



Tackling Tough Trout

By Steve May

As the heat of the summer passes and the cool days of fall approach fly fishing changes. The fish are more experienced as the season drags on and warm early fall days usually mean the rivers are running low and clear.

Early fall is a time I especially enjoy. The kids are back in school so once popular rivers are surprisingly quiet. The days are comfortable and the fish are tough... but fair.

After a full season of fishing my skills are well practiced and the fish, well... they know the game too. This is the time when I bring out the light fly rod, tiny flies and light tippet on my trout streams.

Where I live in southern Ontario fall hatches are usually less numerous and involve smaller bugs than you might find in May or June. Fishing with tiny flies is something many people find quite intimidating, but they really shouldn't. Remember that since the bugs are tiny, fish have to eat more of them to fill up.

In the clear waters of fall a long leader really helps you make a stealthy approach. Long light, leaders tapered down to 6X or 7X will fool most fish in the river and these fine tippets will thread easily on flies size #18 and smaller. Magnifying glasses or good light will help with threading small flies on to a tippet. These long light leaders frighten many anglers but I marvel each season at how nice it is to cast miniscule offerings on light leaders.

To make it easier to see a fly that resembles a speck of dust I like to use some sort of strike indicator. This applies to both nymphs and dry flies. Where legal, I use another bigger fly tied a foot or two up the leader. This offers the fish a couple of menu options and makes it easy to track the progress of my smaller fly that matches the small bugs. More traditional indicators will work if you are only allowed to use one fly, or if you have to

fish a nymph deep below the surface.

Small hooks can be set by simply tightening the line. One thing to remember when using tiny flies is not to set the hook like a bass pro, or you will end up giving a lot of fish a really cool lip piercing to show off. This can get expensive and empty your fly box in a hurry.



When you do hook up try to land the fish as quickly as possible. Even with light line it is surprising how much smoothly applied pressure you can put on a tippet before it breaks. Test your equipment so you know what the maximum force is that you can put on a light leader. The fish will thank you in the end. Fighting a fish to exhaustion severely limits its chances for survival after release.

Other things to be especially conscious of at this time of year are wading quietly and moving slowly when approaching fishy looking places. Remember these fish have had a full season of experience avoiding anglers.

Late season are more memorable partly because they require more thought and preparation on your part and browns and brookies approaching fall spawn are exceptionally beautiful. It will be the memories of these special fall outings that see you through to next season.



Originally published in Real Fishing Magazine
For more information contact:
Grand River Troutfitters
(519) 787-4359
www.grandrivertroutfitters.com