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Subject: : Beginner Forum

Topic: : Answer to the age old "What flies?"

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Fly selection...

One of the most asked questions on this forum, especially by newbies and new posters, is "I'm fishing this stream.....What flies should I use?"

For me, this question is like nails on a chalk board.

I know people are going to follow this up with a list of their top 5, 10, or 25 must have flies; and that this basic question (what fly to use) will keep popping up. However, if I can prevent "the question" one time then this post is a success for me.

I'm not even going to mention the whole size, before color and shape thing.

Here is goes.....

Fly selection is simple. Any fly you have in your box will catch fish on any given day on any given stream. Yes there are specifics, but if you're asking this question, specifics aren't for you (yet).

The reason common patterns are common is because of their effectiveness. Think of fly patterns as evolution. The great ones have been passed down over the years and the crappy ones forgotten.

Basically, all flies work, it's just how you fish them. Any fly that they sell in a shop is going to entice fish. If you've heard about it, it will work. Most of the same bugs are in all of the streams, and generic fly patterns (PT's, Hare's ears, Buggers) will work for any or all of them.

I'm not saying flip rocks or catch bugs with your hat because odds are you don't have an exact imitation and if you tie flies you have to create one at a later time. By the way, most nymphs are brown, green, or some shade in between. And who's to say that fishing an imitation of a Hendrickson nymph in August isn't going to work.

Dries are a different story, however the staple flies are still there. If you are heading to a stream, as long as you are not a complete novice, you should have an idea what hatch activity is going on based off the time of the year. And if you don't, ask "what's hatching," and please not "what flies will work."