

Create a border for your image

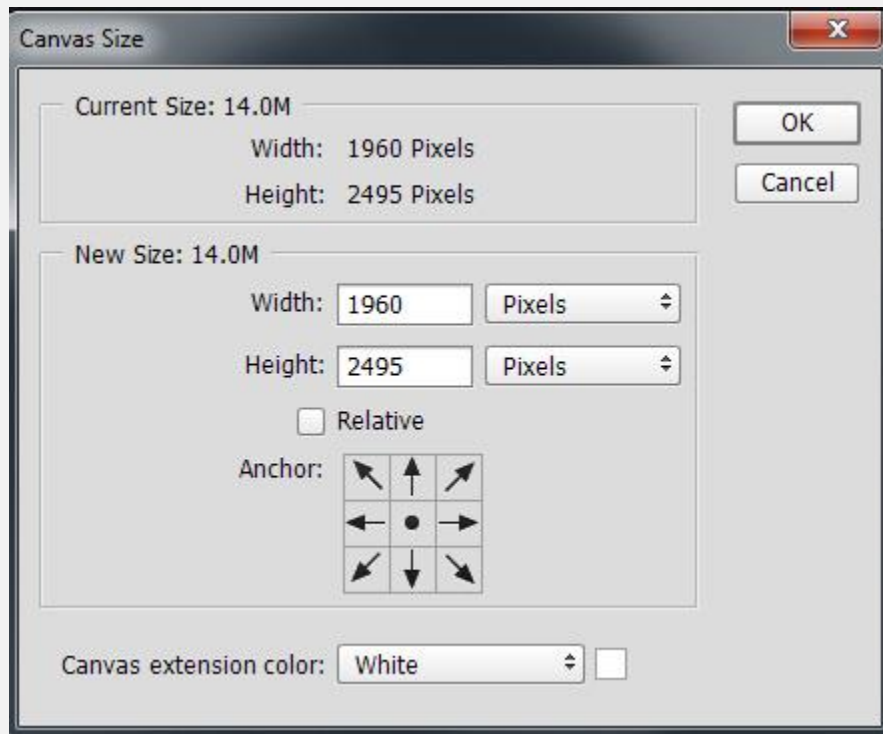
Adding a border to a photo can make a subtle but important difference to the impact of the image. This brief tutorial will take you through a few simple steps to create such a border. The technique should work with just about any photo editing program.

We have an image on a canvas. When you first bring up the image the canvas is the size of the image. In the technique I will describe here we will increase the size of the canvas in steps leaving the size of the image alone.

Here's the final 16x20 image of an 11x14 inch image of a flowering plant called bleeding heart glory bower. There are two borders, an inner lighter border and an outer darker border. I've chosen values for the breadth of each part outside the image itself – the inner and outer borders and the space in between – that appeal to me. Feel free to modify them as you choose.

