

## LIST OF ITEMS NEEDED TO START FLY FISHING FOR TROUT

The list is divided into several sections based upon need (e.g., required, desirable) and for some items there are many alternatives based upon cost, durability, and other factors.

### **GROUP I. — ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE: REQUIRED** (cannot go fishing without them)

**FLY LINE** — **Choose line size FIRST**, then rod; cost \$30–60. Lines numbered by weight of first 30', smaller numbers are lightest lines. Start with a Weight Forward floating line in a light color (NO greens or browns); #5–6 weight lines best for FIRST trout ROD, #6 or 7 for smallmouth; smaller numbered lines for smaller flies & fish and vice versa. Line should last 3–7 years but very important "tool" to fly fishing! The rod and the line cast the fly.

**ROD** — Suggest 8–9' for 5 or 6 wt. lines; graphite best choice, cost \$70–500+, must incl. **rod case** and **bag**. Plan what might be "next" rod—a significant change in line size: EXAMPLE, eventually you might want a series of rods for #3, #5, #7, and #9 **or** #4, #6, & #8. You may want some range in length for one or two of the trout rods—a short and long-type (e.g., 6–7' and an 8.5–9'). So don't try to pick the 'perfect' rod/line combo for **all** types of fly fishing you will want to do. There is no such rod for spin fishing, and there is none for fly fishing.

**REEL** — smallest (by weight) that will hold all the line and some backing, single-action; cost \$25–250+, good ones for about \$40; must hold 75–90' fly line and 30+ yds of 18# Dacron backing; reel should have left hand conversion and spare spool capability, as well as an adjustable drag. SMOOTH drag can be very important where tippet may test only ONE-THIRD the weight of the fish and 'clicks' on reel may momentarily exceed that amount.

**WADERS** — Trout water temperatures normally range 32–65°; **ABSOLUTELY must have nylon or canvas outer covering**; hip waders are minimum needed; will find chest waders keep you drier and save more flies on opposite side of stream (some fishers est. saving 100+ flies/year with chest waders)! Stocking-foot type great for traveler, but more expensive (need separate shoes, maybe gravel guards). Consider breathable waders that help reduce moisture condensing inside the waders. You definitely get what you pay for—expect cost to be \$25/year or more. The \$25 waders may last 1 year or less, \$150 waders (not incl. shoes, etc.) may last 6 or more. Usually no need for 'insulated' waders in this area—get heavy socks and long underwear, etc., for really cold waters; then take these off when water is still too cool to wet wade. If sensitive to cold, do get neoprene. Stocking-foots (non-neoprene) may require gravel guards between inside of wading boot and outside of wader foot. Get wading shoes/boots with non-slip rubber—they will save your butt! Remember, there are few trout streams in the east that can be fished largely from a bank. You must cross the stream (and mud), at a minimum, and most (80–90%) fly fishing for trout is from a position in the stream. High water levels in spring make hip boots less than satisfactory: water is *a/ways* an inch above tops, PLUS, if you fall in, chest waders will keep you drier and warmer. MD now requires non-felt waders on all its waters.

**MISC. REQUIRED ITEMS:** **Polarized sun glasses** (amber tint best) to see INTO the water, 1–2 **FLY** boxes (small compartments for dry flies & clips or foam to hold wet flies), leaders & tippet spools (suggest a 7.5' 3X or 4X tapered leader, with spools of 4–6X tippets to be added for starters), clippers, strike indicators, **flies**. Talk to your fly shop guru for the best flies for waters you will fish at that time of year. A dozen or two to start, which will build to several hundred over a couple of years [now you know why most fly fishers become fly tiers?].

