



**Fly-tying for the e-book version of Fly-Fishing the Western  
Spring Creeks and Tail-Waters**

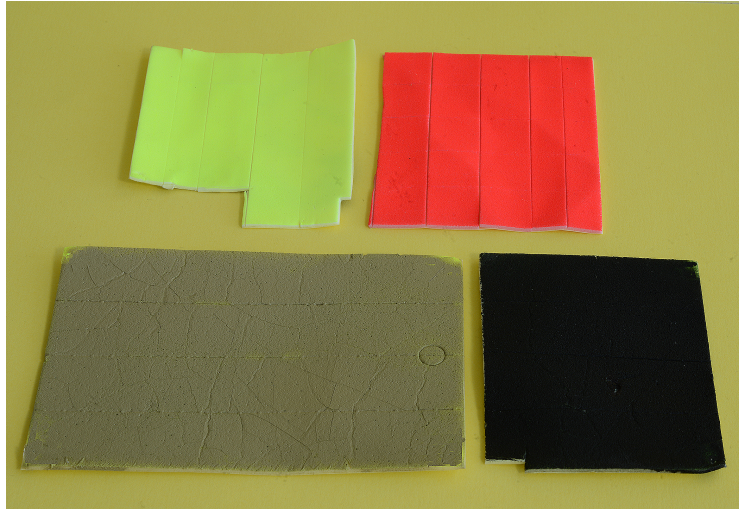
**Lee Kinsey and John Mingo**

**Photography: Suzanne Mingo**

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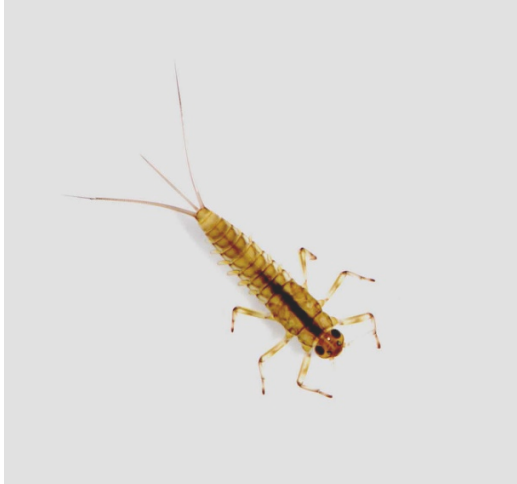
The book and its fly-tying-disk companion are dedicated to Al Troth, the great American fly tyer, guide, and photographer. Without his insights into fly construction and the fishing of small flies on light, long tippetts, we would not have been able to achieve these modest advances in fishing to difficult fish in clear waters.



Four colors of indicators (Umpqua) using camouflage spray paint on the olive and black indicators.



Macro, Micro, and Mini-Micro Indicator versus Size 16 pheasant tail nymph (on a large gape hook). Note that the largest indicator still is much smaller than a full-size Umpqua roll-on indicator (see the indentations showing the factory-default size of the roll-on indicator).



Baetis nymph, not yet mature



Ephemerella nymph, not mature



Scud, about a size 14



Sow-bug, about a size 16



Notice the difference in colors and sizes of the pheasant tail nymphs. This leaf of the fly box contains all un-weighted PT nymphs on large-gape, heavy wire hooks. Another leaf contains the same nymphs on a fine wire dry-fly hook. Still another leaf contains these nymphs with black-wire wound in the thorax area for weight.

## Troth Un-weighted Pheasant Tail Nymph



Un-weighted Olive PT



Un-weighted Natural PT – Herl is still dark but body is much lighter than the Olive-dyed PT

Tying Instructions for Un-weighted PT (Troth style). Photos show Natural PT being tied; tying is identical for Olive un-weighted PT except for the use of olive-dyed PT fibers and gold wire, instead of natural PT fibers and copper wire.