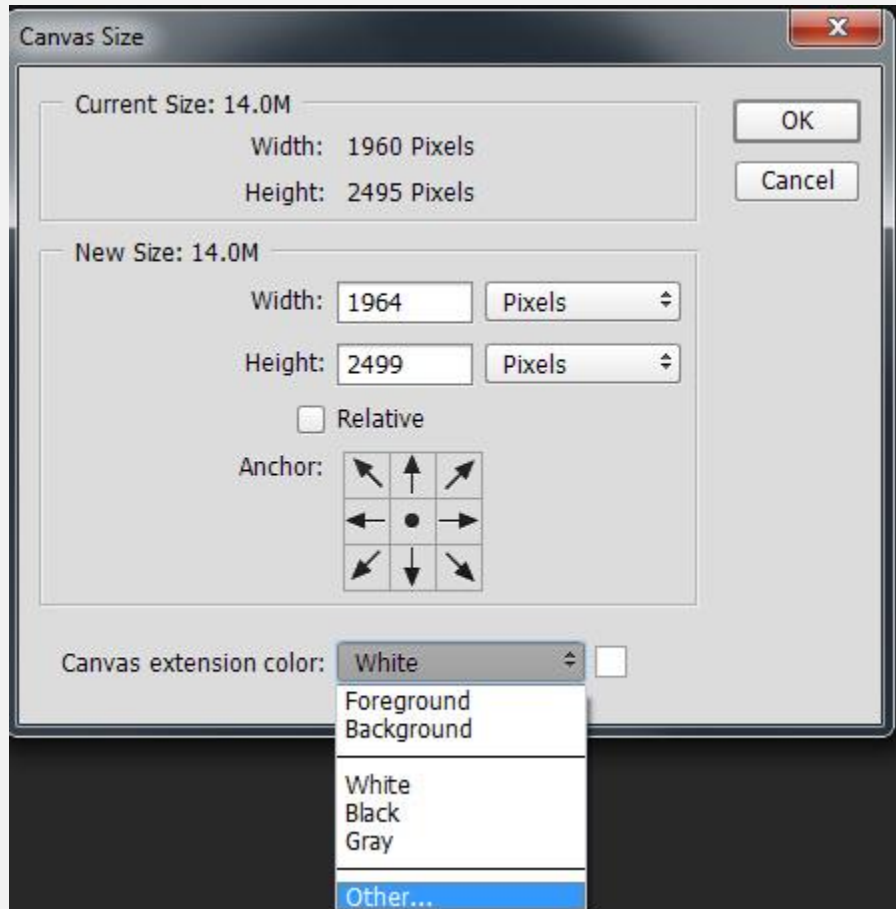


We will be working exclusively with the Canvas Size feature. That is how it is known in Photoshop and Elements. It may go by other names in other editing software. In Photoshop it appears under the Image tab. Here is what it looks like. Make sure the unit of measurement is set on Pixels.



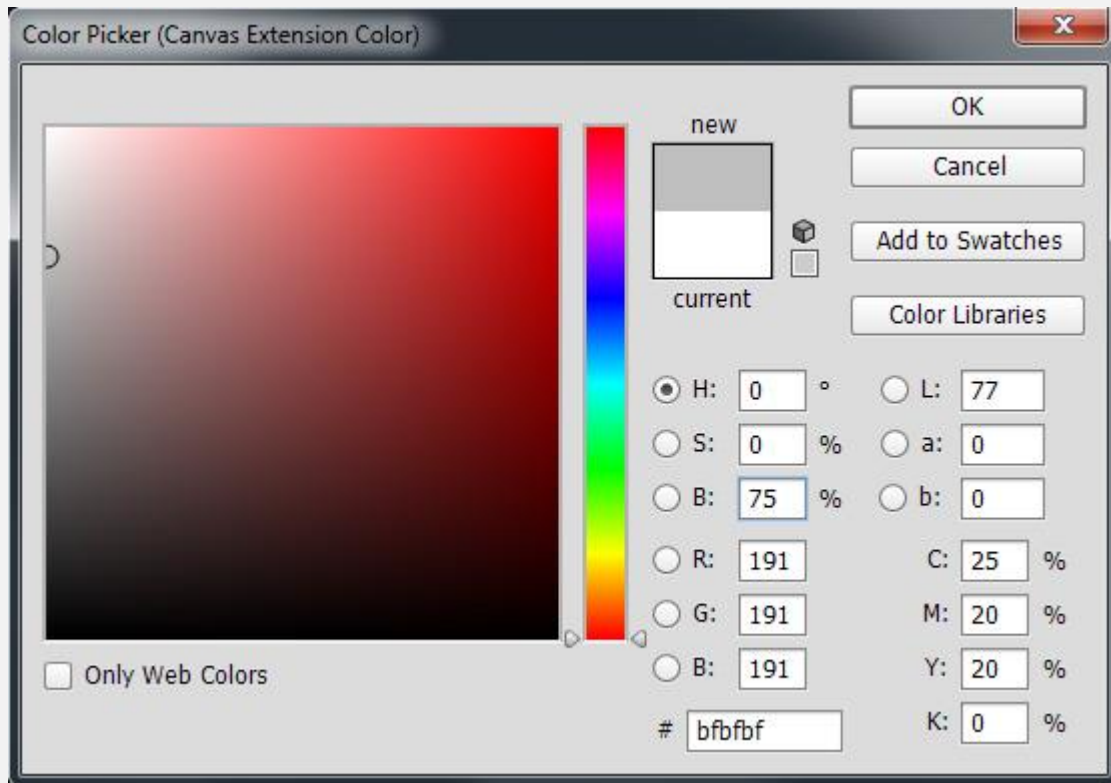
Step 1

According to the dialog box this image is 1960 x 2495 pixels in size. We are going to increase the width and height by four pixels each. This will add two pixels to each side. In this case I changed the values to 1964 and 2499.



