specimen)
- Natural Environs – Mosses, Slugs
- Unusual Features
- Curves and Textures
- Odd Numbers



Howard Goltz – 2nd place 2014

Curves and textures can add interest and visual movement through the photo



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Howard Goltz

Here: The unusual
feature is the
parasitized
mushroom against a
contrasting
background.



2020

First Place –
Tied

Marjie Carr-
Oxley



Here: the
close up shot
of the
colored
guttation of
the
mushroom
provides the
“AHH” factor.

2022
1st Place
Pictorial

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Here: The slug adds scale; the shot across fungi with fall leaves color in background had depth and color and action.

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Or the shot can
just be of a
beautiful
mushroom!

Charles Kilmers
1st Place Tied
2020





Odd subject
numbers
seem better
than even



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Here, closeup of
snow crystals on the
subject is dramatic.

Marjie Carr-Oxley



Here: shot is relatively closeup, but allows room to let colors pop against lichen and other background colors and textures.



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Use tweezers,
brushes,
fingers to
remove
distracting
objects



Howard Goltz

Carry spray
bottle to
“mist” a
subject



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Mushroom Photography Tips

- Framing Strategies To Consider
 - Filling the Frame
 - Use of Surroundings
 - Rule of Thirds



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Framing: Fill The Frame



Too far away, with
distracting
background.

Framing: Fill The Frame



Right: fills
the frame
and allows
better
viewing
cap
texture.



Far away shots
without
purpose are not
effective



Here: the swirl of
the subject
completely crosses
the frame and
provides a feeling
that the slime
molds are on the
move!

**Slime Mold
Leiderman**



Here: the fungi
completely
fill the frame,
emphasizing the color
and the gill pattern.



Here: the
photographer has
zoomed in on the
gills alone and
completely filled the
frame, to deliver
awesome color and
pattern.



Wood Blewit Gills Jackson Art of Mycography

Bottom line: Consider What You Are Trying to Emphasize



Here: texture of cap and unusual volva were the photographer's focus.

Howard Goltz

Mushroom Photography Tips – Pictorial Category

- Framing Strategies To Consider
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 - Rule of Thirds



The mushroom fills the frame, BUT.....



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The mushroom fills the frame, BUT.....



You can back off a bit and bring in relevant surroundings when they add to the picture.

This is not a bad photo, which fills the frame....



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This is not a bad photo, which fills the frame....



...but a slightly wider shot brings in the texture and color of the stump.

Mushroom Photography Tips

- Framing Strategies To Consider
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Framing:

“Rule of Thirds”

Sweet spots for placement
of highest interest:



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The intersections of the
lines denoting the top and
bottom thirds and the left
and right thirds can create
the most interesting focal
points for subjects.



