



SHAUN HARRISON BAIT QUEST

Particle Fever Part 2

Last month's issue saw me visiting the different types of particle baits which have brought me success over the years. There are many other particles in regular use around the country, but, as always, I choose only to write about the things I have experience of, rather than give you second-hand information from someone else.

finished Part One with the comment: *Okay so the carp's weights are going to suffer if everyone starts using particles all through the summer months. But, do you know what? The winter fishing would be far better after a year of particle munching rather than pigging out on high fat, high oil content fishmeal pellets and boilies.*

We need to be very careful not to mistake unhealthy weight gains in carp with healthy growth gains. So many times I hear the carp at such and such a lake are absolutely piling on the weight, but this isn't necessarily a good thing. A lot of this weight gain is down to excessive fats and oil in the bait offered by us, the anglers. We owe it to our fish to look after their insides as well as their outer body tissue. Without the carp we don't have this magical pastime. Properly cooked vegetable particle baits, used in conjunction with some of the less healthy options we give the fish, help to balance their artificial diet a little more. Remember the koi carp keepers. Their carp, are simply prettily coloured cyprinus carpio, the very same fish we fish for, but koi carp keepers wouldn't dream of piling a load of high-oil content halibut or trout pellets into their pools. Koi, when kept properly, are in the absolute peak of health. Carp don't need all this excess oil and fat, just as we humans don't.

Sorry, I went off on a bit of one there. Let me get back to this particle lark and how to make a humble bean or pea just that little bit more interesting.

The number of fish I seemed to be able to hold on the tweaked bait as opposed to what the anglers using straight hemp achieved got rather embarrassing really

It surprises me how many anglers are happy to simply cook their particle baits in plain old tap water and use them in this way when, in fact, there are so many small things you could add to enhance the bait's performance.

Just as with our own food, a little salt or a little gravy or sauce can completely transform a meal from simply being food to something totally delicious. The same thing can be said for all baits.



Salt, gravy and cooking sauces totally transform particle baits.



My first capture of Conan the first time I introduced Hot Hemp to the Mangrove. One of five fish in a night.

Just one extra ingredient can make so much difference. On the other hand, too much and too many ingredients can totally ruin a bait. It is a fine dividing line. I often tell people I could make our range of boilies look and smell the same but cost half the price. It is all down to the taste, the taste is the all-important thing. Skimping on the odd expensive ingredient can turn an excellent bait into an also-ran.

This fine dividing line is not easily detectable by our sense of smell. It is no secret that carp like salt. Add a little salt to your particles whilst they are cooking and you will end up with a rather different-tasting bait to the equivalent bait cooked without the salt. Yet to our sense of smell

the two baits will appear the same.

That last line may have prompted a few people to recall instances when they have seen someone catching more carp than they would consider the norm on what appeared to be the same bait as was being used by other anglers.

I have experienced some incredible fishing on 'tweaked baits'. It is so simple to do and so obvious, I think, to make your bait stand out from that of other anglers, yet so few seem to bother. I guess it is the idle age we live in. I can assure you the humble hempseed – which I have used more than any other bait over the years – can most definitely be improved.

I was most fortunate to be using what is now commonly known as Hot Hemp (hemp with chilli flakes added) for quite a few years before the secret slipped out and hit the DVDs and magazines. I was using it on the Mangrove when almost every other angler was piling in straight hemp. The number of fish I seemed to be able to hold on the tweaked bait as opposed to what the anglers using straight hemp achieved got rather embarrassing really (although I could live with it). Yes, they all caught carp, but I seemed to be able to hold them in my swim for much longer. The Mangrove at that time was very much a night and early morning water, yet I would still be getting takes at midday.

The Hot Hemp was, and still is, an excellent bait, but once it has been done and used for a period of time on a water then it simply becomes just another bait.



Hot Hemp with a sprinkling of corn.

Mehdi Daho and yours truly.



