

Using Serif PhotoPlus

IMPORTANT! Before you edit any image, make a copy of the image file and work on the copy.



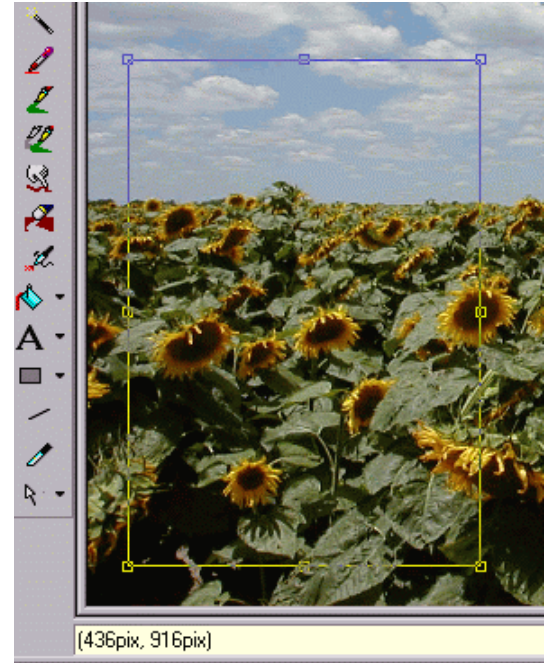
Selecting part of an image

You may have a photo showing more than needed. To remove the “extra” parts of the image, you use the crop tool. The icon looks like the cropping ells that are traditionally used to select the framing of best part of a picture.

To crop the image with Crop tool:

1. Select the **Crop** tool from the **Tools** toolbar.
2. Drag out a rectangle and adjust the edges as needed. To constrain the region to a square, hold down the **Ctrl** key while dragging. PhotoPlus shows the region size in the information line at the bottom of the window.
3. Double-click in the rectangle to crop to the designated size.

Note: Cropping with the Crop tool affects all image layers. Everything outside the designated region is eliminated. If there's a marquee-based selection, it is ignored and deselected during cropping.



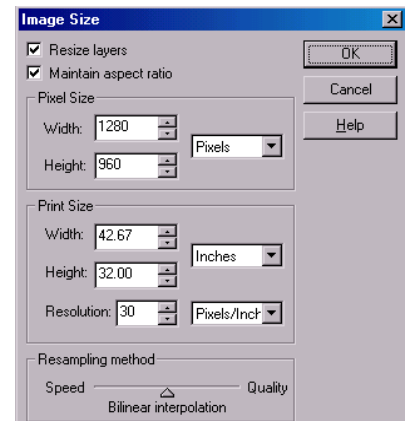
Changing image size

Changing the image size means scaling the whole image (or just a selected region) up or down. Resizing is actually a kind of distortion because the image content is being stretched or squashed. However, especially when downsizing, the distortion is subtle because the program does a good job of resampling the image—that is, recalculating how to distribute the image pixels.

The **Image Size** dialog lets you specify a new size for the whole image, in terms of its screen dimensions and/or printed dimensions.

To resize the whole image:

1. Choose **Image Size...** from the **Image** menu.
2. To specify just the printed dimensions, uncheck **Resize layers**. Check the box to link the Pixel Size (screen) settings to the Print Size settings.
3. To retain the current image proportions, check **Maintain aspect ratio**. Uncheck the box to alter the dimensions independently.



4. If adjusting screen dimensions:
 - Select a preferred scale (either "Pixels" or "Percent") in the drop-down list.
 - Select a **Resampling method**. As a rule, use Nearest Pixel for hard-edge images, Bilinear Interpolation when shrinking photos, and Bicubic Interpolation when enlarging photos.
5. If adjusting printed dimensions, select your preferred units of measurement and resolution.
6. Enter the new values and click **OK**.

Basics of using layers

If you're accustomed to thinking of pictures as flat illustrations in books, or as photographic prints, the concept of image layers may take some getting used to. In fact, layers are hardly unique to electronic images. The emulsion of photographic film has separate layers, each sensitive to a different color—and we've all noticed multiple-image depth effects like shop window reflections or mirrored interiors. There is still something magical about being able to build up an image in a series of planes, like sheets of electronic glass, each of which can vary in transparency and interact with the layers below to produce exciting new images and colors.

