

## MARCH BROWN EMERGER



By Bob Bates

The March Brown is an important spring mayfly. It is a reasonably sized insect so it is easy to imitate. Monica Mullen was tying this pattern at the 2008 N.W. Fly Tying & Fly Fishing Expo in Albany, Oregon. Many people I talked to during the Expo raved about the March Brown in their local streams.

The March Brown (species *Rithrogena*) is a clinger mayfly, so they are found in fast flowing streams. They are widely distributed through the western U.S. and Canada along the Pacific Coast to British Columbia inland to the Eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Notable rivers around the western North America include McKenzie and middle fork of the Willamette in coastal Oregon, Yellowstone, Madison, the Henry's Fork, Rock Creek (Montana) and Crowsnest (Alberta). There are some populations of *Rhithrogena* elsewhere, but hatches are not reliable. Oregon seems to have the earliest hatches in late February to March with higher altitude streams in the Rocky Mountains or Canada as late as mid-May.

According to references, in faster streams the nymphs hang on to the bottom while the dun emerges underwater. Finally, the emerging dun is released from the bottom and floats to the surface. At the surface the dun's wings need to dry before it can fly off. This is a great time for trout as they seem to delight in feeding on drifting emergers. The angler can take advantage of this and float the fly behind boulders, near eddies, along under banks and log jams. Use a floating line and a dead drift.

### Material List:

**Hook:** Dry fly size 8

**Thread:** Black 6/0

**Tail:** Antron yarn, tan

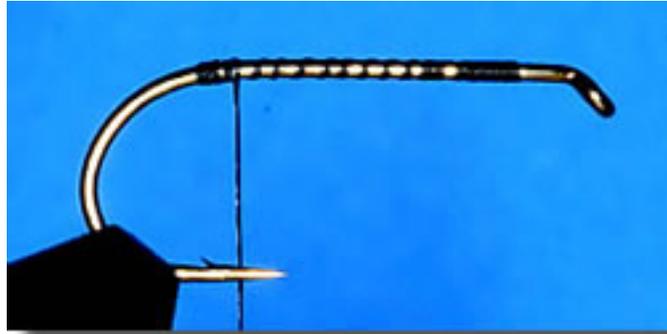
**Rib:** Ultra wire, brassy, red

**Body:** Peacock herl dyed red

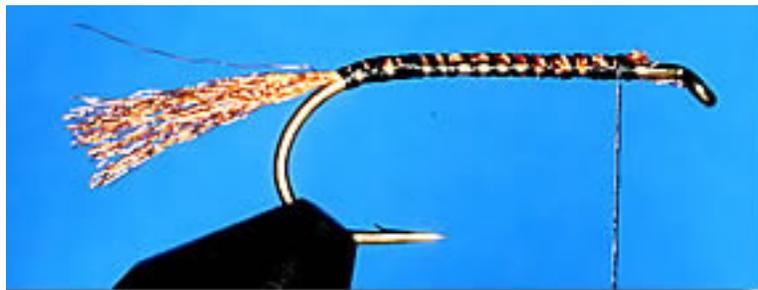
**Wing:** Deer hair

**Thorax:** Hairtron, dark brown

### Tying steps:



1. Start thread a little more than an eye width behind the eye, and wind back to the bend.



2. Tie on Antron yarn for tail. Wind thread rearward around the bend so the tail slopes downward a little. Then wind forward to about two eye widths behind the eye.



3. Tie on the wire rib and wind thread rearward over it to a little behind the bend. Bring thread forward to the bend. Keep the rib on top of the hook. Leave thread at bend.



4. Tie three peacock herls at bend and wind thread over them to a point about 2/3rds shank length in front of the bend.



5. Wrap peacock herls forward to the thread, secure and trim excess.



6. Counter wrap the rib, secure and trim excess with cheap scissors. Don't use the sharp points of your good scissors. "Counter wrap" means to wrap the wire in a direction opposite to how the herl was wrapped.



7. Take a small bunch, a little more than match stick, of deer hair, clean out the under fur and stack it. Tie the bundle at front of peacock herl with tips pointing backward. Trim flared hair at the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> shank length back from the eye. Wind thread over the butts.



8. Put dubbing on thread and build up thorax. Use two layers to get a large enough thorax. It should be fuzzy to stand out more than the body.



9. Grab deer hair and bring it forward over the dubbing. Tie it down right behind the eye. Hold up the deer hair and whip finish between the deer hair and the eye.

**Closing comments:** If you are near a stream that has March Browns in it be sure to tie a few of Monica's emergers to be ready for the hatch. The swift water habitat of a March Brown will

make every fish feel like a monster. Always release the fish carefully so they can play with your fly another day.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.  
You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at [flyofthefmonth@fedflyfishers.org](mailto:flyofthefmonth@fedflyfishers.org)