

MARCH BROWN



By Bob Bates

Anglers who live in an area that has streams with March Brown hatches are truly fortunate. The March Brown (Genus *Rithrogena*) is a clinger mayfly that inhabits fast flowing streams. Where populations exist it is one of the earliest hatching mayflies, and it comes fairly large sizes (#12-14) which might be why it is so popular. People in Oregon are among the fortunate ones; their March Browns hatch is in late February to March. In the higher altitude streams of the Rocky Mountains or Canada the hatch might be as late as mid-May. March Browns attract the trout, and the trout attract anglers.

All of the March Brown patterns that I have photographed for the FFF Fly of the Month (FOM) have been at the N.W. Fly Tying & Fly Fishing Expo in Albany, Oregon. To see the other March Brown Patterns, see FOM October 2008, March Brown Soft Hackle and February 2009, March Brown Emerger. This adult March Brown (February 2010) was tied by Monica Mullen at the 2009 N.W. Fly Tying & Fly Fishing Expo in Albany, Oregon.

Fish it with a floating line and a drag free float. Depending on conditions there are several ways to achieve a drag free float. You can cast a little upstream and let the fly float back to you. You can wiggle the rod before the line hits the water so it will land with a bunch of “S” curves. You can lean your body and rod upstream as far as possible before the line hits the water to throw an upstream bend in the line. Often fly casters in your local fly club will help, or you can talk to a FFF Certified Fly Casting Instructor. Certified instructors are listed on the FFF website: www.fedflyfishers.org.

Materials list:

Hook: Dry Fly: Size 10

Thread: Gudebrod brown, 6/0

Tails: Microfibrillets, dark

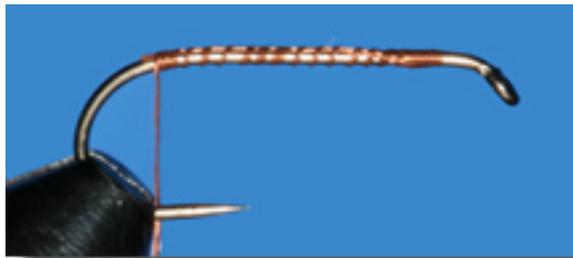
Post: Antron yarn, brown

Body: Hackle quill, brown, tan, etc.

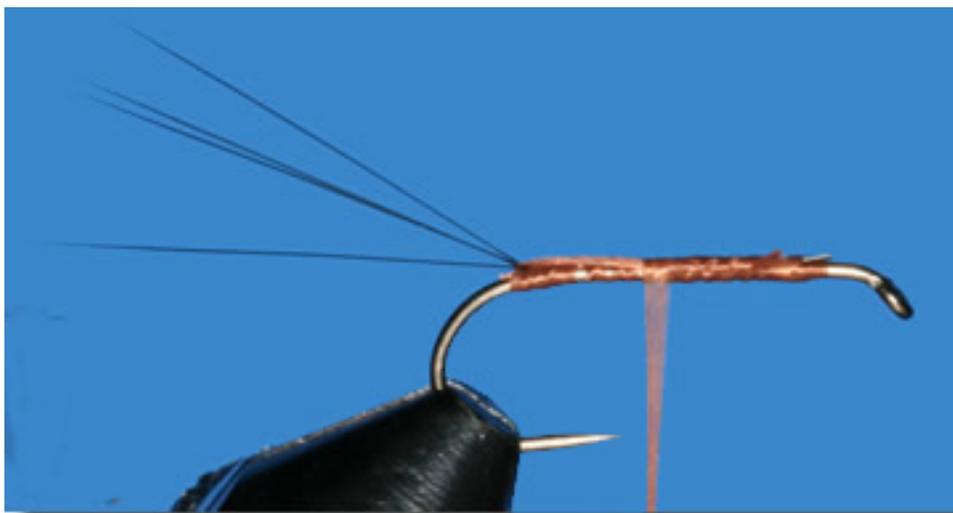
Hackle: Brown

Thorax: Dubbing, brown

Tying steps:



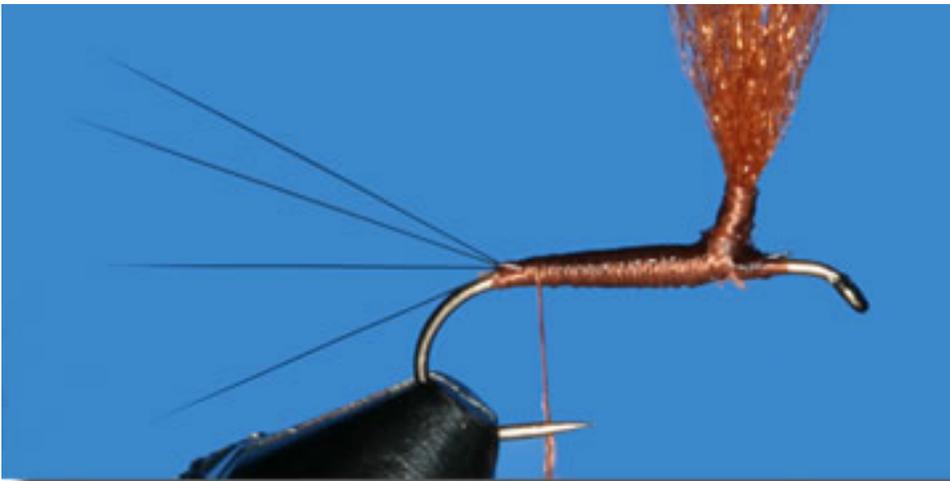
1. Line hook with thread. Start at front of hook and wind back to bend.



