

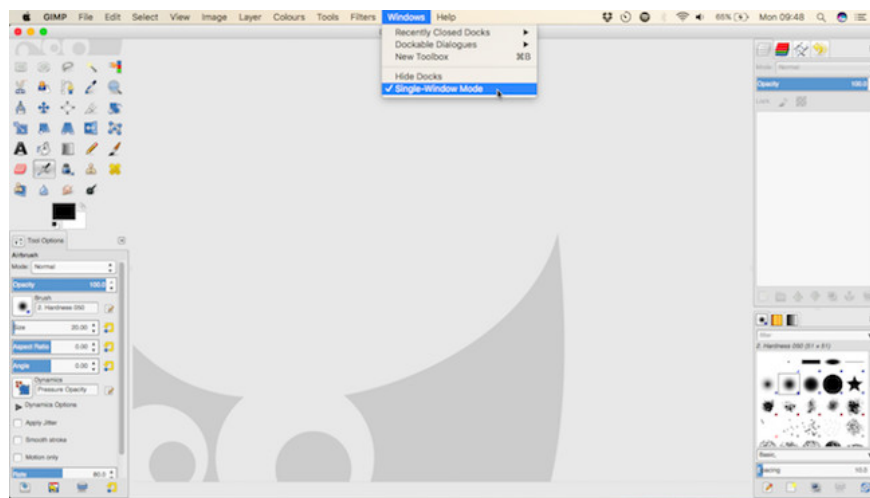
Let your photos 'shine' with GIMP's background change feature

It's easy to change the background of a photo in Photoshop, but you don't want to pay the expensive cost for that, so GIMP will be a wise choice. Changing the background in GIMP is very simple and there are many different ways to do this. The following article will introduce two best solutions to help your photos 'shine'.

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Before start

If you are a new user of GIMP, it may be a bit awkward with its unusual user interface. By default, GIMP is set up with each interface element - windows, toolbars, palettes, etc. - separate.



To view GIMP with the traditional interface, select **Windows > Single-Window Mode**, separate parts of the GIMP interface will be joined together like the one you normally use.

Use the Foreground Select tool to separate the background

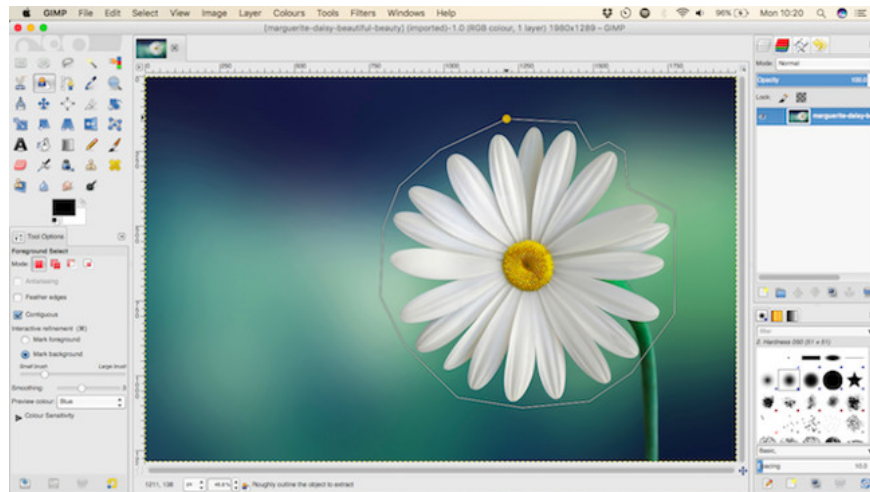
One of the quickest ways to change the background of an image is to use the **Foreground Select** tool. This is a semi-automated tool that does most of the work for you, but it only works well on some photos.

Determine the edge of the image you want to take and clearly separate it from the background. Highlight the entire previous contrast - tones or colors.

