
The SmartPhone Gardener #1

The iPhone was born in 2007 and because of the many profound changes it created within our expectations of what a phone could be and do, all phones soon afterward came with cameras, and not long after that, with apps. The world of phones, photography and cameras were melded and transformed forever. Now, the cameras within nearly all smart-phones are miniature wonders, always within our reach and capable of capturing higher quality photos and video than really good point and shoot cameras could back then. And these photos now can be enhanced and shared around the world, within moments. Just a decade ago that was unimaginable. We are living in the delicious midst of a revolution and everyone is invited to play. Lucky us.

A few photo 'apps' I consider invaluable:

Snapseed: FREE: Both Apple and Android versions. <http://www.snapseed.com/> Powerful, elegant and unbelievably full featured. This is my number one, fave image enhancing/processing app.

Handy Photo: \$2.99. Both Apple and Android versions. <http://adva-soft.com/products/handy-photo/>

Camera+: \$2.99. iOS only. iPhone, \$4.99 iPad: <http://campl.us> So far, this little app is my hands-down fave for shooting pics. And for adding on borders to photos because it adds them onto the outside rather than cropping into it. Definitely worth the price!

VSCO: Free + in app purchases. Both Apple & Android. You'll find it in the Apple and Android app stores. Like Camera+ it allows 2 finger screen tap to enable separate focus and exposure points. Move these points then to suit your individual focus and exposure needs for any particular scene.

Over: Free + in app purchases. Both Apple & Android. <http://madewithover.com> Place stylized type atop your photos. Several fonts, more available for purchase. I adore the simplicity and elegance of this one and use it constantly. Infinitely variable colors, opacities, add shadows to your type, add your own logos, etc. Brilliant!

Mextures: Free + in app purchases, App Store. Sorry, Apple only, so far. Over 120 hand picked textures: Grit & Grain, Light leaks, Gradients, Grunge and more. An absolute must have for this photographer in creating stylized and mysterious images. <https://www.mextures.com/store/>

How to pick the photo apps that are right for you: The best way to discover what's possible in the world of photo apps for your smart phone is to find out what others, whose pics you love are raving about. But you can also just log in to your phone's app store and browse. Read reviews, look at examples and give yourself permission to plunk down the cost of a burger and fries to purchase a handful of these portable little wonders, and begin playing. Some you'll love and some will almost immediately prove themselves unfit for your way of doing things, but that's exactly as it should be. Approach buying photo apps like you would going to a yard sale. You could choose to feel upset about that dollar or two you just spent on some shiny bauble that didn't seem nearly so precious once you got it home, or instead, smile and chalk it up to the price of the adventure.



This magazine cover and the feature story inside were shot entirely with my iPhone 6. Yes, really.