Materials list:

Hook: Dai-ichi 1640

Hook Sizes: 14-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 Black

Tails: Pheasant Tail

Ribbing: Ultra Wire XS or S, copper or gold

Body: 3 to 7 pheasant tail fibers, depending on size. Color is natural; dyed olive; or bleached

Wing: PT fibers folder over thorax area

Hackle: none

Weight: none

Post: none

Thorax: Peacock herl, trimmed underneath and sides, if necessary; bleached herl is used for the Blonde PT.

Important Details:

a) Trim peacock herl to make the thorax area only slightly larger than body.

b) Buy individual peacock tails (rather than strung herl), and size the herl before tying. Herl fibers near the base of the peacock tail are the smallest and finest. Most strung herl fibers are too thick for the smaller hook sizes.





- 1) Tie in the ribbing (shown at left) and the 3 to 5 PT fibers. Note that tail fibers are approximately one-third the length of the body. Do NOT make the tails too long!



- 3) Wrap the ribbing forward, then take a few turns with the thread to aim the PT fibers toward the tail of the fly. This allows PT fibers to make a nice wing case after the herl is placed in the thorax.



- 2) Wrap the PT fibers forward, leaving room for the thorax (herl)



- 4) Tie in the herl



5) Wrap the herl forward



6) Wrap the PT fibers over the herl to form the wing case, then whip finish



- 7) Trim the herl under the fly and on the sides, if necessary. Very little bottom trimming and no side trimming are needed if the herl is sized properly for the size fly being tied. A size 16 is shown in the photos.

Note the large gape of this relatively heavy wire hook. This fly is meant to ride at about 6" or deeper in the water column. The same fly tied on a Tiemco 101 dry fly hook is meant to ride immediately under the film or, if treated, in the film.

Note that it is extremely important to pay attention to the *width* of your PT imitation depending on whether you are fishing a Baetis/sulphur hatch (think "skinny") or an Ephemerella hatch (think "wide"). The width of the PT can be controlled by a) the number of PT fibers you use in tying the fly, and b) the thickness of the peacock herl you use. In the photo below, we show the effect of differing numbers of PT fibers.



Both flies are tied on a size 18 Tiemco 101 light-wire dry-fly hook. Both use olive-dyed PT fibers and small herl. The top fly is tied with 3 PT fibers; the bottom fly is tied with 7 fibers. The top fly also has undergone some trimming of the herl.

## Troth-Kinsey Weighted Olive Pheasant Tail Nymph



Tying instructions for the weighted pheasant tail nymph. Photos show the Olive-dyed version. The natural PT version has the same black wire weighting for the thorax. Note that in Lee's version, peacock herl is NOT tied-in over the black wire weighting, in order to give the fly the nicest proportions. Also, there is no weight under the body, just the wire serving double-duty as weight and as thorax. This forward-weighting offsets the extra weight of the hook bend, allowing the fly to ride more naturally in our view.

Materials list:

Hook: Dai-ichi 1640

Sizes: 14-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 Black

Tails: 3-7 PT fibers, olive or natural

Ribbing: Ultra-Wire, S or XS, gold or copper. Note that you can also use the copper colored wire both as ribbing and as thorax weight (much as in the Sawyer

method).

Body: 3-5 Pheasant tail fibers

Wing: wing case of PT fibers

Hackle: none

Weight: Ultra-Wire wrapped many times at thorax.

Post: none

Thorax: Wire weighting

Instructions: Use same procedure as for un-weighted PT. However, instead of peacock herl, use the black Ultra Wire for the thorax. Since the wire thorax will not be built-up on top of the thorax as in the case of the herl, make sure the wrapped-over PT fibers (to form the wing-case) are done with some slack above the black-wire thorax.

Note: Al Troth used lead wire for weight in the thorax, then wrapped herl around this weight. This is quite doable in the larger sizes.