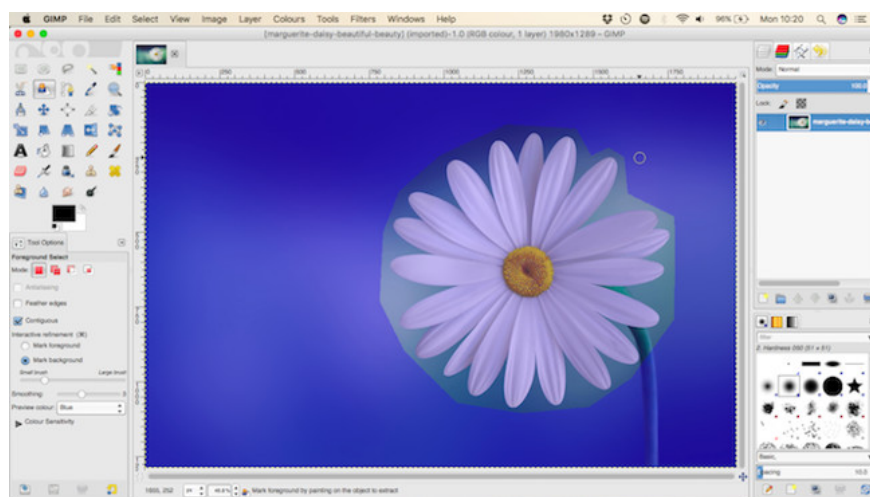
Open the image and select the **Foreground Select** tool from the control panel on the left side of the screen.

1. Draw a border

First, draw a rough outline around the object to split the background by clicking, dragging, or combining both. This outline does not need to be accurate. All you need to do in this section is to define the image area that contains the separating element and the background.

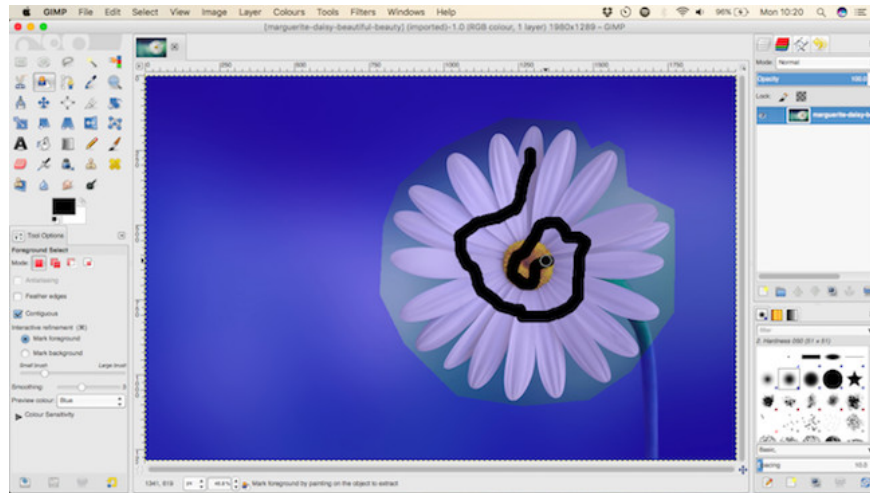


After the selection is complete, you will see a dark blue layer on the background and a lighter blue layer on the rest of the image. You can change this color to green or red in **Tool Options**.