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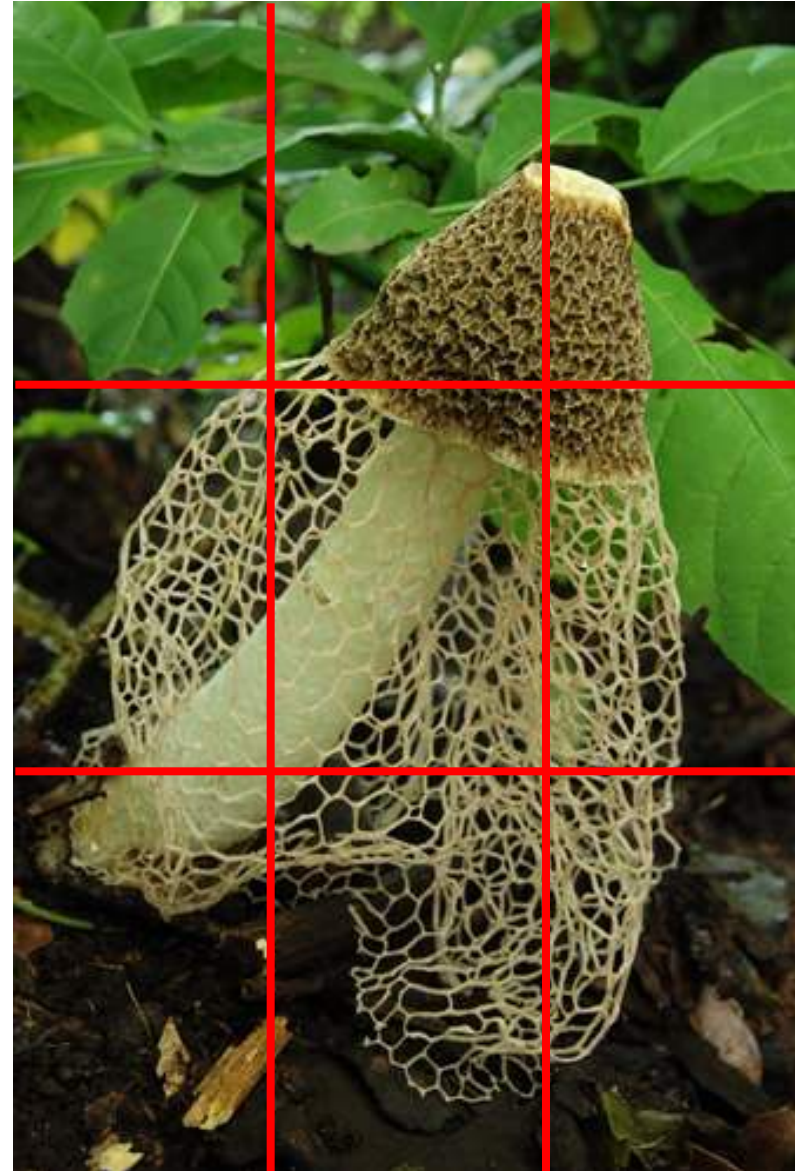


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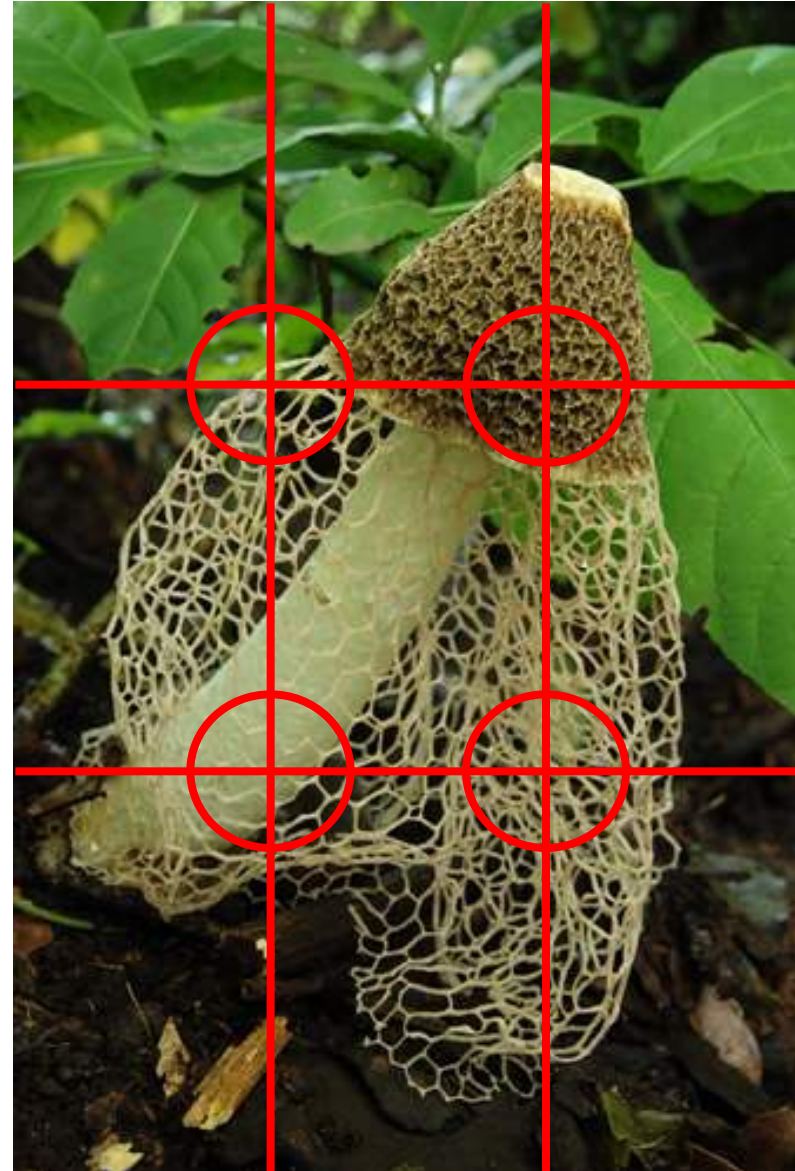


