



Digital Scrapper Tutorial | Select Subject

Extracted Elements Using Select Subject

by Jenifer Juris

Extract your own elements from stock photos with the help of subject selection.

© 2023 Digital Scrapper, [Terms of Use](#), For Photoshop Elements and Adobe Photoshop.

In this tutorial, I'll show you how simple it can be to make your own elements using stock photos and the Select Subject menu option.

For this tutorial you will need:

- A stock photo (one provided in the downloads)

Important Links:

- Find this [tutorial on our blog](#).
- [Digital Scrapper's Website](#)
- [Digital Scrapper's Community](#)
- [Find Us On Facebook](#)
- [Find Us On YouTube](#)
- [Find Us On Instagram](#)
- [Contact Us](#)



Prepare the Workspace

- Create a new 12x12 inch document (File > New > Blank File) at 300 ppi with a white background. (PS: Choose File > New.)
- In the downloads for this tutorial, I've included two stock photos for practicing with. Open the flower photo (File > Open) named dst-Select-Subject-Extracted-Elements-quino-al-unsplash-flower.jpg.
- Get the Move tool.
- On the document, hold down the Shift key and click and drag the photo onto the new document.



NOTE: Holding down the Shift key while adding something to a document ensures that the item will land in the center of the document.

- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips to the default of black over white.

What are Stock Photos?

- Stock photos are NOT any image you can find on the internet.
- Stock photos are licensed for specific uses.
- Stock photo usage rights can be purchased for a fee.
- Stock photos can also be free.
- Some will require crediting the original photographer.
- Some will not require any crediting. Always check the license.

Where Can You Find Stock Photos?

- Unsplash:
 - Offers two tiers of regular and plus.
 - Regular Unsplash is free for both personal and commercial use. Crediting is not required.
 - Unsplash+ is a membership you can pay for which gives you access to more images and unlimited downloads.
- Pixabay:
 - Everything on Pixabay is free for both personal and commercial use.
 - However, be careful where you click. Pixabay also displays stock photos from another stock website (which requires a paid membership) so make sure to only click on the royalty-free pictures.
 - Crediting is not required.
- When searching either site, use terms like purple flower, leaf, or butterfly. Keep it simple.

What Stock Photos Work Best?

There are four major factors that play a part in using stock photos successfully for this technique.

- Number of Subjects - One clear subject is best.



- Direction of the Element - The subject should be facing the camera straight on.



- Background - The background should be as simple as possible.



- Coloring - Check for odd color casts that will look strange once the photo is extracted.



Extract the Flower from the Photo

- In the Menu Bar, choose Select > Subject.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Add Layer Mask icon to mask away the unselected pixels.

Clean Up the Extraction (If Needed)

- Press Ctrl + (Mac: Cmd +) multiple times to zoom in on the flower.
- Get the Polygonal Lasso tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the New Selection icon, set the Feather to 0 px, and check Anti-aliasing.
- On the document, click to place the beginning of the first segment. We want to only remove this small black triangle in between the petals.
- Place a series of clicks to create additional segments.
- To close the selection, click at the beginning of the first segment.

NOTE: Because this flower is very large, we will be making it smaller. This will make most of the leftover black pixels unseeable, so the selection does not have to be perfect. It's enough to remove the most obvious of the leftover black pixels.

- Press the letter X to switch the foreground color chip to white.
- Press Ctrl Backspace (Mac: Cmd Delete) to fill the selection with white.



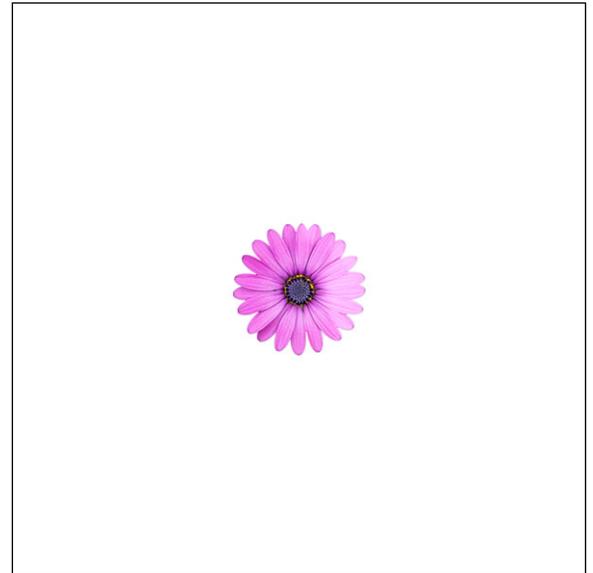
NOTE: Because we are using a Layer mask, filling the selection with white is actually just concealing the selected pixels.

- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.
- Repeat this process of selecting the black pixels in between the petals, filling them with white, and deselecting, until all of the more obvious black pixels are removed.
- Press Ctrl - (Mac: Cmd -) a few times to zoom back out.

Save the Element as a PNG for Future Use

- In the Menu Bar, choose View > Rulers to turn the Rulers on.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get the Transform options.
- On the document, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Opt key) and click and drag from a corner handle to make the flower smaller. Reduce the size of the flower until it's roughly between 3 and 4 inches in diameter.
- Click the checkmark to commit the change.

NOTE: This flower is still on the large size for a flower element on a 12x12 page. I plan to resize my flower smaller on my final page. But it's always a good idea to save an element slightly larger than you'll need because you can always make it smaller.



- In the Layers panel, click on the Visibility icon of the Background layer to hide it.
- Get the Rectangular Marquee tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the New Selection icon, set the Feather to 0 px, and the Aspect to Normal. (PS: Set the Style to Normal.)
- On the document, click and drag a selection around the flower, making sure that the entire flower is within the selection.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Image > Crop to remove the blank pixels.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.
- Save the document (File > Save As) as a PNG file with a unique name. In the dialog box, set the File Size option to Smallest File Size and click OK.
- Close the document without saving.



NOTE: If you plan to make a few of these, it's a good idea to create a folder on your computer just for these elements. Then they will be easier to find in the future.

Use the Flower on a Project

Once you have opened your flower PNG file and moved it onto your project document, you may want to add a drop shadow layer style to it.

Photoshop Elements Only:

- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Layer Style > Style Settings.
- In the dialog box, set the Lighting Angle to 120°. Click directly on the words Drop Shadow to open the settings. Set the Size to 20, the Distance to 25, and the Opacity to 50. Click OK.

Adobe Photoshop Only:

- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > Layer Style > Drop Shadow.
- In the dialog box, click on Reset to Default. Set the Blend Mode to Multiply, the Opacity to 50%, the Angle to 120°, the Distance to 25, the Spread to 0, and the Size to 20. Click OK.

NOTE: Depending on the size of your project document, you may need to adjust the size of the drop shadow.

In the downloads for this class, I've also included a picture of a green leaf for extracting. Try these same steps with that photo and save your results. I decided to use that leaf on my page. The cream rose is an element I extracted from a stock photo, as well.



Credits:

Page & Photos: Jenifer Juris
Kit: Family Ties by Kristin Cronin-Barrow,
Pretty Day by Carol W Designs
Fonts: Special Elite, Bolyna