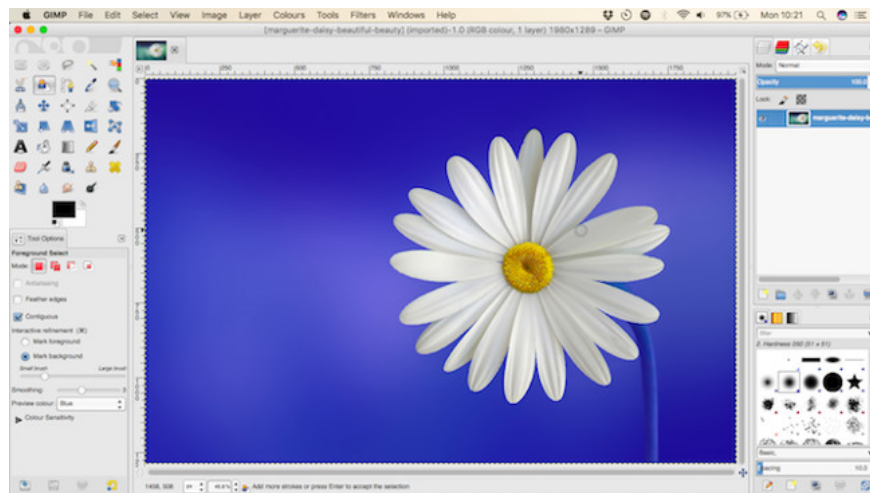


2. Draw on the image to be separated

Now, draw a line on all the parts of the image you want to grab, taking all of its different colors and tones. Make sure you do not encroach on the background - because this operation cannot be undone, you will have to start over if it is wrong.



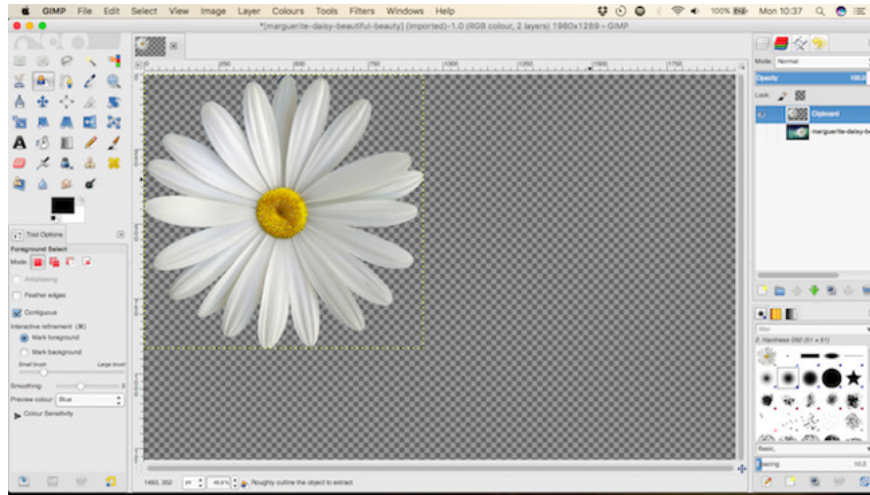
When you release the mouse button, GIMP will start analyzing the image, which will take several seconds. When completed, the image area contains the element to be retrieved and the background area is no longer segregated. If any part of the object to be retrieved is not selected, just redraw it to add.



3. Create and copy the selection

When you are satisfied, press **Enter** to select the image you want to retrieve.

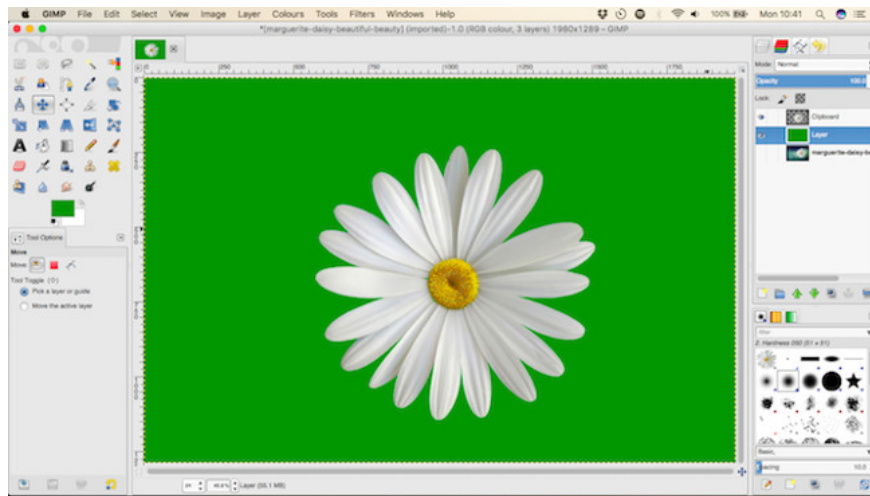
Copy the selection by pressing **Ctrl + C** on Windows or **Cmd + C** on the Mac. Then select **Edit > Paste As > New Layer**.