## Black Goose-Biot Midge Pupa



### Tying instructions for midge pupa.

This is the most popular pupa in the fly shops, but don't be afraid to experiment with other versions. The fly is tied on a light scud hook, but the hook still is heavier than a typical dry fly hook. So, remember to use an extremely small micro-indicator close to the fly if you wish to suspend it high in the water column. Note also that the head of the fly is relatively narrow, indicating a "puparium" of the sort discussed earlier. The tyer should feel free to substitute a larger dubbed head.

Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 2487

Sizes: 16-22

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 black

Tails: none

Ribbing: Ultra-Wire XS red or gold or copper

Body: Turkey or Goose Biot. Color: Black, olive, or white

Wing: none

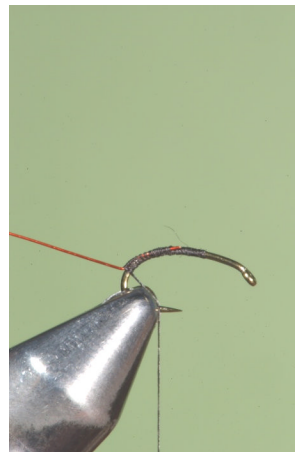
Hackle: none

Weight: none

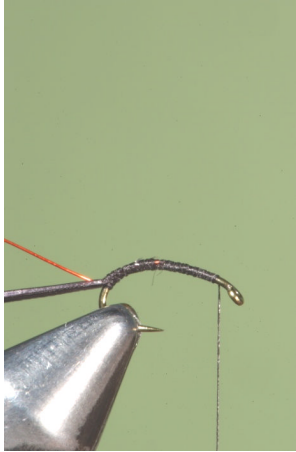
Post: none

Thorax: Thread wrapped to make head slightly wider than body. Be sure to get the length and width of the head correct in relation to length of body (as in photograph), unless you purposely wish to use a broader dubbed or peacock herl thorax..

Instructions for midge pupa:



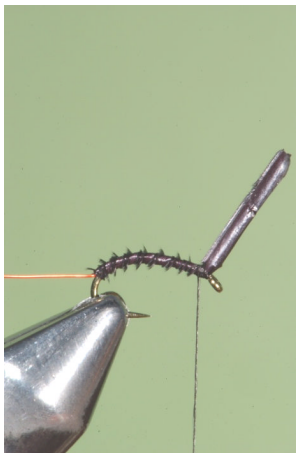
- 1) Tie in thread and red-wire ribbing. Make sure these start well around the curvature of the hook.



- 2) Tie in goose or turkey quill in manner shown.



- 4) Wrap wire ribbing forward; secure; then build up the thread head and whip finish. Note the lack of breathing fibers.



- 3) Wrap quill so that fibers flair to sides; leave just enough room for thread-head. Note position of tag-end of biot to allow space for head.

## Lee's Sow-Bug



### Tying instructions for sow-bug

The sow-bug has a distinctive stripe down its back. Lee uses PT fibers to imitate both this stripe and the overall carapace or back-covering of the insect.

Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 2487

Sizes: 16-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 black

Tails: none

Ribbing: Ultra Wire, small, copper or gold

Body: Bleached Peacock Herl

Wing: none

Weight: none

Hackle: none

Post: none

Thorax: not different from body

Other: Back covering of 4-6 PT fibers, natural

Tying instructions:



- 1) Tie in copper or gold ribbing; tie in about one-third of the way down the curve of the hook.



- 2) Tie in PT fibers at same place around curve of hook



- 3) Tie in bleached herl, 2 fibers, along shank of hook, ending at back of hook, where the wire and PT fibers are tied in. Remember to use herl nearer to the eye or tip of the peacock tail, rather than the base of the tail. These tip fibers are thicker than those at the base.



- 4) Wrap the strands of herl to the front and secure.



- 5) Bring the PT fibers over the body toward the front and secure. The PT fibers should be covering the whole back and pushing the herl fibers down on either side of the hook.