**TECHNIQUE:** Do not simply acquire all the paraphernalia, then go out to a stream, pond or a lawn to try to cast the line and catch a trout or bass on your own! *Please*, get some instruction—formal classes, guide service, TU Chapter, friends, videos, books, magazines, etc. A few hours of good instruction in the very beginning will save you hundreds of hours whipping your rod around, resulting in casts of only 15–20 feet, tangled leaders, hundreds of flies lost in trees, a busted rod, and maybe a coronary. You will also need to learn a couple of knots and how to approach trout (they are very sensitive to all potential predators—and you are a 'predator' to a trout). Learning how and where to wade, where to cast, and other tactics are very important to your success. Fly fishing is **NOT** simply casting some bait in the water, sitting on a bank in the sun and waiting for the fish to yank on your line. It takes considerable concentration at all times—*that is part of the challenge!* On many of our waters, the wild trout seem to learn to detect a fraudulent "bug" and spit it out in a few nanoseconds—all before they reach 9" in length!

## **GROUP II. — NEED TO GET SOON AFTER STARTING: REAL NICE TO HAVE**

VEST—Where are you going to carry all those fly boxes, tippet spools, small tools, etc? Cost \$20–100+, dozens of varieties. You may want to look for storage in the back—lunch, drink, rain jacket, AND other important needs. If you have chest waders, do not get a long vest; get a "shorty vest" to keep gear dry.

NET—makes for less stress for holding and releasing fish; cost \$10–70+; look for soft nylon and small-mesh bag, if possible. Newer "Catch-and-release" nets are excellent and can also capture most insects on the water or flying nearby.

CAP/HAT—shaded eyes see much better, large-billed baseball cap, etc.; look for dark underside to reduce glare from water or use BLACK ink, etc., to color underside.

RAIN JACKET—good fishing in rain! Get a "shorty" and 1–2 sizes larger to allow arm and air movement while wearing a heavy shirt/sweater; cost \$30–225+; goes with chest waders.

MORE FLIES AND OTHER ITEMS—always more flies (& boxes)! Boxes should have all "similar" flies--wets, dries, nymphs, mayflies, general attractors, etc., sorted together in one place. Example: do not mix nymphs with dries in each of several different boxes; try to separate all your nymphs into one box and dries into their own. If you have less than perfect eyes, try 'flip focals' on the brim of your hat to magnify tiny flies and leaders. You may need tiny split shot; dry fly floatant paste (avoid the sprays); net retractor; hook remover (small hemostat); sunglass chord/retainer; small flashlight (to get back to car after dark!), and small retractors for clippers, hemostat, etc.

## **GROUP III. — NICE TO HAVE EVERY SO OFTEN (mostly optional, specialized tools)**

MISC. ITEMS—hook hone (use 'Diamond Deb' nail file), stream thermometer, flex lite for late evening hatches, small insect/aquatic net (new C&R landing nets with small mesh will catch many bugs), scissors, small pliers, sinking fly lines, tippet dispenser/holder, and wading staff. Do not use sheepskin patch ON vest to hold flies for any long period of time IF you value them and do any walking through bushes! Use a small fly wallet to hold larger wet flies until dry.

OTHER ACCESSORIES—other fly lines (e.g., fast sinking tip), spare reel spool(s) for other lines, braided leader butt section for specialized dry fly presentations, quilted/thermal pants for use under waders in very cold waters, special fingerless gloves (try on before buying; wool or Neoprene popular) for winter, and wader patch kits.

## **GROUP IV. — 'WHERE TO GO' FOR INFORMATION & TACKLE**

TACKLE SOURCES: several stores and shops in the area that specialize in fly fishing tackle and accessories— Shop around. Local stores offer you inspection of item, information *and* personal service; mail order usually offers better prices. Ask your friends or TU chapter members for other sources.

MAPS are available from US Geological Survey and State Highway Admin.; Delorme Atlas

LOCAL SHOPS & PROFESSIONAL GUIDES—ask at your local shop or at TU meetings

BOOKS: "Guide to Maryland Trout Fishing" (2nd Edition) by Gelso & Coburn (reprinted 2006)

TU CHAPTERS—members, chapter outings, meetings, and newsletters. Contact National TU offices @703-522-0200 or [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org) for chapter nearest to you. There are currently 7 chapters within 50 miles of Wash.–Balt.