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Example of
super-
effective shot
using the
“Rule of
Thirds”.



Amanita sp. The World of Mushrooms

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Angle of Shot – Strategies

1. Go Low – Shoot Even With Subject

Ross Haughberg



Angle of Shot – Strategies

1. Go Low – Shoot Even With Subject



Tricholomopsis rutilans Hanzi Mushroom Photography

Angle of Shot – Strategies

1. Go Low – Shoot Even With Subject
2. Shoot Up



Shoot Up!

- Get down low and shoot from ground level.
- This will enable you to see the textures, shapes and colors of not only the top dome of the mushroom but its underside.
- It will also give your mushroom height which makes for a more dramatic and three dimensional shot.
- Shooting up makes your mushrooms more important



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Shooting Up
Can Add Drama



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Shooting up reveals
features not otherwise
visible.



Rizvanovic Almir

Phyllotopsis nidulans
Rizvanovic Almir
Mushroom Photography!

Angle of Shot – Strategies

1. Go Low – Shoot Even With Subject
2. Shoot Up
3. Can Shoot “Down” In Rare Circumstances

Here: specimen was white and needed darker background, and was spherical – so top-down shot emphasized this.



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Angle of Shot – Strategies

1. Go Low – Shoot Even With Subject
2. Shoot Up
3. Can Shoot “Down” In Rare Circumstances



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Place sharpest
focus on area of
special interest /
set against out of
focus foreground
and background,
or darker or
contrasting color
background



Here: the
foreground is in
focus to show
color of
mushroom and
draw less
attention to the
background.

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Same Mushroom :

Left shot keeps the forest in focus as part of the composition of up-shooting the mushroom as part of the forest.

The right shot sought to isolate the mushroom cap texture and blur back detail.



Either one is a strong photo!

Here the photographer wished to emphasize the depth and sheer volume of the growth – so there is greater depth of focus.

Marjie Carr-Oxley
“Guess What’s For Dinner!”