- 6) Wrap the ribbing wire to the front, creating 4 or 5 body segments, depending on hook size. Whip finish. Note that, if herl size is chosen properly, no trimming is needed, except possibly on sides. Choose a herl size so that the herl width, as shown in this photo, is approximately one-half of the gape of the hook.

## **Kinsey Thorax Dun (PMD/sulphur/olive)**



### Tying Instructions

There are several keys in tying this fly, including some differences from traditional thorax duns:

- The use of dubbing to help with the splitting of the tail fibers
- The use of Micro-Fibbets for tails (but shorter than for a spinner pattern)
- The use of turkey biots for the body
- The use of turkey flats for the wing(s)
- The use of bleached grizzly super saddle hackle

At the end we also outline some specifics in preparing the turkey flats when making the wing.

### Materials List:

Hook: Dai-ichi 1310

Sizes: 16-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 yellow (or light cahill); olive

Tails: Micro-Fibbets (4) – ginger or dun

Ribbing: none

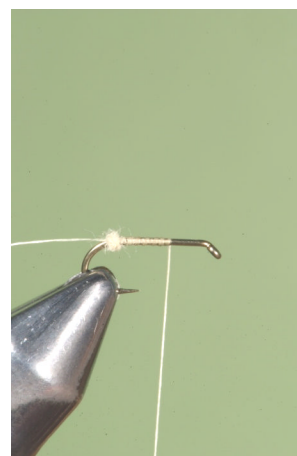
Body: Turkey Biot -- sulphur or olive color

Wing: Tan or light gray turkey flats

Hackle: Bleached grizzly super saddle-hackle

Post: none

Dubbing: for tail-splitting and thorax area – Beaver Dubbing, sulphur, yellow, or olive (Rocky Mountain Dubbing)



1) Note how tying thread end is left



sticking straight out of tail.  
Then, tie a dubbing ball at tail of  
hook, then tie in 4 Micro-Fibberts  
over the dubbing.



- 2) Use the tying thread tag-end  
(which was left sticking straight  
out the tail) to separate the 4 tails  
into 2 on each side of the  
dubbing ball.



- 3) Tie in the turkey quill and run  
thread to front of hook as shown.



- 4) Tie the quill forward to form the  
body.



- 5) Form the wing out of the turkey  
flat (see separate photos and  
instructions at end) and tie in the  
wing. This is done by a) tying in  
the butts at the front of the hook,  
b) taking a couple of turns of  
thread at the back of the wing; c)  
taking 2 or 3 parachute turns of  
the thread at the base of the wing  
and d) finishing off the thread  
behind the wing.



- 6) Tie in the bleached grizzly hackle behind the wing.



- 7) Wrap the dubbing behind and in front of the wing.



- 8) Take 2 wraps of hackle behind the wing and 2 or 3 wraps in front; finish off and whip-finish.



- 9) Two types of cutting are now required (go slowly, the fly is already tied):
- Cut the wing so that it assumes the shape of a slightly tilted backward mayfly wing – a short horizontal cut at the top of the wing (not all the way across), followed by an angled cut from the end of the first cut down toward the tail of the fly.
  - Clip a V-shaped notch out of the hackle underneath the hook. The result should be that the hackle fibers project out from the fly and slightly downward. There is no need to clip hackle near the wing.

Instructions for forming turkey flat wing:



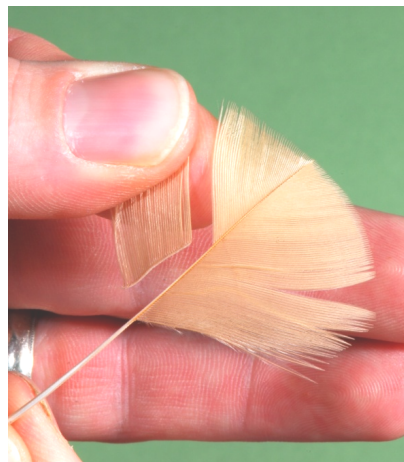
- a) Hold turkey flat with concave side upward.