Now, the split image is pasted into a new layer with transparent background. Select **Select > None** to delete any remaining selections and hide the original image by clicking on the eye icon in the **Layer palette** on the right.

4. Add new wallpaper

Now you can add a new background. Create a new layer and move it just below the extracted image layer. You can paste an image into this layer or add color using the **Bucket Fill tool (Shift + B)**.



Drag the extracted image into place using the **Move tool** (use the **M** shortcut) to finish.

Use the Paths tool to separate the background

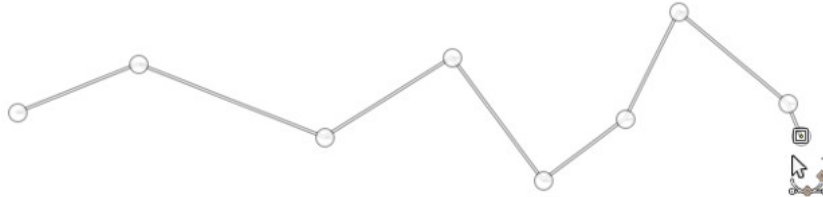
For any image that the object you choose has a blurred edge or many details, automated tools will not work. You need to use **Paths tool**.

GIMP's **Paths tool** is similar to the **Pen tool** in Photoshop. This tool will be a bit difficult to use, but it is an extremely powerful tool.

How to use Paths tool in GIMP

Paths tool allows you to create complex selections by placing a series of dots, called buttons, on top of an image. They are connected by a line that can be straight or curved or angled. By placing buttons around the object, you can select it correctly.

Here are the basics of Paths Tool to help you 'speed up':

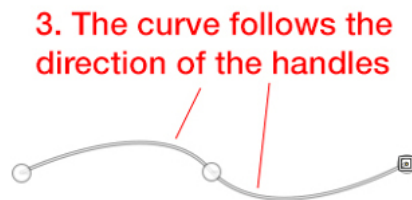


Each click on the image will create a button -**click multiple times to create a link**.

1. Drag this handle up



2. Drag this handle down



Click and drag the line between the two buttons to create a curve. Move up or down to change the curve.



When placing a new button, **click and drag in the direction you want** and quickly create the curve.

You can adjust the button at any time by clicking the button to select, move to a new location or delete the button with the **Backspace** key. Make sure you select the last button in the path before you start adding other buttons.

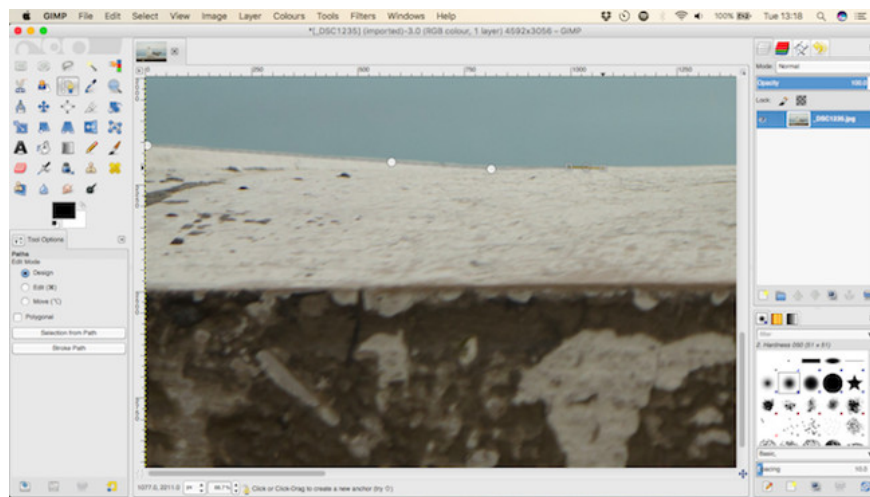
The above instructions are very simple but may take some time before you feel "comfortable" with it. You should practice in a white image file to get used to how it works.

