

On The Fly

March 2011

“Fly tying is a school from which we never graduate”

PATTERN OF THE MONTH: March Brown Comparadun

Hook: Daiichi 1170, standard dry fly, size 14-10.
Thread: 8-0 tan.
Wing: Brown natural coastal deer hair.
Tail: Brown hackle fibers.
Abdomen and thorax: Tan Dubbing



Tying Instructions

Step 1 Mash the barb and mount the hook in the vise.

Step 2: Start the thread one eye width behind the eye and lay down an even thread base to a position just above the hook barb. Return the thread to a position 1/3 the shank length behind the eye.

Step 3: Select a small bunch of deer hair, comb, stack, measure one shank length, and tie in the hair with the tips pointing forward at the 1/3 point. Do not wrap so tight as to flair the hair. Push the wing down around the hook shank so the hair is evenly distributed in the upper 180 degrees. Add a few more firm thread wraps rearward to secure the hair in place,

Step 4: Trim the hair butts at an angle and bind them down with firm thread wraps. Form a small ball of thread wraps at the bend of the hook just above the hook barb.

Step 5: Select a half dozen or so hackle fibers and tie them in on top of the hook shank just in front of that thread ball. As you tie back towards the thread ball the hackle fibers will naturally want to separate to either side. Give them some help with your thumb nail and secure with a couple firm wraps. You should end up with a nicely tapered underbody. If not fill in with thread wraps.

Step 6: Twist dubbing onto the tying thread and wind forward to the base of the wing. With your thumb nail crease the wing upright on top and both sides. Now draw the wing sharply back and firmly wrap your dubbed thread in front of the wing to hold the wing in the upright position.

Step 7: Take two crisscross turns of dubbed thread under the wing and one more turn in front, then form a neat head, whip finish and cement.

Step 8: Snip the center fibers out of the tail leaving a couple on each side.

In 1972, Al Caucci and Bob Nastasi introduced the Comparadun pattern to fly fishers in a booklet entitled Comparahatch, distributed by Cortland. It was a remarkably simple and effective fly equaling results attained by the classic Catskill style dry flies. The unique fan deer hair wing simulates both the natural's wing and legs. The split tails add realism. The Comparadun is tied in many sizes and colors to imitate any species of mayfly. For slow to moderate currents fish the Comparadun dead drift or with a slight twitch if appropriate.

TYING TIPS

Many other types of deer hair are too spongy for a Comparadun wing. You don't want the hair to flair, so spinning grade will not work well at all. This fly is a great example of why I advocate a good thread base before starting most flies. Without the thread base, it is almost impossible to keep the wing hairs from rotating down the side of the hook shank. By the time the fly is finished you will have a 360 degree wing.

Here it is, the dry fly you've been waiting for, three materials plus a hook and some thread. It's easy to tie and once you learn the concept you can imitate any dry fly, any size, any color. So tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you do.