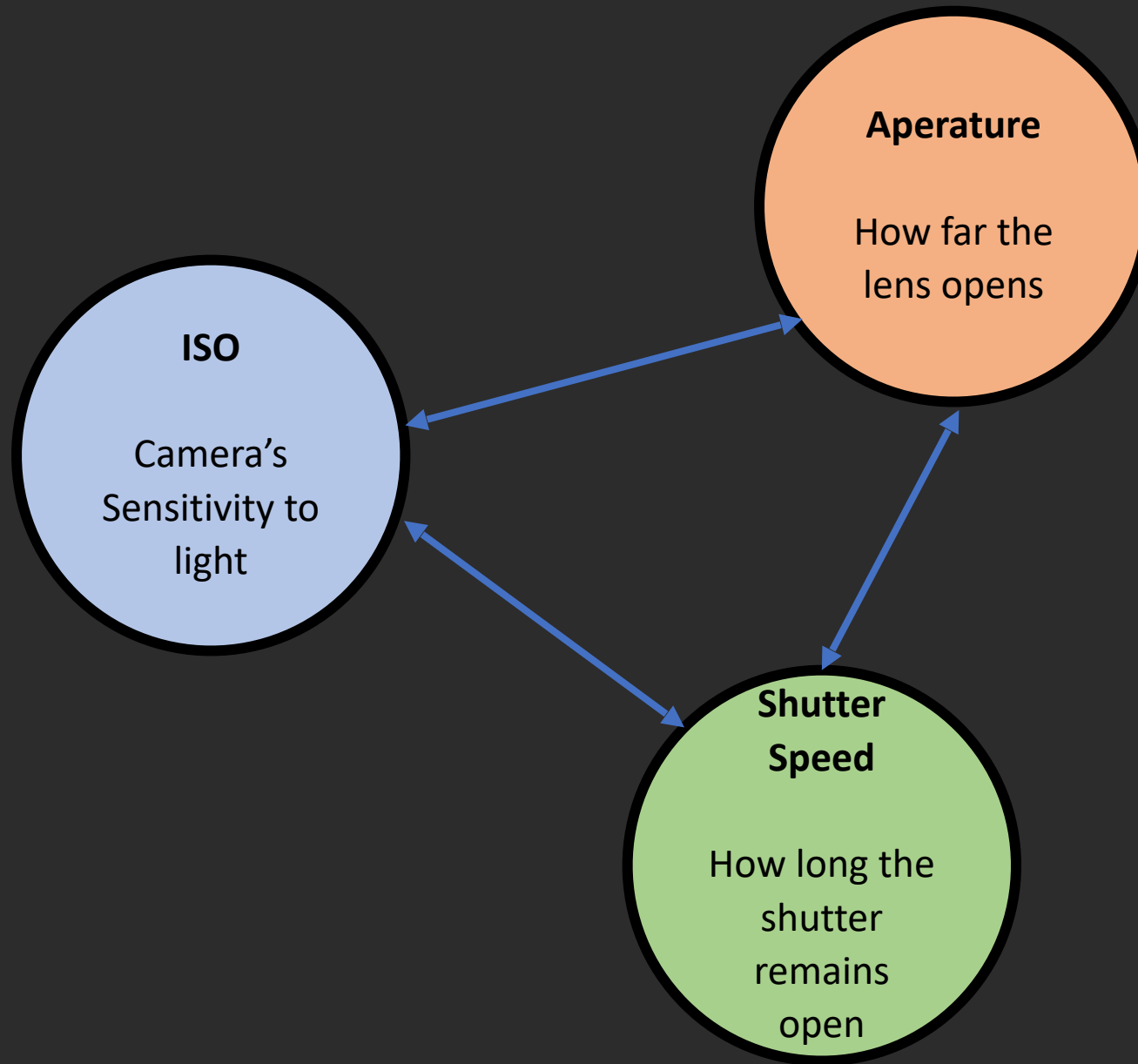


Two-thirds of this toothed fungus is in focus to emphasize the droplets, and the last third is out-of-focus, but still depicts the depth and density of the specimen.