Step 3

The Canvas extension color is currently white but we want a light gray. Click on “White” to see the choices. Click on “Other” to get to the color palette.



There are several ways here to pick colors, it is simplest to work with Hue, Saturation, Brightness. Enter 75 next to B. Click OK. This will take you back to Canvas Size. Click OK there as well.

This has added a light gray border two pixels thick on all sides.

Step 3

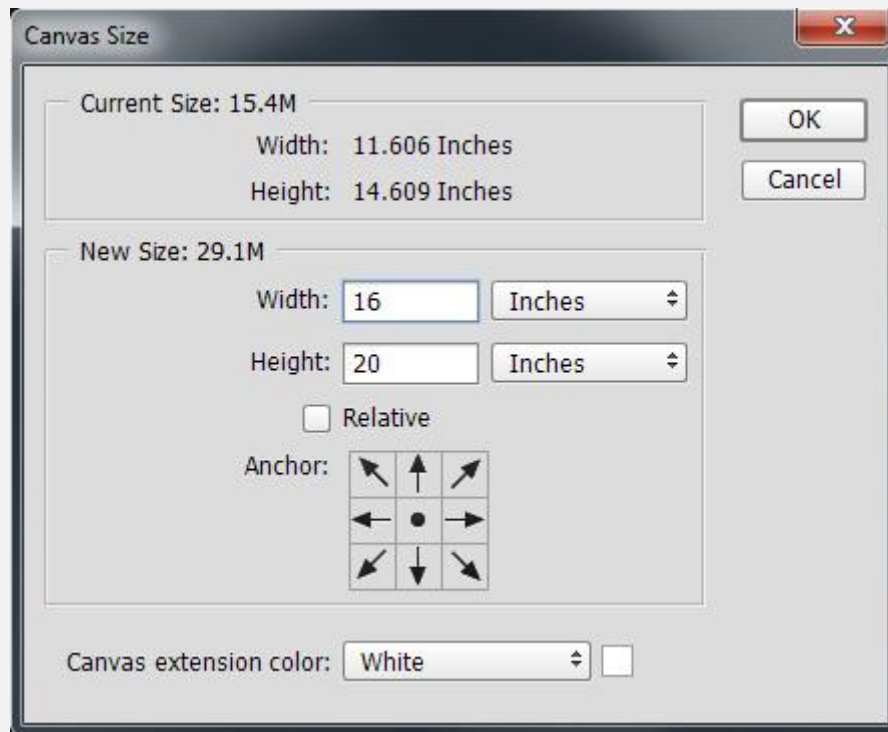
Now add a white border by going back to Canvas Size and adding 100 to the width and the height. Select white as the color and click OK.

Step 4

Now for the darker outer border. Go to Canvas Size again, add four to the width and height and change the color to 50% B. Click OK.

Step 5

So far our unit of measurement has been pixels. To bring the image to 16 X 20 inches, I find it more convenient to change the unit of measurement to inches at this point. Go to the Canvas Size dialog box and click on the box currently labeled Pixels. Click on Inches and enter a width of 16 and a height of 20. Click OK and you're done.



As simple as this border is, it is one of my favorites. A little thought will reveal that you don't need to stick with the colors I chose or the spacing and size of the borders.

In many images the light inner border will not be needed and will not be visible if it is included. It is most needed when the image background is light in color (here it was white). Its main purpose is to say "This is where the image ends".

I will sometimes add noise to the white areas to give the "matting" a texture. That requires more work and, the way I do it, masking as well, so we'll leave it alone for the present.

Have fun.