Change background with Paths tool

When you want to cut off an object with the **Paths Tool**, you position the buttons along a line around the edge of the object to be taken.

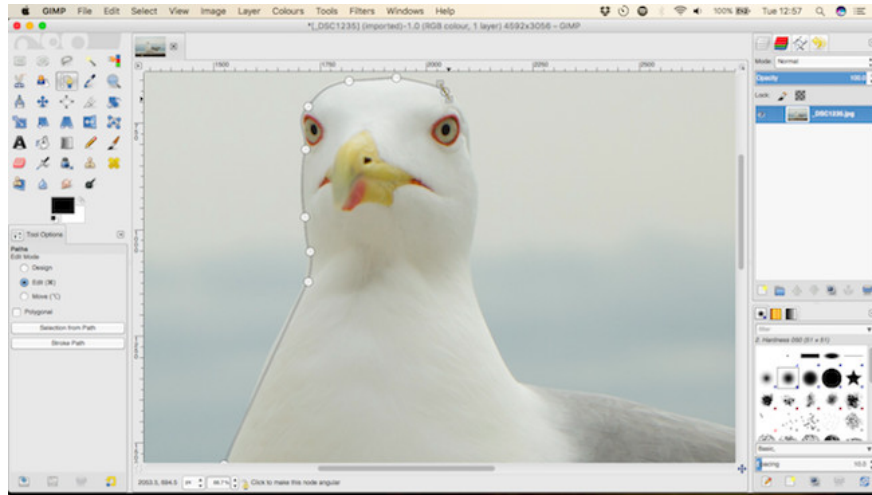
1. Zoom in

Zoom in on the image to make sure you put the buttons inside the object, not on or outside it. This will avoid any excess around the selection.



2. Start adding buttons

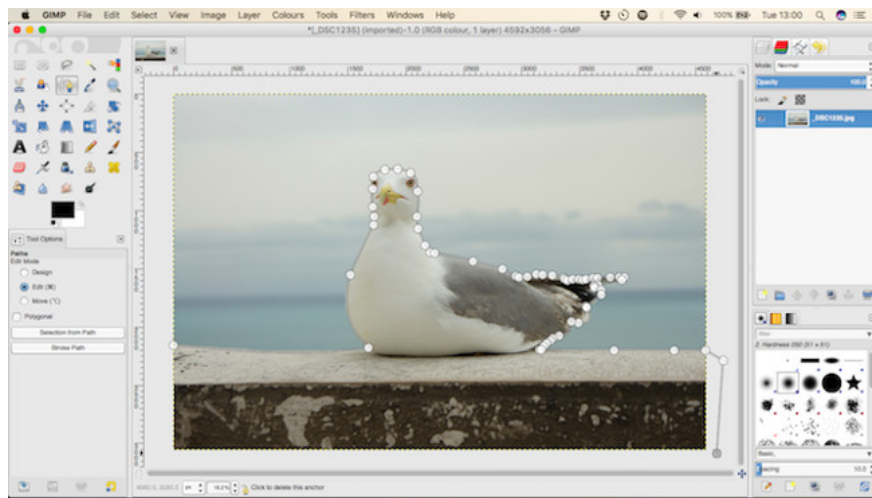
Select a starting point for the first button. Choose somewhere with no details, preferably a corner or a straight line.



