

Nearly ten years ago, I wrote about waking up one morning and being captivated by an outstanding sunrise. Sadly, by the time I got dressed, grabbed my camera and headed outdoors, the moment was gone. I failed to photograph that beautiful sunrise. Perhaps more aptly stated, “I missed a “Kodak Moment.”

I certainly am not a professional photographer, but I truly enjoy taking photographs. I became a camera buff as a kid long ago. At age eleven, I remember saving up and buying my first camera, a Kodak Brownie Bull’s Eye. Most of the remaining photographs of my childhood days came from that camera. Since those early days, I continue to enjoy taking pictures.

There is a saying, “Seasons come and seasons go.” As gardeners, we all know that beauty in nature changes quickly. Over the years I’ve realized that a camera can be a great gardening tool. The camera captures that instant, fragile beauty to be enjoyed over and over. Especially with the advent of digital photography, the digital camera built into my smart phone has become one of my most important gardening tools.

Several years ago, my first digital camera was given to by my late son Jeremy for Father’s Day —my son and a gift I will never forget. Since then, I’ve acquired other digital cameras, those with more bells and whistles. Using digital, I can shoot an unlimited number of photos and incur no developing costs. Immediately after shooting, I can view the photos. After viewing, if I don’t like the photo, I can delete it and keep only those that I like. Furthermore, I can print them or simply download them to my computer and view them over and over as slide shows. I presently have hundreds of photos of family, friends, flowers, trees, shrubs, insects and other vistas of nature taken at different seasons over the years. These photos certainly help me to reflect on my past gardening experiences, but they also help me with my future gardening plans.



I recently entered a new realm of digital photography. The Extension Office recently acquired a *Dino-Lite Digital Microscope*. It’s a microscope and digital camera all in one. The other day I was asked to help a client identify a certain insect he had collected. Although I have a general knowledge of many insects, I was unable to identify his specimen. Fortunately, UNL has professional entomologists. As a result, I placed this mystifying, tiny creature under the *Dino-Lite*. There I magnified it many times its actual size, photographed it in many

positions, then downloaded it to the computer. Then, I fired off an email to the entomologists at UNL with the digital photos attached. I now anxiously await their reply. I've attached a photo of the beetle under the magnification of the Dino-Lite device. Interestingly, in reality, this beetle was only one-half inch in length, but from the attached photos, he seems like an alien monster.

Beauty abounds. Throughout my life I've come to realize that Mother Nature often presents spectacular vistas in unexpected places and at unexpected times every day of our lives. All we need to do is pay attention. Make a camera a part of your gardening tools. Carry it with you and at that moment, you, too, just might be at the right place and at the right time to capture that perfect "Kodak Moment," thus preserving it forever.