

Mother's Day Caddis

Sunriver Angler's Fly Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer

It's April, and Mother's Day is just around the corner on May 11th. Have you thought about a gift for that special fly fishing mom? I have the perfect solution for you. How about a dozen Mother's Day caddisflies tied by you, along with an invite to spend a wonderful day on the Crooked River fly fishing during the Mother's Day hatch. Yup, almost sounds too perfect!

The Mother's Day Caddis hatches in great proliferation on many western rivers around its namesake holiday. Sometimes the hatch can be intense and cover the water and the air with caddisflies. Here in our local Oregon waters, the Crooked River plays host to this hatch from approximately early-May to early June. Precise timing varies from year-to-year and is dependent on the weather.

The Mother's Day Caddis is often also referred to as an American Grannom or a *Brachycentrus americanus*. But it is also confused with *Brachycentrus occidentalis*. Not being an entomologist or expert in Latin names, I know this fly as a Mother's Day Caddis that is dark olive/gray in color, and which trout eat in enormous quantities during the hatch. That makes it a prime hatch to target on the Crooked River very soon.

Cast this pattern just above rising trout and let the fly dead-drift toward the rise form. If you are not raising fish, try a size smaller or larger. Or alternatively, impart some very subtle movement on your fly with slight wiggles of a raised rod tip. Ideally, you don't want to do much more than twitch the fly. Often trout key in on fly movement and this technique can mean the difference between a take and a refusal.



Pattern Recipe:

Hook: Tiemco 100 or Daiichi 1180, size 14-16

Thread: Black 6/0 – 8/0

Training Shuck: Dark Olive Brown Zelon

Abdomen: Blend of Dark Olive Gray dubbing (75%) and Olive UV Ice Dub (25%)

Wing: Dark Dun Dyed Elk Hair

Abdomen: Dubbed Dark Natural CDC

Hackle: Whiting Dark Dun Midge Saddle (undersize by 1-2 hook sizes)

Tying Instructions:

1. Tie on the thread at the 2/3's point of the hook (wing-set position). Tie in a sparse clump of Zelon back to the tail-set position. Trim the Zelon to a length about equal to the length of the Abdomen of the fly.
2. Blend the Dark Olive Gray dubbing with the ice dub by felting it between your fingers repeatedly until it is fully blended. Alternatively, use a spinning blade type coffee grinder. However, it is usually better to commit the coffee grinder as a dubbing mixer, rather than returning it to service grinding coffee. I don't like dubbing mixes in my morning cup of java! Dub the abdomen with this mixture to form a nice tapered body to the fly.
3. Select a sparse clump of elk hair. Take particular care to clean out all the under-fur from the hair. Place the cleaned hair tip down in a hair stacker tool and gently tap the tips of the hair even. Remove from the stacker and tie on at the wing-set position. The tips should extend slightly beyond the bend of the hook, but not nearly to the end of the trailing shuck. The butts of the hair should be left, for now, hanging over the eye of the hook. The thread wraps over the elk hair should extend for about a 16th+ of an inch. This will accommodate the abdomen of the fly.
4. Prepare the saddle hackle by stripping about an 1/8 inch of the barbs off the stem at the base of the feather. Tie in at the back of the thorax at about a 45 degree angle on the opposite side of the hook from the tier. The shiny side of the hackle should face towards the rear of the fly and the dull side towards the front (dry fly style).
5. Cut CDC fibers off the stem of the CDC feather and dub these onto the thread. Wind the CDC dubbed fibers over the thorax of the fly. CDC feathers are from near the oil gland of waterfowl and are extremely water resistant. This feather helps float your fly naturally without the need for fly floatant.
6. Wind the saddle hackle with 3-4 wraps over the top of the CDC and tie off in front of the butts of Elk hair at the head of the fly.
7. Trim the Butt ends of the elk to form a subtle extended head of the fly just past the eye of the hook.

