

MAY - THE BLACK GNAT



HOOK: Size 16 dry fly.

THREAD: Black 8/0.

BODY: Wound using a narrow strip of black razor foam or fine black dubbing.

WING: White poly-yarn

THORAX: Fine black polypropylene dubbing

HACKLE: Black cock. On the left is a fly tied 'paraloop' style, on the right a more conventional tying.

When the weather starts to warm up in May, we should look forward to hatches or rather 'falls' of these small black terrestrial flies. Apart from the midges and beetles which we may have already seen in April, the Black Gnat with its larger relative the Hawthorn Fly are usually the first major arrivals of the season. Although it is a terrestrial fly, on warm sunny days large swarms can appear with many of them ending up on the water. Once there, they are an easy target for the trout.

Later in the day after the main fall is over, a 'double knotted' Black Gnat can be very effective when the fish are mopping up the mating flies trapped in the surface film.

Hatches and falls of the flies can dependant on the weather, particularly the conditions of the previous few weeks. A cold wet Spring may mean they hardly appear at all.



Above: Black Gnats spooned from a fish

Below: 'Knotted' Black Gnats



Below: An imitation of the 'knotted gnat' – two flies in one!



If you are into 'matching the hatch' other flies to watch out for during May are larger beetles, Alder flies and the first hatches of Sedges towards the end of the month. There may also be Aphids and Cow Dung flies falling onto the water. Don't forget that there will always be midges hatching so midge (buzzer) pupae are usually worth a swim especially on colder days when there may be very little rising.

Now the warmer weather has arrived, fish will be at or near the surface most days and flies fished in this zone will have a good chance of catching. A suitable tactic is to use the 'washing line' method. With a floating or midge-tip line, fish a 12 -16 foot leader with a buoyant fly on the point. This can be a small booby, a greased-up muddler minnow or similar. For your dropper fly/flyes choose something like Diawl Bach, Cruncher, Black & Peacock Spider etc. A slow steady retrieve will keep your flies near the surface where they are likely to be intercepted by the trout.

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