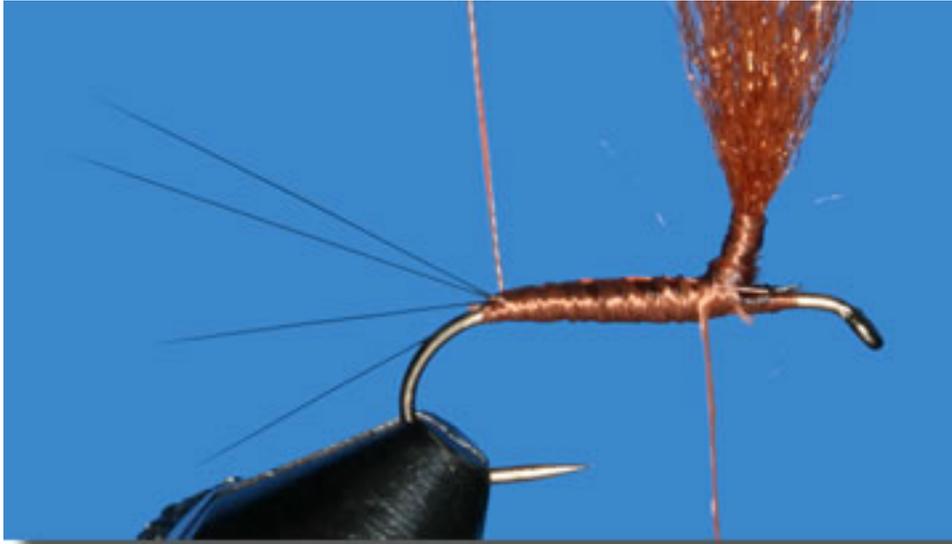
2. Tie on four Microfibrillets to make a shank length Tail. Take a piece of thread and place it around the back of the hook. Slide thread along the hook up to the bend, and between the Microfibrillets to spread them with two fibers on each side. Then tie the thread down.



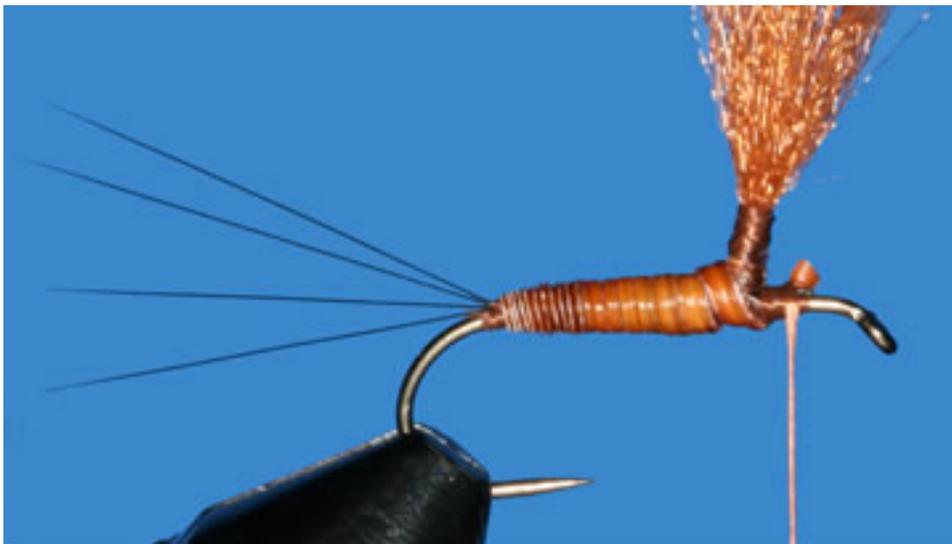
3. Fold Antron yarn in half, and tie both pieces on at a point one third shank length back from the eye.



4. Pull up Antron and wrap thread in front of Antron to hold it up. Then wrap thread around the base of the Antron to hold the four strands together. This is posting, and it gives a base for winding on the hackle. Build up a base of thread on the body for the quill. Leave the thread at the back of the hook.



5. Tie on a feather quill by the tip just in front of the tail, and wind the thread forward to behind the post. Monica keeps the quills in a crock pot with warm water and a few drops of hair conditioner. This keeps them pliable and easier to wrap.



6. Wind quill forward carefully and secure in front of post. Put a little head cement or Sally Hansen's Hard as Nails on the quill.



7. Select a hackle, and trim the barbs so there is a little stubble to help secure the hackle. Tie it on in front of post. Put a little brown dubbing on the thread, and wrap a thorax in front of and behind the post. Finish with thread behind the eye.



8. Start wrapping hackle by putting the first wrap up the post, and putting each succeeding wrap under the preceding one. Tie off the hackle behind the eye, and trim excess. When asked how many wraps Monica said: "Use all of the feather." Trim the thread, and trim the post about a shank length high. Put a drop of head cement on top of the hackle, and hold the fly so it runs down the barbs into the post.



9. Monica also ties the March Brown with two quills (one lighter than the other) to give the pattern a more segmented appearance. Wind the quills carefully so one quill always stays in front of the other.

Closing comments: You can make your own quills by burning off the barbs and dyeing them. However, it is easier and safer to buy them from Cabela's, Orvis, a local fly shop or some other supplier. This pattern floats well in the faster water where the *Rithrogena* lives. If you are new to fly fishing, talk to people at your local fly shop to see if the March Brown is in your area and when it hatches.

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