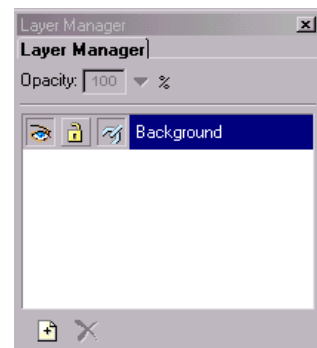
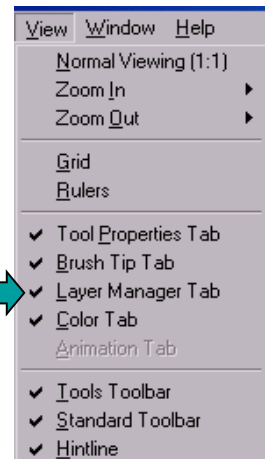
This introduces the basic idea of layers as implemented in PhotoPlus. The topics that follow delve into the creative possibilities of layers.

Kinds of layers

In a typical PhotoPlus image—for example, a photograph you've scanned in, a new picture file you've just created, or a standard bitmap file you've opened—there is one layer that behaves like a conventional "flat" image. This is called the **Background** layer, and you can think of it as having paint overlaid on an opaque, solid color surface.

You can create any number of new layers in your image. Each new one appears on top of the currently active layer, comprising a stack that you can view and manipulate with the **Layer Manager** tab. We call these additional layers standard layers to differentiate them from the Background layer. Standard layers behave like transparent sheets through which the underlying layers are visible. (Text layers, which differ from the other two types of layers, are covered in the topic Creating text.)

A key distinction is that pixels on the Background layer are always opaque, while those on standard layers can vary in opacity (or transparency—another way of expressing the same property). A couple of examples will show how this rule is applied in PhotoPlus:



Suppose you are creating a new picture image. The **New Image** dialog provides three choices for Background: White, Background Color, and Transparent. If you pick White or Background Color, the Layer Manager shows a single layer in the new image named "Background." If you pick Transparent, however, the single layer is named "Layer 1"—and in this case, the image (typically an animation file) has no Background layer.

If you cut, delete, or move a selection on the Background layer, the "hole" that's left exposes the current background color (as shown on the Color tab). The same operations on a standard layer expose a transparent hole.

Tip: If you want to manipulate the Background layer using transparency, you can either duplicate it or use the **Promote to Layer** command (see below).

Tip: To adjust the grid size and colors of the "checkerboard" pattern denoting transparency, choose **Preferences...** from the **File** menu and select the **Transparency** tab.

Operations involving layers

Many standard operations, such as painting, selecting and moving, Clipboard actions, adjusting colors, applying effects, and so on, are possible on both the Background layer and standard layers.

Others, such as rearranging the order of layers in the stack, varying layer opacity (transparency), masking, or creating animation frames, only work with standard layers.

Once an image has more than just a background layer, the layer information can only be preserved by saving the image in the native PhotoPlus (.SPP) format. Exporting the image to standard "flat" bitmap formats requires that multiple layers first be merged (see the next topic).

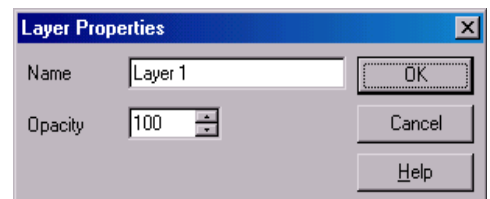
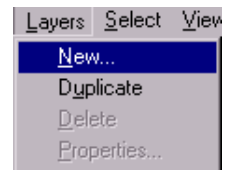
Here's a brief summary of the commands you'll need to create new standard layers and set layer properties. See also the Visual Reference topic on the Layer Manager tab.

To carry out basic layer operations:

To create a new standard layer, click the **New Layer** button on the Layer Manager tab. You can enter a more meaningful name for the new layer. Opacity of 100 means the pixels on this layer are solid and cannot be seen through. Set Opacity to 0 and the pixels on that layer are totally transparent. If you set it to 50, it is like looking through a semi-transparent window.

