

# Adams Fly Pattern

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*Sunriver Angler's Fly Tying Corner*

*By: Phil Fischer*



My love affair with the Adams classic fly pattern began at a very early age. Our family was on an annual vacation to the Sierra at one of our favorite campgrounds. The area has many lakes and streams nearby, and for a 10-year-old, was heaven. I looked forward to this trip every year, as I would spend my days with a spinning rod in my hand for hours on end. But this year was different. I saved my pennies for something special. The first morning of our trip, I marched into the Sardine Lake Lodge and purchased my very first fly. Not just any fly either. This one was tied by George Browning, who owned the Lodge, and spent winters tying flies for the upcoming season. His flies were the genuine deal and “Made where the trout are caught”. As a 10-year-old soon to become fly fisherman, I was enthralled and

popped down 25 cents to buy my first fly. I had many to choose from, and I don't quite remember why I chose an Adams pattern; perhaps it was because it looked like the ever-present mosquitos along the stream where I intended to fish this pattern. But that's the one I picked, and I spent the entire rest of the week fishing with my new treasure, the Adams fly pattern.



*An old banner that is still in Sardine Lake Lodge Advertising Browning's Hand Tied Flies*

I chose to feature the Adams this month not only because of my early affinity for this pattern, but also because it has stood the test of time. It was originally designed and tied by Leonard Halladay in Michigan back in 1922. Since then, it has been tied relentlessly to fool wary trout from coast to coast. It is one of the most popular, versatile and productive patterns for trout. George Browning's version of this pattern was very effective for the high sierra lakes and streams of my youth.

Back in the day, I had a 5 1/2 foot spinning rod with a fast retrieve reel and 4 pound test monofilament. Not exactly the best set-up for fly casting. But with the wind behind me and a well-timed forward sweep on the rod, I could sometimes cast that Adams upwards of ten feet. The trout didn't seem to care, I caught many small brook trout and rainbows on this pattern. I fished a small stream that was full of beaver ponds, brush and brookies. And every time I got that Adams caught

in a streamside bush or overhanging branch, I waded in and dislodged my prized fly. I managed to fish that fly for the entire week. Toward the end of the week, it was tattered, but still caught fish. The lunker of the week was probably no more than nine inches. But I didn't care, I was enthralled with my newfound status as a fly fisherman. That fly catapulted me forward into fly fishing and fly tying as a major centerpiece of much of my life.

Fast forward several decades, I still fish and tie the Adams fly pattern. This summer I packed my float tube into a high-country lake and caught numerous fine rainbows on a parachute version of this pattern. The Adams comes out of my fly box every summer on East Lake during Callibaetis hatches. It is still one of my favorite patterns and every time I fish it, I'm reminded of those warm summer days back in the high Sierra casting this fly with a spinning rod to small, colorful brook trout and rainbows, where my path to a lifetime of fly fishing started. Give this pattern a try. It might rekindle your own memory of small trout in a small stream of your youth.

#### **Adams Materials List:**

**Hook:** Firehole Competition Barbless 419, size 12 -18

**Thread:** 16/0 Veevus Black

**Tail:** Whiting Coq De Leon Spade Hackle – Natural Pardo

**Abdomen:** Superfine Dubbing – Adams Gray

**Wing:** Whiting Hebert Miner Grizzly Hen Cape

**Hackle:** Whiting Dry Fly Saddles in Brown and Grizzly

Tying instructions and steps are being published in video form, and can be found on the Sunriver Anglers Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/SunriverAnglers/>, or at the following YouTube URL:  
<https://youtu.be/XHJ3Rq6gUC4> .

Learn to tie this fly pattern and fish it on our local lakes and streams. It is just as effective today as it was in my youth. If you have questions or would like additional information about the Adams fly 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](mailto:Philfischer@sbcglobal.net).