



Spring Creek Flycraft and Guide Service

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by Bill Carnazzo

Bill's Articulated Damsel Fly Nymph

Last month we featured an articulated stonefly pattern. This month let's look at doing a damsel fly nymph using the articulated style of fly. Why do that to a damsel nymph? Well, if you've ever watched a damsel nymph swim, you'll see how difficult it is to imitate that action with a fly. While using the articulated style does not guarantee motion similar to the live bug, I believe it may generate a bit sexier motion than a pattern tied in the traditional style. Time and experience will prove it out (or not), but I like trying new ideas and tinkering outside the (fly)box. The instructions for the articulated style are found in the April, 2012 Fly of the Month article, so I won't repeat those steps here except where necessary for clarity. In this month's fly, we will use a scud type hook (short shank, curved, with nice wide gape). There are many good scud style hooks on the market. For this fly I chose the Tiemco 2488. Use whatever you have available. In the photos accompanying the article, I have used hooks that are larger than the specified sizes because the smaller sizes are hard to photograph accurately.

Materials

Hook: Tiemco 2488; #18 rear hook, #14 front hook
Thread: Danville or UTC 6/0 flat nylon, light olive
Beads: Light olive translucent seed size glass beads
Tail: Sparse damsel olive marabou
Sheath: Fine damsel olive rabbit fur
Abdomen: Same as sheath
Eyes: Olive tinted clear mono eyes, size small

Ribbing: Extra fine copper wire
Legs: None
Wing case: Same as tail
Thorax: Same as abdomen
Weight: None
Connector: Monofilament (4x)

Tying Instructions

1. See April, 2012 Fly of the Month article for general instructions on tying using the articulated style. To begin with the rear fly (#18), de-barb it and cover the shank with thread, stopping at a point between the hook point and the rear of the barb. Cut a small bunch of damsel olive marabou from the shaft, and tie it in at that point, leaving the thread there.
2. Tie in the copper wire at the same point, dub a very sparse, thin body, and rib the fly. This finishes the rear piece, so whip finish and cut the thread.
3. Place the front (#14) hook in your vise, debarb it, and cover the shank with thread, stopping at a point between the hook point and the rear of the barb.
4. Cut an 8" piece of 4x monofilament tippet and run it through the eye of the rear hook. Add the beads and mount the mono with the beads and attached rear hook to the front hook shank as described in the April article.



5. After the mono loop, the beads, and the rear fly are attached properly to the front hook, create a small dubbing loop at the rear of the front hook and fill about 1" of the loop with dubbing. Twist it into a loose rope, take a couple of wraps, tie the loop off, and trim the loop away. Use a piece of Velcro or your bodkin to pick out the dubbing and brush it to the rear. This serves to cover the attachment point of the connector loop and help make the front and rear "flies" appear to be continuous.
6. Move the thread forward and tie in a pair of eyes about one hook-eye width behind the eye, and tie in a piece of copper wire just ahead of the shroud.
7. Dub a sparse abdomen, ending just behind the eyes. Leaving the thread there, rib the fly and tie the copper wire off behind the eyes.
8. Cut a small clump of marabou from the stem and tie it in with the tips facing out over the eye of the hook. Move the thread to the area between the hook eye and the mono eyes, and again tie the marabou down there. The length of the clump should be such that the tips extend out over the hook eye about a shank's length.
9. Move the thread to the rear of the eyes and dub a thorax behind the eyes and between them. Don't overdo this step, as the thorax should be only slightly larger than the abdomen. Return the thread to the area behind the eyes.
10. Pull the marabou rearward by the tips, so that they extend backward over the body and tie them down with a few wraps. This creates a sparse wing case and "wing". Whip finish at that point.



Tying Tips

1. Keep everything very sparse. Damsel nymphs are not "robust" creatures; rather, they are small and delicate. Overly dressed damsel nymphs will routinely be ignored by fish.
2. Keep thread wraps to an absolute minimum. Even with flat nylon thread you can add too much bulk by over-dressing the hook shank with thread.

When fishing this or any other damsel nymph, use a loop knot to tie the fly to your tippet, and strip slowly. Be sure to watch your leader closely during those seconds before stripping, as fish will often take the fly "on the drop." Many takes are missed during this interval.

Enjoy, and see ya on the creek...!!!