Tiered Tooth fungus, *Hericium cirrhatum* Barnett

**Whether
Using a
Handheld
Camera or
Cell Phone**



**All 3 Interact
with each other
-
so experiment
with adjusting
them**

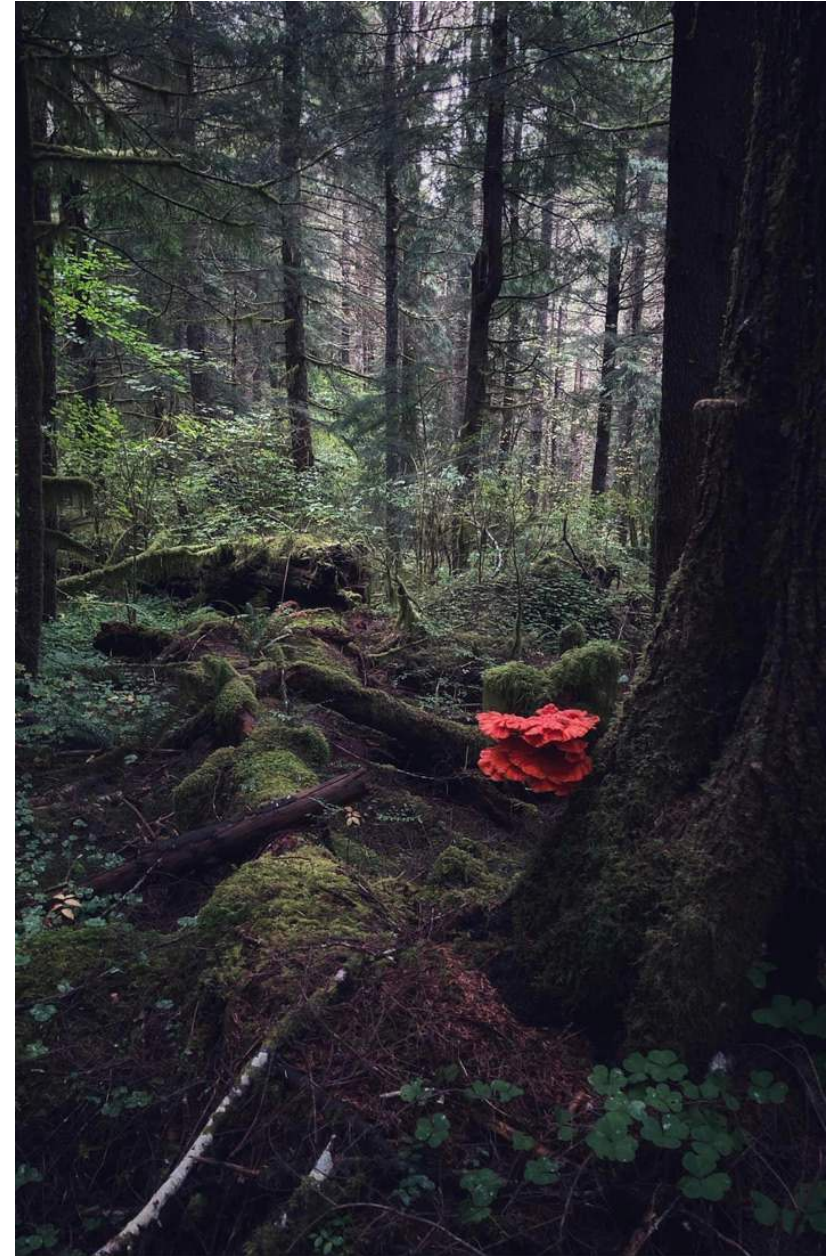
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Lighting

Consider:

- Time of Day
- Angle of Light Source
- Filling In
- Shadows
- Contrast



Lighting

Best lighting:

Overcast / cloudy skies / Golden Light Dawn/
Dusk, or entire subject in shade or shadow

Can easily lose 1/3 of detail with too much
contrast – modify the light

Low-contrast on subject matter = less loss of
image in bright or dark areas



Howard Goltz

Light Sources

- Sun
- Camera's built-in flash
- Ring light: hand held or ones that fit on front of camera
- Reflective paper
- Last resort: flashlight



Natural Light
From Behind

Marjie Carr-Oxley





Howard Goltz

Ring Light Behind Subject

Fill-In Lighting Can Illuminate Moisture



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Final Tips From the Pros

- Go out a lot and hunt!
- Take a lot of photos of one mushroom to try angles, lighting, etc. Digital photos are free!
- Take most in late or early light.
- Check photos in field to ensure focus



Other Resources

- For advice on camera settings and photographic equipment, for photographing mushrooms, see [“MMS Mushroom Photography”](#)
 - slides by Howard Goltz
 - on the MMS website
 - At MMS site, click on “Resources” and then “Articles and Presentations”

