

Fly of the Month

by Greg Chester

The Missing Link



Recipe

(Mike Mercer's original specifications)

- Hook: Tiemco 102Y, #13 – 19
(yes, odd-numbered sizes like the Iris Caddis)
- Thread: 8/0 Unithread, camel
- Tail: none
- Abdomen: Tying thread
- Ribbing: Small pearl Flashabou
- Coating: SofTex. Coat abdomen after ribbing (head cement will work as well)
- Outriggers: Dark dun EP Fibers, straight Zelon or Z Yarn
- Thorax: Ice Dub, UV Brown
- Wing: Elk body hair, natural
- Hackle: Dark dun tied Parachute style, one size larger than normal.
- Head: Tying thread

If you've nothing better to do during the next snow storm and have wanted to test your tying dexterity you might like to give this bug a try, plus it's a real fish catcher. I was introduced to this pattern by the guys at Blue Ribbon last April and together we came up with a tying procedure that gets the job done with minimal hassle.

As some of you may know this pattern was developed by Mike Mercer, a noted Northern California tier who has many successful patterns to his credit. He created this pattern to imitate spent caddis on the Lower Sacramento River and for reasons known only by the trout they started taking it for various mayflies as well as caddis during complex hatches – go figure! As always trying to ascertain why trout eat what do at times is an exercise in futility. So, just accept it and give this bug a try for your caddis and mayfly activity.

As I noted earlier this pattern will test your dexterity and adherence to proper proportions. The menu reflects Mike's original specifications but feel free to try colors to match other caddis and mayflies. I tied up some #15's in Callibaetis colors and had great success at Harriman Ranch on the Henry's Fork in August of this year – no small achievement fooling those PhD rainbows. A #17 PMD version also scored well for me on Idaho's famous Silver Creek – again, tough fish to fool. So, grab a favorite beverage, cue up some tunes and hit the vice.

Tying Instructions

Abdomen:

Wrap a base of thread including part way around the bend. Tie in ribbing at hook bend and advance thread to midpoint of shank – NO FURTHER!!!. Wrap ribbing in open spirals to midpoint of shank. Coat abdomen with SofTex. This takes awhile to dry, so tie a few more up to this point while you're waiting.

Outriggers:

Tie in EP fibers in a spent wing configuration. Leave fibers long for the moment. Sparsely dub Ice Dub in a figure 8 pattern around tie-in point forcing outriggers into a delta, swept back configuration. Don't crowd the head space as you'll need room for the wing and hackle. I suggest that you temporarily control the untrimmed outriggers by securing them to your vice with a wrap of lead wire, or clipping hackle pliers onto the ends and letting them dangle until completing the fly.

Wing:

Clean, stack and tie in a clump of elk hair in the thorax area with butts toward the eye and the wing equal to the body length. Don't trim butts yet and don't crowd the head space!

Hackle:

Tie in hackle in front of the wing and wrap 3 times around wing and butts, parachute style. Tie off hackle and form a small head with tying thread. Cut off thread

Complete the fly:

Trim outriggers equal to the length of the hook.

Trim elk butts leaving a short stub (similar to an Elk Hair Caddis)

Cement head.

Celebrate:

Pour a finger or two of single malt and congratulate yourself on a job well done.

(now try a #21 in baetis colors!)

Notes: If you have trouble finding the 102Y hooks try Tiemco's 900BL or MFC's 7009 series, (both even sizes). You want a wide gape, light wire hook.