

### EMERGENT SPARKLE CADDIS



By Bob Bates

Spring is the time when we all look for the great hatches of mayflies, stoneflies, midges and most important for many of us caddis flies. Gary LaFontaine and his team studied caddis flies, and his book *Caddisflies* is the standard on the subject. He describes many fly patterns to imitate caddis species. Two of those are Deep Pupa and Emergent Pupa. If you have an opportunity to read *Caddisflies* do it. There is much there to help you be a better fly angler. You will also see there are many more great patterns and many variations of the Deep Pupa and Emergent Pupa patterns.

Ellen Clark from Fort Washakie, WY tied several LaFontaine patterns at the 2009 East Idaho Fly Tying Expo, Idaho Falls, Idaho, April 16-17, 2009. While there are many variations available, this is one she likes to tie and fish.

Zelon or Antron have a trilobal (three sided) fiber structure which has many advantages. Does it make good flies? You become a believer when you read pages 32-39 in *Caddisflies*. Statements like: "...in clear water the Sparkle Caddis Pupa drew the attention of trout three and a half feet away, while in the same situation a standard pupa drew the attention of fish no farther than a foot away." and "The Emergent Pupa...on the stream was roughly three times better than a fly lacking the imitation of an air sack,..." It doesn't clump or matt like other materials. It makes the fly carry air bubbles, and "The Emergent, hanging half in and half out of the water, kicks off a constant stream of bubbles." This was part of the patterns unexpected effectiveness. At times the Emergent Pupa even broke selective feeding cycles. What more do you want?

Fish feeding on emergers are often mistakenly thought to be feeding on adults. Several years ago on the Missouri River I watched a couple of fly anglers fishing over a bunch of rising fish. Since they were fishing the water I desired I watched them from a high spot. Through binoculars I could see the actively rising fish, and their floating flies drifting along untouched. However, most important I could see adult caddis floating unscathed for several hundred feet before they took flight. After the frustrated anglers left, they caught no fish, my friend and I went down and proceeded to hook and release many fish on pupa and nymph imitations.

How do you fish the Emergent Sparkle Caddis? Read pages 99 – 114 in *Caddisflies* for a complete discussion, but I'll try to condense it a little. First is the dead drift approach. The fly is kept awash in the surface film where a trout can porpoise and eat it. For the caddis that does not ride quietly on the surface Gary recommends "the stutter and drift method," which is more active. Put a slack line curve cast up and across with the fly landing downstream of the line. Then make a quick mend before the fly starts to drag. The mend should do no more than make the fly stutter sideways a little. Release a little line to extend the drift. Some species of caddis Gary calls runners or paddlers; Canadians call them traveling sedges. These caddis move across the surface more or less in a straight line and either take off or are recycled into trout with an explosive rise. Grease the fly, and retrieve it with long pulls to move it across the water surface. I have also watched caddis swim around in circles before taking off, but I have never figured a way to move the fly like that.

Enough talk, let's tie it.

**Materials list:**

**Hook:** Dry Fly hook

**Thread:** 6/0 brown

**Bubble or over body:** Micro Zelon, a new product, was used to tie the pictured fly, but Zelon or Antron yarn are normally used, tan or caddis gold

**Underbody:** Mole hair and Quick Fingers Touch Dubbing

**Head:** Dubbed mole or peacock

## Tying steps:



1. Start thread about mid shank, and wind rearward to the bend which on most regular dry fly hooks is a point right over the barb.



2. Attach two clumps of Zelon or Antron at the bend of the hook. Place one bundle of Zelon or Antron on each side of the hook. As you tie, try to spread the fibers around the hook. Antron yarn might need to be combed out to fluff it enough for a good over body.



3. Ellen uses a variety of colors for the underbody, but on this fly she used mixed mole and Quick Fingers Touch Dubbing. Most tiers put a tacky dubbing wax on the thread and just touch the thread with a dubbing ball. She said that the touch technique was developed by Gary LaFontaine. Don't roll it down like making a tight noodle. Note, about one quarter shank length is uncovered.



4. Bring the bunches of Anton forward along the sides of the hook. Put a couple of not too tight thread winds just a front of underbody. Use a bodkin to pull out and bulk up the over body. Try to keep the over body evenly distributed around the hook.



5. At this point you can put wing pads on the sides of the over body. Tie in dark soft hackles parallel to hook shank no more than three quarters shank length long. Sometimes a small bunch of lighter colored deer hair is added for a wing. Wrap mole fur dubbing or peacock herls for a head.

**Closing comments:** Every fly angler needs this and other Gary LaFontaine patterns in their fly box. They are easy to tie, and from the reports they are almost magic for catching trout. Then go out and fish them.

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