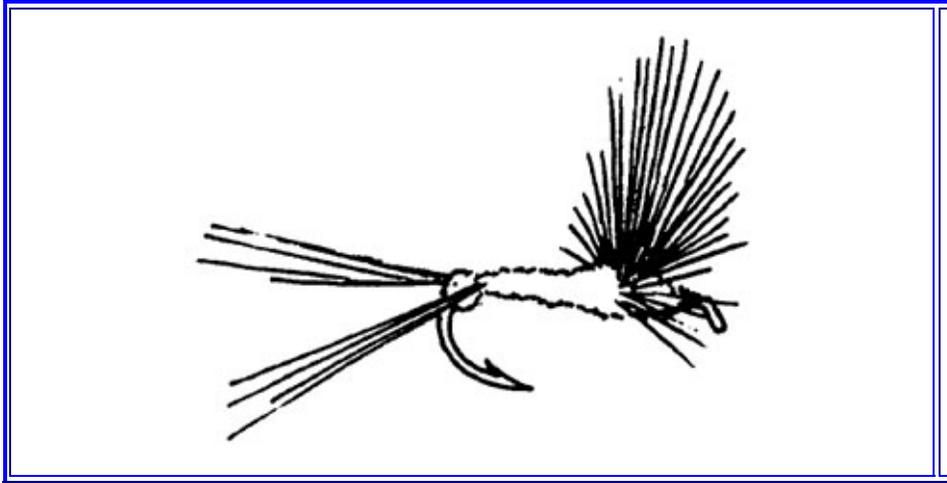


Comparadun

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Comments by Jim Abbs

If you fish spring creeks--and many eastern and midwestern waters have only groundwater sources---you have found that very selective trout and flat water are the rule. For mayfly hatches in such situations, your flies need to be perfect- and that may not be enough. To improve your chances, consider the no-hackle comparadun patterns. When it comes to adult mayflies and selective trout, the choice often is a no-hackle fly.

Frances Betters introduced the no-hackle Haystack fly in the 1930s and 1940s. But it was the insight and innovation of Doug Swisher and Carl Richards in their book, *Selective Trout* (1971) that made them popular. Many fly fishers soon found out that these flies not only look deadly on the water, trout seem to love them. The Swisher-Richards flies had a couple of limitations: they were not easy to tie (especially setting the wings properly) and often were destroyed by the first fish caught.

However, a more durable no-hackle fly is the Comparadun, described by Al Caucci and Bob Nastasi in their book *Hatches* in 1975. By variations in size, body color and wing color, practically any adult mayfly can be imitated with the Comparadun pattern. Due the wing structure, the same pattern often works for the dun and the spinner. The other benefits of the Comparadun are that it floats like cork (due to its deer hair wings), is relatively easy to tie --even in fairly small sizes-- and does not require feathers from \$80 rooster necks.

One caution with these flies is that once you start using them, because of their deadly effectiveness, indestructibility, ease of construction and reduced cost you may never go back to conventional mayfly patterns.

MATERIALS

HOOK: Dry fly hook, Mustad 94840 or its equivalent (sizes 10-18, depending on the naturals). A 1XL or 2XL is sometimes suggested.

THREAD: 6/0 flymaster in a color to match the body or with dark bodied patterns, black

WING: Deer hair fibers from the mask, ears or legs (finer than body hair)

TAIL: Hackle fibers in a color to match the body or the natural

BODY: Dubbing fur (or synthetic)

TYING STEPS

1. Wind a base of thread over the front (eye side) of the hook shank, stopping about one-third of the way back from the eye.
2. Cut a small clump of deer hair fibers from the hide and align them (a hair stacker is easiest). The size of this clump varies with the size of the fly. For a start choose a clump about the size of a round toothpick.
3. Lay the clump of fibers on top of the hook shank with the tips pointing forward toward the eye of the hook.
4. Wrap the hair fibers with 4 or 5 turns of thread while pushing down slightly with your thumb so that some of the fibers are on top of the shank and some are on the sides.
5. Lift the fibers to a vertical position and put 10-15 turns of thread in front of them. Push the fibers rearward as you make these turns. With this the fibers should fan out forming a 180 degree arc. You may have to adjust the fibers a bit as you go. Fibers below the hook shank can be cut off.
6. Wind the thread behind the wings and trim the deer hair fiber butts in a tapered fashion so as to provide a base for a tapered body.
7. Dub a small ball of fur on to the hook shank just before the bend of the hook. Tie in 2-4 hackle fibers on each side of the ball of fur so that they flare out from the hook shank at an angle of about 45 degrees.
8. Dub the body with the fur or synthetic of your choice, winding it forward in a tapered fashion. Dub in front of the deer hair wing. Place an extra turn or two of dubbing immediately behind and in immediately in front of the wings.

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