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The Nuke Caddis

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Gary Lafontaine set off a barrage of new caddis fly patterns when he encased the body of a caddis pupa in an Antron “bubble.” The Nuke Caddis is one of these spinoffs and employs a technique similar to the one used to create the “milky veil” around the Nuke Egg (see our March 2024 Fly of the Month). You can achieve a comparable effect with Pearl Ice Dub around the caddis body. Ice Dub doesn’t fold around the thread the way Glo Bug Yarn does, so you have to lay it around the body to form the “veil,” which imitates the shiny gas bubble around the pupa body. In the water the Ice Dub shows up as a translucent glimmer around the body, a definite trigger to the fish.

This pattern uses a technique that I learned for bodies that layers (not blends) two different colors of dubbing in a dubbing loop. The effect on the dubbed body is amazing when using a bright color such as Wapsi sparkle dubbing in highlander green Antron and SLF Golden Stone, which is an olive blend (see photo). Varying the mixtures will cover all the shades needed for a green caddis.

If you’re new to dubbing loops, this fly can help you master them. There are many YouTube videos that demonstrate how to use loops, e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3-drhWeU7s>, and some that can help you improvise a dubbing twister if you don’t have one. I fashioned a twister from a 2-inch paper clip. Start by straightening out the clip. Bend one end into a hook and slide a 1 or 2 oz. egg sinker on the shaft. Then, double over the opposite end about the length of the sinker and slide the sinker over the doubled wire to lock it in place. You now have a dubbing twister tool. If you’d rather buy one, the Smhaen Regular, Red Master Dubbing Twister is absolutely the best dubbing twister I will ever own. It’s a little expensive, but it should last a lifetime.

Nuke Caddis Recipe

1. *Hook: Any scud hook – size 10 to 16. Gamakatsu C12 – size 14 in the photo.*
2. *Thread: Dark brown or black 6/0.*
3. *Body: Highlander green Antron and SLF golden stone dubbing. Start the thread 2 or 3 eye widths behind the hook eye and wrap the thread into the bend. Return the thread just above the hook barb. Ready a very thin mat of Antron dubbing on your tying table. It should be about 1½ inches long by ½ inch wide. Next, lay a thinner mat of golden stone dubbing on top. Make a mat that’s very thin at the top and thicker at the bottom. This will create a nice taper to the dubbing when you twist the mat into a rope. Too much dubbing will create a rope that’s too thick, so go thin. Make a dubbing loop above the hook barb and then return the thread to the starting point behind the hook eye. Insert a twister tool into the loop. Insert the mat of dubbing mat into the loop with the thicker edge at the bottom of the loop. Twist the dubbing into a tight rope and wind the rope in consecutive wraps to the starting point. Tie the loop off and trim the excess. If you haven’t used dubbing loops before, check out a couple of YouTube videos on dubbing loops.*

4. *Bubble: Pearl Ice Dub. Take a small pinch of dubbing, pull it apart and back together a couple times until you have a very small amount about 1½ inches long. It doesn't matter how scraggly it is. Tie it in lengthwise in the middle of the clump on the back side of the hook shank with a light wrap (which should help rotate the fibers around the hook) and then a tight pinch wrap to secure it. Next, fold over the other half of the dub to your side and with same light wrap and a tight pinch wrap to secure the ice dub. You don't have to be picky here. Just get the Ice Dub fibers around the body. Sparse is best. You can trim the dub length when you are done with the fly.*
5. *Collar and head: Pine squirrel or hare's mask hair. Olive is my first color choice. Make another dubbing loop at the thread position. Take a very small amount (¼ inch diameter) of squirrel or mask hair (the hair with more black with brown tips just above the eyes is best) and remove the fluff. Cut the bottom off the clump to about ¼ inch in length (adjust the length to match the size of the fly). Distribute the hair in the dubbing loop so it forms about an inch of "hackle" when you twist it. Make 2 wraps, folding the hairs rearward as you wrap. Secure and trim off the excess. Whip finish with 2 or 3 turns. Trim the Ice Dub off at the hook bend. Trim any unruly fibers. The Ice Dub should form a "veil" around the body.*

When you get the hang of this fly, it ties in minutes. You can apply the hackle and body techniques to your other jig flies, bead heads, etc. This fly is a pre-emerger. Fish it deep with a lift.