

Elk Hair Caddis

Sunriver Angler's Fly-Tying Corner

By: Phil Fischer



The Elk Hair Caddis is one of the most popular fly patterns in fly fishing. It was originally designed by Al Troth in the 1950's for fishing his home waters in Pennsylvania. The pattern floats like a cork and you can fish it so many different ways: dead-drifted, skittering on the surface, stripped in the surface film, or even as a diving caddis. Its excellent Caddis-like profile and buoyant design make it an extremely effective fly pattern. Over time its popularity grew in the faster and more riffled waters of the Western United States.

The Elk Hair Caddis is a relatively easy fly to tie and is an excellent pattern for those newer to fly tying. It can be tied in numerous color combinations, as there is a myriad of natural caddis species in different sizes and colors. I tied this fly to specifically imitate the Mother's Day Caddis hatch on several of our local rivers, particularly the Crooked. This hatch is profuse starting in May each year in and around Mother's Day. Legions of caddisflies hatch and skitter on the surface of the Crooked and provoke aggressive surface activity by hungry trout. The Mother's Day Caddis, its common name, is more specifically an American Grannom Caddis or *Brachycentrus Americanus*. It has a olive body and slate colored wing and ranges in size from 14-18, with the most common in a size 16. The materials I used for this fly closely imitate the natural and also closely follow Al Troth's original.

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. Give this pattern a try on some of our local Central Oregon rivers come Mother's Day. It works!

Elk Hair Caddis Materials List:

Hook:	Firehole 609 or 419 Size 14-18
Thread:	Danville's 6/0 Flat Waxed, Olive Brown
Rib:	Ultra Wire, Small, Olive
Abdomen:	Fly Fish Food Bruiser Blend Junior Dubbing, Olive Brown
Hackle:	Whiting Dry Fly Midge Saddle, Grizzly Dyed Dun
Wing:	Natural Deer or Elk Hair suitable for Comparaduns

Tying instructions and steps are 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/L4J5mWXCM_I

Experiment with this pattern during caddis time in Spring and early Summer on Central Oregon's Rivers. 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.