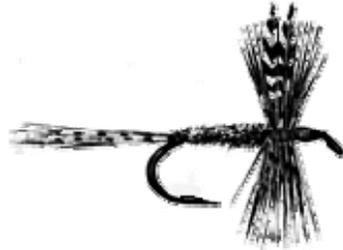


Federation of Fly Fishers Fly of the Month

April, 1998 The Adams America's most popular dry fly



Comments by Jim Abbs

In North America, the most popular dry fly is the Adams. Importantly, the Adams is an American original. In the early 1920's, fly fishermen on the Boardman River in northern lower Michigan were having problems. The fantastic Michigan grayling was gone. Rainbows had been stocked to provide fishing after the demise of the grayling but they were getting scarce and brook trout had been wiped out by over-fishing and habitat destruction.

There was a newly stocked European trout that produced some good fishing, but it was creating a few headaches among fly fishermen. They found it so finicky that it was a source of frustration. That new fish was the brown trout.

Because anglers and fly tiers were trying to find a fly the brown would take more readily, a new pattern was born. It not only pleased the browns but shortly found wide acclaim across the country and world-wide.

As a testimony to the popularity of this fly, a monument was erected in its honor by the Michigan Outdoor Writers Association. The plaque on that monument says it all: "HONORING THE CREATION OF THE ADAMS FLY. Here is what the plaque says:

"In 1922, ardent fly fisherman Leonard Hallady created the first Adams dry fly near his home on the banks of Mayfield pond. He named it in honor of his good friend, Judge Charles F. Adams, another enthusiastic angler who loved to fish for brook and brown trout in the nearby Boardman River. The Adams combines brown and grizzly hackle; many trout anglers claim it is the best fly ever made. Some, in fact, declare that if they had to use only one fly for all of their trout fishing, it would be the Adams."

Because of the Adams' success, there have been many, many variations on the original pattern, including a Golden Adams, Swedish Adams, Parachute Adams, Down Wing Adams, Poly Adams, Lady Adams, Teal Wing Adams, Blue-wing Adams, Western Adams, and more. While the instructions provided here are for the common pattern today, the 1922 original also was somewhat different, with a tail of golden pheasant neck feathers, body of grey yarn, dark grizzly and ginger hackle. The original also appears to have been tied spent-wing style.

The pattern described here is the current version found in almost all fly pattern books.

MATERIALS

- **Hook:** Dry fly hook, sizes 10-20
- **Thread:** Gray or black
- **Wing:** Grizzly hackle tips
- **Tail:** Brown and grizzly hackle mixed (moose mane for western waters)
- **Body:** Gray muskrat dubbing fur
- **Hackle:** Brown and grizzly hackle mixed (2 hackles normally, or 3 for western style flies)

TYING STEPS

1. Tie in brown and grizzly hackle for tail (6-10 strands), with a length equivalent to the hook shank
2. Dub body with light to medium muskrat fur, taper body to approximately 50% of hook shank length
3. Select two matched grizzly hackle tips, with length appropriate for hook size (hook shank length)
4. Lash wings to hook shank and wrap thread around the base of the wings so as to support them in an upright and divided manner (beginning tyer may wish to consult a fly tying book for instructions on wing setting).
5. Tie in one grizzly hackle and one brown hackle (some suggest two brown hackles and one grizzly hackle for western waters) and wind hackle behind and in front of wings. Leave room for the head.
6. Tie off, whip finish and apply head cement.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
 You can direct any questions or comments to FOM at flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org