Bait Quest | Shaun Harrison

Cooking Particles	Presoak	Boil
Standard Hempseed	Overnight	Until it splits
Big Hemp	Overnight	Until it splits
Tares	Overnight	30 minutes
Wheat	Overnight	15 minutes
Mixed Seed Aniseed	Overnight	30 minutes
Mixed Seed Standard	Overnight	30 minutes
Garlic Feast	24 hours	30 minutes
Dark Seed Mix	Overnight	30 minutes
Mini Tiger Nuts	24 hours	30 minutes
Standard Tiger Nuts	24 hours	30 minutes
Jumbo Tiger Nuts	24 hours	30 minutes
Maize	24 hours	30 minutes
Groats	Not necessary	5 minutes
Black-eyed Beans	Overnight	30 minutes
Pinto Beans	Overnight	30 minutes
Chickpeas	Overnight	30 minutes
Maple Peas	Overnight	30 minutes

let me into one of his little secrets whilst I was fishing with him last year, which was that he likes to mix and match his particle juices.

Many years ago I discovered the benefits of soaking my air-dried boilies in cooked hemp juice, but I must admit to not doing a lot else with the juice until I spoke to Mehdi. He cooks his hempseed before anything else then drains off the juice and uses it to cook any other particle bait he may be preparing. This certainly got my brain ticking with the endless possibilities. Hemp-flavoured black-eyed beans came to mind immediately. Mehdi did some experimenting with hemp juice-soaked and cooked tiger nuts – as he says, all the sugars and slime of the

tiger nut but also oozing hemp juice too!

the taste of what is often a banned bait without actually introducing the bait. The birds will enjoy the nuts you have prepared while you are left to do battle with the carp.

In Conclusion

I feel that the use of particle baits has gone down a similar path to that of the floater angler whereby very little experimentation is going on these days. Yes, anglers still pile in the hemp and use the tigers; some more adventurous anglers use the mixed seed mixes which are available in many different forms, but so few seem to take the preparation side of it much further than a simple soak and a boil. Boy, are you missing out on something!

Oh, I almost forgot – and I don't know how I ever could – one of the most effective particle baits I have ever known, which carp will take from the off almost to the exclusion of any other bait, and which a lot of carp these days have never come across, is the easiest particle of them all to prepare. You open the tin and you use it. Yes, sweetcorn, one of the most effective baits of all time, and do you know what? Sweetcorn sits in sugar and salt.

Until next time, best fishes,
Shaun Harrison.

mixers, then shake the whole lot until all the mixers look as though they are damp. If some still look dry and the inside of the bag looks dry, add a little water and repeat the process until all the mixers look damp but not dripping wet, then it is a simple case of leaving them for a few hours to allow the flavour to penetrate into them.

Mixing and Matching the Mehdi Daho Way

What did I say at the start of this piece – in the very first paragraph?

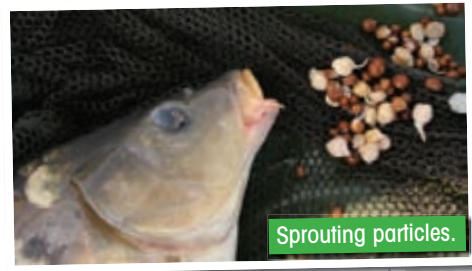
I choose only to write about the things I have experience of, rather than give you second-hand information from someone else.

Right then, it looks as though that's all about to go out of the window. Well, not completely. Since being given the information I have started to experiment along similar paths.

My very good friend Mehdi Daho, owner of Laroussi and Old Oaks near Le Mans in France,

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Living in France, on many of the waters he fishes Mehdi has to try to combat the attentions of poisson chat. He found out many years ago that the poisson chat don't like the taste of peanuts and he's used this to his advantage by cooking his hempseed and mixed seed blends in the juice from cooked nuts and he now has far fewer problems from them. A brilliant method of using



Sprouting particles.