

# In the Vise

Wood's Super Caddis/By Glenn Zinkus



**G**arren Wood single-mindedly pursues meticulous consistency in his flies (see “Masters at the Bench,” November/December 2015). Thanks to his reputation as a tier of well-executed trout and steelhead flies, it was no surprise that when my wife and I discovered his Super Caddis it became one of our early-summer favorites on Oregon’s Deschutes River. We soon realized that this versatile pattern would be equally effective anywhere trout feed on caddisflies. For that matter, it even works as a hopper imitation.

The Super Caddis is not only the prettiest caddisfly dry we recall fishing, but it’s also truly versatile, effective in a variety of multiple situations. It’s deadly enough to make a good candidate for a one-fly contest.

Wood’s Super Caddis combines elements of the traditional Elk Hair Caddis, the X-Caddis (rubber legs), and the F Fly (simple body and CDC wing). The result is a caddisfly pattern that casts like a dream, floats buoyantly even on long drifts, and is easy to see after it lands on the water. Perhaps most important, this fly looks like something that entices fish, whether during a caddisfly hatch or during nonhatch periods when you are prospecting likely water.

Wood ties the Super Caddis with a high-visibility upper wing, or indicator. I remember many evenings spent fishing caddisfly hatches on the Deschutes River, searching for my fly in the fading light, and setting the hook on any splash that seemed to be near where I thought my fly might be drifting. Those days are over. The indicator can be tied to match the body color, so selecting the desired body color only requires a quick glance. Green bodies can have a high-vis green indica-

tor, burnt orange bodies can use a high-vis orange indicator, and so on. Use your imagination and match your indicator color to the fly body, an ingeniously simple trick that saves a lot of riffling through the fly box when you need to be casting to rising trout. Just pick the indicator color and fly size, and go fish. I even organize my box by lining up rows based on indicator color and hook size. The high-vis indicator is largely out of sight to the fish, thanks to the fly’s design.

Once on your tippet, the Super Caddis lands and floats perfectly upright every time; it won’t flip over or do anything else but float upright like a live caddisfly. Wood designed the fly to behave on the water by using a perfectly balanced, low-profile stacked wing, including a CDC underwing, and he is careful to prevent any of the elk hair

used for the wing from spreading below the hook.

The fly’s perfect balance and flotation allow you to use it for a number of different dry-fly techniques. Adult caddisflies, during their evening ovipositing flights, tend to be frenetic, spastically bouncing up and down along the current. The rubber legs of the Super Caddis provide built-in motion to help mimic busy-body egg-laying caddisflies and trigger trout to strike. Fish the Super Caddis on a dead drift, on a swing, or skated with occasional twitches. Moreover, because it’s so visible and so buoyant, this fly is ideal as an indicator fly in a dry/dropper rig.

Fish this fly in all light conditions—morning, noon, and evening. Fish it along the edges, under bankside brush and trees, during the day; cast it to rising trout in the evening. Carry it everywhere, from spring creeks to rushing rivers and tailwaters to mountain brooks.

## Materials

- Hook:** Standard dry fly, sizes 10–16
- Thread:** Orange, size 8/0
- Body:** Caddis Orange Wapsi Life Cycle dubbing
- Rib:** Dark orange S-Lon beading thread, size D
- Underwing:** Natural gray CDC
- Wing:** Elk hair
- Indicator:** Fluorescent orange Water Silk
- Legs:** Brown rubber legs



**Step 1:** With a base layer of thread on the hook, secure a 3-inch length of S-Lon beading thread along the shank. Build a thin dubbed body, then spiral the S-Lon beading thread through the body as a rib to create a segmented look.

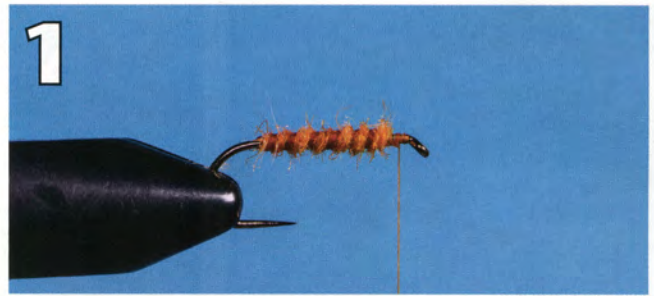
**Step 2:** Secure CDC feathers in at the front of the hook so they extend slightly past the hook bend. Clip the butt ends of the CDC and cover the cut ends with a few wraps of thread.

**Step 3:** Remove the underfur from a small clump of elk hairs, then even the tips with a hair stacker. With your left hand, place the hair on top of the hook so the tips align with the CDC. Pinch the elk hair firmly in place on top of the hook and make two loose wraps of thread. Then, while holding the hair firmly in place so it can't move, tighten the thread wraps. Add a few tightening wraps, then pass the thread in front of the butt ends and make a few tight thread wraps.

**Step 4:** On top of the elk hair, secure a length of Water Silk that extends beyond the eye of the hook. Again make two loose wraps of thread before tightening so the material can't spin to the far side of the hook. Clip the Water Silk so that it extends about halfway toward the tips of the elk hair. In front of the tie-in point, clip both the Water Silk and the elk hair, leaving a small head as shown.

**Step 5:** Cut two strands of rubber legs that are about twice the length of the hook. Tie one strand on each side of the fly, securing them at the same location where you secured the elk hair and the Water Silk.

**Step 6:** Whip-finish the thread at the tie-in point for the wing and legs. Trim the legs so that both sides match. Apply a small amount of head cement on the head and the tie-in area for the wing and legs.



ALL PLATES BY GARREN WOOD



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