

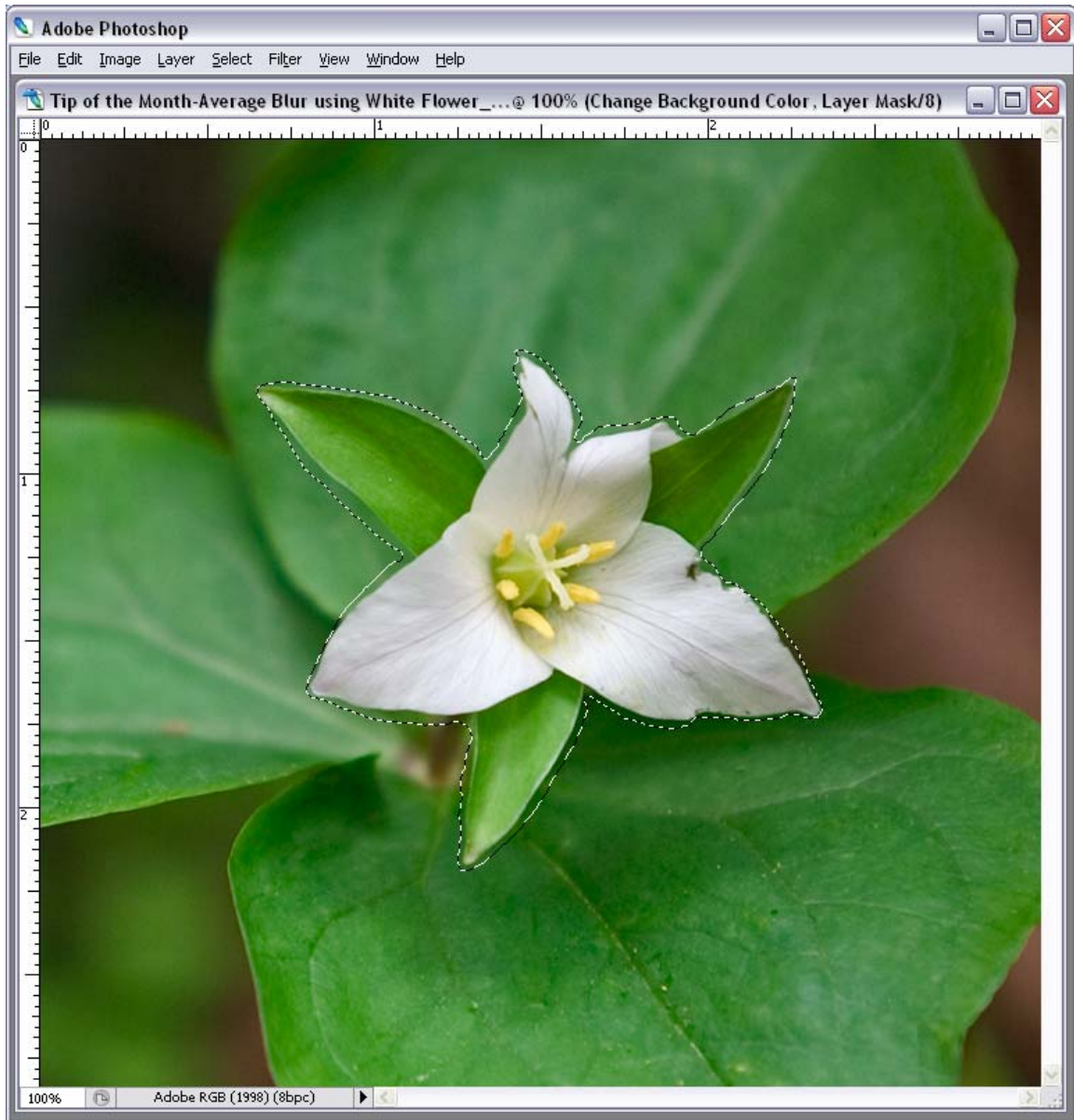
Using Average Blur to Isolate a Subject

This is a simple technique for isolating a subject. It can work great if you simply want to eliminate a distracting background. The example I'm going to use here is of a flower. The background isn't a real problem but I'd like to see only the flower itself and not the large leaves at its base. I can certainly make a selection to remove it but this is another technique for accomplishing that and the selection involved here does not need to be very accurate.

