

Sunriver Anglers Fly Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



Last week I attended the Craig Mathews Seminar hosted by the Central Oregon Fly Fishers and the Sunriver Anglers at the Riverhouse in Bend. Craig is a well know fly fisherman, fly tier, conservationist and former owner of Blue Ribbon Flies in West Yellowstone Montana. He has authored several books on fly patterns for the Yellowstone region and was a co-founder of 1% for the Planet, an organization that promotes contributing 1% of revenues from business to support environmental stewardship programs, such as those that benefit our fisheries. The seminar promised to feature some of the underfished waters around Yellowstone. Yet, I was most excited for the opportunity to watch him tie many of his well known fly patterns.

He tied a pattern that really caught my attention; the Improved Sparkle Dun. I've tied and fished earlier versions of this fly for many years with good success in our local waters. Immediately I could see the potential to adapt this pattern to our local hatches in Central Oregon. In past Fly Tying Corner articles I have discussed mayfly cripple patterns. The Improved Sparkle Dun is another proven cripple that works on fussy trout. The pattern rides low in the water, and the Zelon in this fly glistens and imitates air bubbles on the emerging natural mayfly. This unique property of Zelon is one of the things that triggers strikes from hungry trout.

Immediately after Craig's seminar, I and numerous others got on the phone with Blue Ribbon Flies to order materials to tie Craig's patterns. This shop is the sole supplier of Zelon, having bought up the last of this product before it was discontinued some years ago by the manufacturer.

Just a few days later it almost felt like Christmas, as my package had arrived. In this package was a myriad of materials, with lots of different colors of Zelon, and several excellent pieces of Sparkle Dun and X-Caddis deer hair. I sat down at my vice that afternoon and began experimenting with some of the new patterns I had learned in last week's seminar. The pattern for this month's article, the Blue Wing Olive Improved Sparkle Dun, was one of the first of Craig's patterns to spring forth from my vice. Now all I need is a slightly overcast Blue Wing Olive day on the Crooked or Fall rivers and I will give this fly a real test over fussy trout.

Pattern Recipe:

Hook: Tiemco 2487, or Daiichi 1130 in sizes 16-18

Thread: Rusty Dun UNI 8/0

Trailing Shuck: Crinkled Zelon in Baetis Olive

Abdomen: Rusty Dun

Thorax: Superfine dubbing in Blue Wing Olive

Wing: Early Season Comparadun deer hair, backed with Baetis Olive Zelon

Tying Instructions:

1. Wind a layer of thread from the tail set position to the front of the hook.
2. Clip a clump of natural Sparkle Dun Deer hair, which is from an early season deer before its winter coat emerges. This hair has very short black tips and flairs the proper amount for the Sparkle Dun. Stack the hair in a hair stacker and tie in at the wing position on the hook. Wind thread several wraps behind the wing, and then forward through the hair to the head of the fly. This will help ensure the hair stands up straight to form the wing. Clip the butts tightly to form a very sparse bump behind the wing and cover them with thread wraps. This will form the structure for the thorax of this fly.
3. Clip a piece of Zelon and tie in right behind the wing with a portion extending to form a secondary wing into the deer hair and extending about the same height as the wing. Wind consecutive wraps of thread over the Zelon back towards the tail set position, leaving a portion of the Zelon extending to form a trailing shuck approximately the length of the abdomen of the fly. Return the thread to the back of the thorax. I like to leave a very slight gap between thread wraps to let the Zelon show through the abdomen giving a slight segmented effect. It also allows the Zelon to glisten slightly, imitating a freshly hatching mayfly.
4. Dun a sparse layer of Superfine dubbing beginning over the rear of the thorax and extending to the head. Whip finish and lightly glue the head.

If you have questions or would like additional information about this pattern, please don't hesitate to email me. Or if you have suggestions on future patterns to feature in this column, I welcome your input. I can be reached at Philfischer@sbcglobal.net.