

Floating Nymph (March Brown) CS 2/06 Carl Sanders, Fly of the Month

Not really a nymph, not quite an emerger, this pattern is designed to float just under the water surface*. Tied to drift freely, this is a great pattern during the pre hatch melee of mayflies. It can be tied to match most mayfly hatches. This one is particularly tied for the March Brown hatches on the Deschutes.

March Browns will generally begin hatching when the water temperature reaches a consistent 42F. This can happen as soon as the middle of February and usually into the middle of April. March browns like to hang out in rocky riffles then move to the slower water to emerge. A prime spot for this fly would be the slower water at the tail of the riffle. Nymphs will begin moving early in the morning then emerge late morning allowing the angler to sleep in a bit before running to the waters edge. It is a good pattern to drop a hare's ear nymph from.



Hook: any light wire, emerger style hook, sizes 14 - 16

Thread: red

Ribbing: medium copper wire

Tail: dark partridge tips

Abdomen: a mustard brown hare's ear with dark partridge from the tails over the top

Wing case: 1/4 strip of brown closed cell foam

Thorax: peacock

Legs: Badger hen hackle

- Tie on a piece of copper wire just behind the bend of your hook. Tie in a dark partridge feather near the tips with about 1/4 inch protruding from the back of the fly. Do not trim off the rest.
- Dub about 2/3 of the shank. Pull the rest of the partridge over the top of the dubbing. Tie down. Wrap the copper ribbing and tie down.
- Tie in your strip of foam with the longer end towards the back of the fly. Trim the short end and tie any extra down tightly and clean.
- Just in front of the foam tie in your hackle then your peacock. Wrap the peacock forward leaving a small space behind the eye of the hook.
- Wrap your hackle forward through the peacock with no more than two turns.
- Gently pull the foam forward and tie down, still leaving some headroom. Don't stretch the foam before you tie it down, try to create a nice bubble shape.
- Then, while holding the rest of the foam end up in your left hand wrap a nice head behind the hook eye and under the foam end piece that jams the foam to stand up on its own. Tie off the head.
- Stretch the end of the foam up and trim fairly close. I like to coat the foam bubble with a light film of head cement to seal it.

Carl Sanders

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* You can float most unweighted nymphs by just adding your floatant to the entire nymph or, maybe, just to the thorax.

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