Below is the original image

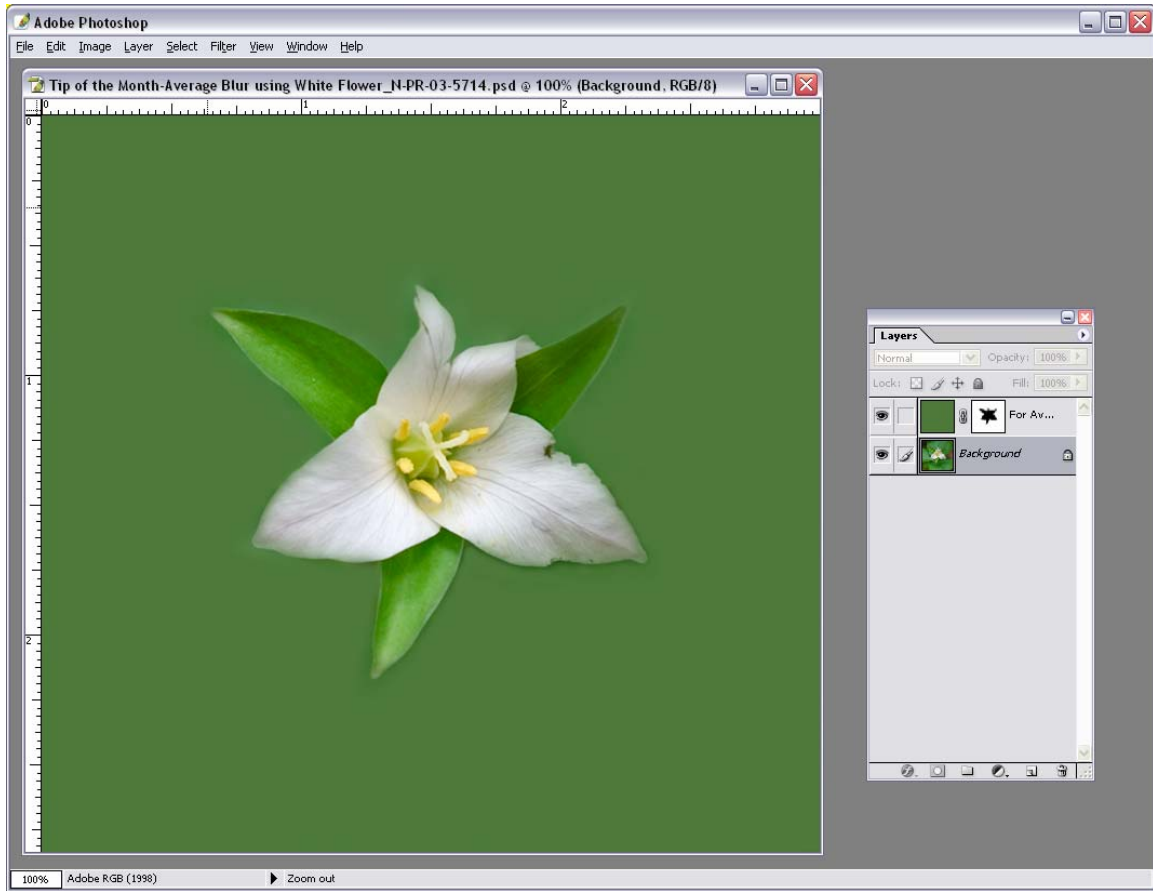


We will first make a copy of the background layer. We will apply Average Blur to this copy but first we will make **rough** selection of the flower as shown below:



Next, apply a significant feather to the selection, we'll use 25. Now add that selection as a layer mask to the copy of the background layer such that the flower is masked out.

Now apply Filter>Blur>Average. The screen print below shows the image with the background behind the flower blurred via Average Blur. The layers palette shows the mask on the second layer. By having the mask we can fine tune the selection by simply painting on the mask in black if some of the original background shows through or in white if we missed some of the flower.



Now you might not like the color of the background that resulted from using Average Blur. You can change that by adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer on top of the layer with the blur and then clip it to that layer so it will only affect that layer. You can create any color background you wish by adjusting the Hue/Saturation sliders and even check the colorize box. The flower itself will not be affected since it is protected by the layer mask.

Below is the result of applying the Hue/Saturation adjustment layer with the following settings:

