

Basic “Driftless Area” Flies for the Fall Season (suggested by Willie Beshire)

Category	Fly	Size (suggested)	Comments
Nymphs -most of the time trout are feeding sub-surface. These patterns catch a lot of fish.	Pheasant Tail	14, 16	Works most of the time. I prefer bead heads
	Copper John	14, 16	Works most of the time. I prefer bead heads
	Pink Squirrel	14, 16	Works most of the time. I prefer bead heads
	Scud	14, 16	Works most of the time. I prefer bead heads
	Zebra midge	18, 20	Can be good when fish are very selective & eating only very small flies. Sometimes fished as a “hopper/dropper” rig. Light Tan & Black colors work well.
	(many others)	varies	
Dry Flies -when fish are surface feeding, dry flies are the fly fisherman’s ultimate pleasure.	Blue winged olive (bwo)	16,18,20	Most common hatch in the fall; also common throughout the year. They are typically very small sizes in the fall.
	Adams	14,16,18,20	Common flies that frequently work. A good general May Fly Imitation. Can pass for a bwo. I often like parachute version for calm water. Full hackle version for fishing the ripples.
	Elk Hair Caddis	14, 16, 18	Common trout flies that frequently work in tan, brown, olive, slate gray, or black.
	Griffith’s gnat	18, 20	Can work well when fish are very selective & eating only very small surface flies.
	(many others)	varies	
Terrestrials -may be the answer for surface fishing when flies are not hatching.	Ants	16, 18	Good in summer/fall
	Grasshoppers	10, 12	Good in summer/fall; possible bigger fish Good for hopper/dropper rig: fishing a small fly as a trailer with buoyant hopper as strike indicator
	Beetles	16, 18	Good in summer/fall
	Squirmy Wormy	14, 16	Great after a rain; at times worms can steal the show--almost cheating (sometimes frowned upon by fly fishing purists!).
Streamers -simulate bait fish, crayfish, leeches, hellgrammites, and other food that swims.	Wooly Buggers	varies	I often use size 10 for stream trout; larger sizes if targeting bigger fish. I typically prefer bead heads and black or olive colors. Lighter colors can represent bait fish.
	(many others)		
Wet Flies -very effective when fish are feeding on emerging flies just below the surface.	Soft Hackle	14, 16	Good to swing downstream as a searching pattern. Many colors. I often use bright green or yellow bodied & other natural colors. Easy for beginners to fish swinging downstream---learners sometimes catch their first trout using this method.

1. You don’t need all flies on the list to have fun & catch fish!
2. It’s good to have an assortment of the various categories (nymph/dry/streamer) if you want to learn & practice a variety of trout fly fishing techniques.
3. The list includes very common flies that produce. There are hundreds of patterns available. The best choices vary by season, weather/water conditions, location, and preference of the angler.