

Photoshop Leaves Tutorial

We can find images literally right at our feet, and one of the benefits in shooting digital is that we can experiment, after all it is not going to cost us anything in film.

Our images were taken with the Nikon Coolpix 990, while sweeping some leaves from the patio after it had been raining. Using layers ([hyper link to layers](#)) and a few other steps we can build an effective but simple montage. First we select our background image (see below).

Tip When working on a montage it helps if you can save all of the images you intend using in one folder. This will make it much easier to call them up as you need them.

After making any necessary corrections such as levels ([link to levels](#)) we call up our Layers Palette Windows>Show Layers (shortcut F7). Click onto the thumbnail in the layers palette and drag it over the Create a New Layer icon to duplicate our original background. You can rename the new layer by right clicking and selecting Layer Properties (see below). Don't worry if you are using Photoshop 5, choose Layer Options and enter a name of your choice.

From our main menu bar choose Filter>Stylize>Find Edges and apply to our new layer. To give our image a nice Autumn glow in the Layers Palette select from the Blend Mode Luminosity and we reduce the Opacity to around 87%. It is always worth experimenting with these settings as they produce some dramatic effects.

Opening our next image in Photoshop we call up the Move Tool (shortcut V)([hyper link to move tool](#)). Click on our new image and drag it onto our background image, as we drag it across a + sign will appear as it is being copied over. Our new image will be copied in as a new layer and we can rename this as before.

Our new image needs to be scaled down so the Transform command is called up, Edit > Free Transform (short cut Ctrl T). This will put a frame around the image with eight grab handles. Holding down the Shift key drag the top corner handle inwards to reduce the size while maintaining the correct proportions. Moving the cursor into the frame changes it to a black arrow which will allow us to move the image into position. Press the Enter key to remove the frame. We can also rotate our image by moving the cursor outside the corners of the frame - a bent arrow will appear which we can then use to rotate the image.

We can repeat this procedure until we have all our images in position. shape as the layers build up.

We can now see our montage taking

To add more definition to our new layers we could add drop shadows. On the Layers Palette click on the Add a Layer Style icon and select Drop Shadow from the drop down menu. In Photoshop 5 Layer>Layer Effect>Drop Shadow . Set the Angle to around 130 and move the Distance slider to around 15 pixels

We can also Bevel and Emboss our images, using the Layers Style palette or in Photoshop 5 Layers>Layer Effect>Bevel and Emboss. In the Layers Style Palette, Emboss was chose, Direction set to Up and a size of 10 pixels. Apply this to all our new layers. Photoshop 6 has a new trick up its sleeve for doing just this. Simply click on the Effects Layer (see below) and drag it up dropping it into the other layers.

We can make any adjustments to the position of our layers using the Move Tool, ([hyper link to Move Tool](#)), or we can change the order of our layers by clicking on the layer we wish to move and dragging it above the other layers.

Calling up our Type Tool (shortcut T) we click in the area we wish to add our text. From the Drop Down menu on the options bar we can select the font and size of the font we are going to use. Clicking on the Type Tool in Photoshop 5 will open the dialogue box with your text options.

Photoshop 6 gives us some great options using Layer Styles. We are able to add various effects to our text all from the same palette (see above). Using Photoshop 5 most of these effects can be found under Layers>Layer Effect. Try experimenting with some of the different styles, it's really amazing what effects can be achieved. Finishing touches can be made by calling up our Hue/Saturation palette Image>Adjust>Hue/Saturation and adjusting as necessary.

Our finished montage

This same technique can be used to create other montages such as family groups, holidays and special events.

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