



# Trout Don't Speak Latin!

By Steve May

Many anglers are turned off of fly-fishing because they think it is too technical. Many old time anglers try to impress new fly fishers by spouting off about the “Baetis hatch” or talking about the “Ephemereella’s” they saw yesterday. It can seem a bit overwhelming for a beginner to know the Latin names of the insects they encounter on stream. Fear not, because the fish know less Latin than you do!

What is important when fly-fishing is to be observant. If you see the fish are eating small olive colored bugs with grey wings that is all the information you really need to select an appropriate fly. Simply look into your fly box and pick the fly that best represents the natural insects. You don't need to know that you are in the midst of a “Baetis” hatch.

*To find out what food items the fish might have available to them there are a couple of things you can do to avoid taking courses in Latin, taxonomy and entomology.*

I commonly shake some of the streamside bushes, watch what flies out and match these creatures to an imitation in my fly box. The bugs in the bushes are usually available to the trout.

If there are no bugs in the bushes and you don't see any fish rising, then you can look at other food sources that may be available to the fish under the surface of the stream.

Shallow areas with some current are a river's food factory. Try picking up a few rocks from the river bottom or holding a fine meshed net downstream while stirring up the bottom a bit. You will find lots of potential food items on the local trout's menu. Take a look at these creepy crawlies and select your fly accordingly. No need for a university degree in entomology!

It can be helpful to collect some bugs in film canisters filled with rubbing alcohol. If you use river water you will be surprised at how much stink can come out of a small film canister filled with rotten bugs!

A local fly shop or club can be invaluable in helping you identify your drunken bug collection. They can assist with selecting flies that imitate your collection and work for local hatches. Over time you will begin to pick up the names of the important local bugs, when these insects hatch and how to be prepared with the right patterns.

Before long you will begin to recognize the major types of insects that trout eat. You will learn what a mayfly, caddis fly, midge or stonefly looks like in both its adult and nymph form. This will be helpful when you talk with other fly anglers.



*This trout was fooled by a pheasant tail nymph and I am sure he does not know the latin name of the bug it represented.*

If you put your observation skills to the test and present your fly well, it won't be long before the old-timers will ask you what fly fooled that big fish you just landed. You can respond with “it ate a little brown fly that looks just like the ones flying around”.

You have to impress the fish, not other anglers, and trout do not study Latin.



Originally published in Real Fishing Magazine  
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