

long thread

MEDIA

***Spin Off* Photo Guidelines**

There are four important factors for photos submitted to *Spin Off*: focus, size, format, and composition. Our contributors have a variety of photography skill levels, and we can often (but not always) improve photos here if necessary. Here are some basic principles to help your hard work have good results.

Focus:

The photograph *must* be crisp, not blurry, in the important area. An out-of-focus background is OK, but we cannot use any photographs that are generally out of focus.

Size:

Photos need to be 300 dpi and at least 4" on their longest side to be printed. A good rule of thumb is that photos over 1 MB are usually large enough for publication. File sizes under 200 KB are almost never usable.

Photos taken on a phone can be large enough, but some phones and email programs automatically compress/reduce photos. It's better to attach photos than paste them in the body of an email. You can send a Dropbox link if you're in doubt.

Format:

We can accept jpeg, tif, and psd (Photoshop) files. Png *may* be acceptable if the file size is large and the photo has not been saved from a website.

Please do not edit your photographs in any way; send us directions for any necessary changes and we will do any correction here. Do not watermark your photos, which will make them unusable.

Composition:

This is the hardest element to direct. Some principles:

1. Simple background: No distractions from other elements that don't need to be in the photo. Examples include furniture, people, colorful fiber that isn't directly related to the subject, and anything that isn't necessary to understand the purpose of the photo. (Setting the scene is good; making it hard to tell what's important is not.) When in doubt, shooting on white is a good option. Craft/hobby stores usually carry white foam core or poster board in fairly large sizes pretty inexpensively; we use it when we photograph in our studio.

2. Crop: Make sure that there is plenty of room around the main subject. We may crop the photo further, but depending on the layout of the page, we may need extra space around the edges. (Cropping a photo can also reduce the file size.)

3. Lighting: This is a delicate balance. There needs to be enough contrast to make the subject visible, but too much can create images that are “blown out” (so much light that we can’t see detail). Avoid backlighting and harsh shadows. Sunlight can be better than artificial light, especially if it’s diffused (for example, on a cloudy day or in even shade).