

Fly of the Month

By Mike Ott

Joe Aimonette's "Christmas Tree"

With gas hovering around the four dollar a gallon mark and threatening to go to five, we're all looking for more local fishing opportunities. I think just about everyone in the Ozark Fly Fishers vicinity lives within twenty minutes of some kind of pond, creek, river, or lake that holds some kind of fly-worthy fish – bass, bluegill, sunfish, crappie, catfish, carp, whatever. Originated by our own Joe Aimonette, this now famous warm-water fly pattern is easy to tie, easy to fish, and just plain works. So far this spring, I have caught countless bass, bluegill, and crappie from local waters ranging from a local subdivision's lake to Busch Wildlife to Shaw Arboretum's lakes during a class there. Hope I get this right Joe...



Hook: Dai-Riki 070, Mustad 3906B, Tiemco 3761 Size #8-10

Thread: 6/0 Black

Eyes: Medium Bead Chain Eyes – Black, Silver, or Copper

Tail: Red Short Fluffy Marabou (from the base of saddle hackles) with Red Flashabou or Crystal Flash (can also use just red flashabou and/or crystal flash)

Body: Black Tinsel Chenille

Hackle: Black Soft, Webby Saddle Hackle with some of the fluff

- 1) Secure hook in vise and start thread one eye-length behind eye of hook and wrap back about two eye-lengths.
- 2) Put a small drop of Zap-A-Gap on thread and secure bead chain eyes in the middle of the thread wraps – about one and one-half eye-lengths back.
- 3) Wrap the thread back to the bend of the hook even with the hook barb.
- 4) Tie in fluffy red Marabou tail about one hook shank length long. Add six to eight strands of red flashabou distributed around the marabou and extending about one-quarter length past the end of the tail.
- 5) Tie in black tinsel chenille at the base of the tail and wrap thread to just behind the eyes. Wrap an even body and tie off just behind the bead chain eyes. Trim off the excess.
- 6) Select a webby black saddle hackle feather that is not too wide or stiff. Stroke back the fibers about three wraps-worth from the fluff, and tie in by the tip right behind the eyes.
- 7) Make a soft-hackle style hackle collar with the last wrap being the fluffy butt of the feather. Stroke back towards the tail and set in with a couple of wraps of thread.
- 8) Tie off the hackle and trim the excess stem.
- 9) Whip finish and cement.

This fly can be fished alone cast out and stripped back, fished as the top fly above a soft hackle or wooly, or under a popper as a dropper. Seems like you can't fish it wrong as long as you are hitting water with fish in it. Also try it in different colors – peacock, olive, or brown. Keep the red tail though. Thanks, Joe, for a great fly pattern!