Now start adding buttons around the edge of the object. The spacing between nodes can be larger in visible and smaller areas in the detail area. Where there are more details, zoom in and use more buttons.

3. Complete the selection

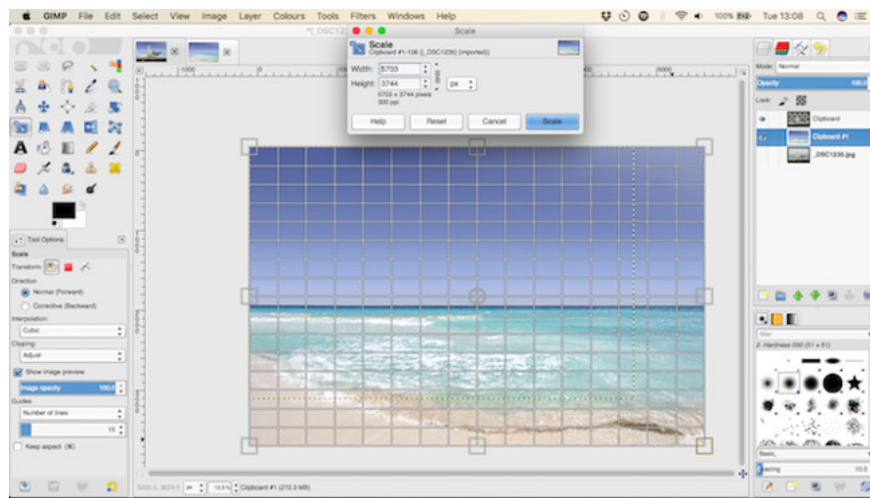
To finish, place the last button next to the first button and then press **Enter** to turn the path into a selection. Select **Select > Feather** and keep the default pixel setting of 5px to make the edges of the selection more smooth.



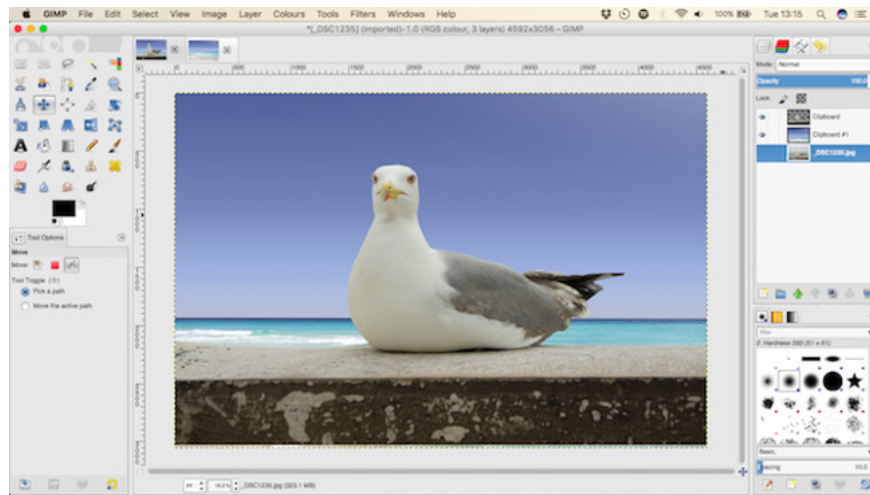
Now copy and paste the selection into a new layer and hide the original layer.

4. Add background

Finally, add your new background. Drag the image containing the background image into the GIMP window - this is the new layer, but make sure you put it under the layer containing the cut objects. Use the **Scale** tool (**Shift + T**) to resize.



Select the layer containing the cut object and press the **M** key to open the **Move** tool. Now drag it into place and save the newly edited image.



So you've completed the steps to change the wallpaper in a photo. GIMP also has many similar ways, but it is important to choose the right method for your image. The Foreground Select tool is the perfect choice for simple images, while learning Paths tools will help you with more complex, detailed images.

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