To select a layer, click on its name in the Layer Manager tab. The selected layer is now the active layer.

To clone the active layer and its contents as a new standard layer, choose **Duplicate...** from the **Layers** menu.



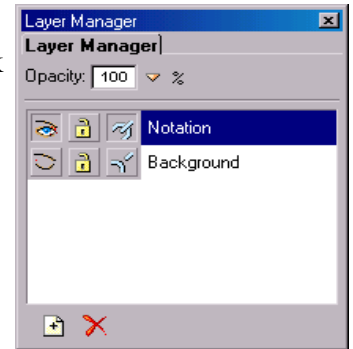
To convert the Background layer to a standard (transparent) layer, right-click "Background" on the Layer manager tab and choose Promote to Layer. The layer's name changes from "Background" to "Layer <number>."

To remove the active layer, click the **Delete** button on the Layer Manager tab. (You can delete the Background layer, as long as it's not the only layer.)

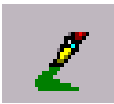
To make a layer's contents visible or invisible, click the **Hide/Show Layer** button next to its name on the Layer Manager tab. The icon switches between an open and closed eye. Shortcut: Left- or right-click a hidden layer's name to make the layer visible again.

To prevent further editing of transparent regions on a standard layer, click the **Protect Transparency** button next to its name on the Layer Manager tab.

To convert any text layer to a standard layer, right-click on the layer name and choose **Render Text Layer** from the menu.



For a visual preview of layers (including hidden layers) in the image, pause the mouse pointer over a layer name and the Layer Preview window appears. It's especially handy if you're working with many similar layers, image fragments, and/or hidden layers.



Creating straight lines and shapes

In addition to the various **brush** tools, the PhotoPlus Tools toolbar includes the **Line** tool for drawing straight lines, and the **Shape Tools** flyout featuring an assortment of tools for creating rectangles, ellipses, polygons, and other shapes. Each shape is adjustable, so you can experiment before committing to a particular figure—with innumerable possibilities!

To use a brush:

1. Pick the **Paintbrush** tool.
2. Select your **Color** and **Brush Tip** from the palette.
3. Click-drag to draw the line.



To create a shape:

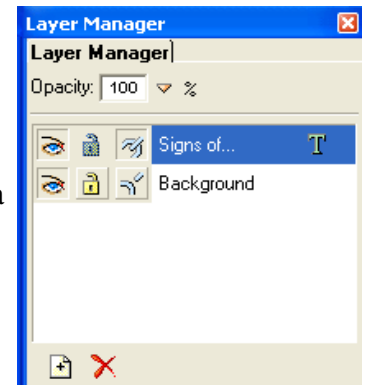
1. Click the **Shape Tools** button's down arrow to display the flyout, then select a shape. (To choose the most recently used shape, just click the larger button.)
2. Set **Tool Properties** tab options—weight (thickness), opacity, anti-alias, and stylus settings—as needed.
3. Drag out a shape on the image, then adjust the shape's handles to fine-tune it. To constrain the shape's proportions, hold down the Ctrl key while dragging.
4. When you're satisfied, double-click within the shape to draw it, or click outside the shape to cancel it.

Tip: To switch temporarily to the **Color Pickup** tool from the **Line** tool or a **shape** tool, press the **Alt** key. Then left-click to define the foreground color, or right-click to define the background color.

Creating Text



When you create text, it is automatically placed on a separate Text layer. The Layer Manager tab designates text layers with a **T** symbol. In order to keep text editable, only one block of text can occupy a text layer, and various functions—such as painting functions or the Paste Into Layer command—are disabled on text layers. If you cut/copy a text layer and paste it elsewhere as a new layer, it becomes a standard layer and its text is no longer editable. To convert any text layer to a standard layer, right-click on the layer name and choose Render Text Layer from the menu.



To create text:

1. Click the **Text** button. You can choose solid or outline text from the flyout.
2. Click where you want your text to appear in your image.
3. Select a font size relative to the picture size. Using a five megapixel image the height is 1920 pixels. I try 72 as a starting point for that image size. Select the text color.
4. Type your text in the window.
5. Click **OK**