- b) Tear off the webbing and separate the section to be formed into a wing (in the photo, this is the first set of fibers on the left side of the flat, still facing concave side up).



- c) Size the section to be torn off at twice the width of the wing to be fashioned. Then, hold the section between the fingers of your left hand and tear off the rest of the flat using your right hand.



- d) It is important to keep the fibers flat in your left fingers for the next step.



- e) Fold the fibers in half in the direction shown.



- f) This creates the symmetrical wing as held by your thumb and fore-finger of the right hand.

## Lee's Clipped-Hackle Spinner



### Tying Instructions for Spinner

The keys to tying this fly are the Micro-Fibbet tails (longer than for the dun), the biot body, and the dubbing at the thorax.

Materials list:

Hook: Dai-ichi 1310

Sizes: 16-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 olive or yellow (light cahill)

Tails: Micro-Fibbets, 2 each side, separated by tail dubbing ball; tail color is dun, to match hackle

Ribbing: none

Body: Turkey Biot, PMD color or Rust

Wing: none; hackle serves this purpose

Hackle: Super saddle-hackle, medium gray

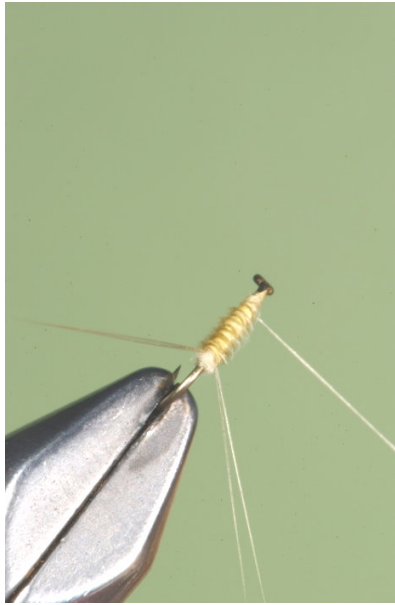
Post: none

Thorax: Beaver Dubbing by Rocky Mountain Dubbing; same color used to separate tails; sulphur yellow or rust

Tying instructions:



- 1) Attach the thread to the hook, wind down to tail and put in the tail dubbing ball (as in the construction of the thorax dun). The photo shows the tails tied in first – as is typically done. Do this AFTER the dubbing ball is in place (see instructions for the thorax dun).



- 2) Make the tails longer than for the dun; typically 50% (or more) longer than the body as in the photo. Use the thread to separate the tails (2 on each side). Tie in turkey biot in front of the tail ball, then wind the biot to the front, leaving room for the thorax area.



- 3) Tie in a single super-saddle hackle, then construct the dubbed thorax

(somewhat thicker than the body but not too thick).



- 4) Wrap the hackle forward and tightly to the dubbed thorax, approximately 5 turns.



- 5) Trim the top and bottom of the hackle so that there is a "v" cut-out on the top and an inverted "v" cut-

out on the bottom. Whip-finish.



The finished fly should float flush in the surface film.

## Lee's Curved CDC Emerger



### Tying the curved emerger:

The keys to this fly are the biot body for better resistance to the fly sinking, and the “cheeks” on the CDC that flare out on either side of the body to help stabilize the fly in the surface film. Note how these “cheeks” are missing on most commercially-tied CDC duns.

### Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 2487 (Note that this hook not only provides the curved body but also is sufficiently heavy to cause the body to break through the surface film. Treat only the thorax area with dry fly spray or ointment.

Sizes: 16-20

Thread: Uni-Thread 8/0 yellow (Light Cahill)

Tails: Zelon fibers, rust or brown, to simulate the lower half of the nymph body. Keep these as short as that of tails on a Baetis nymph.

Ribbing: none

Body: Turkey Biot, mahogany

Wing: 2 natural CDC feathers, natural grey

Hackle: none

Weight: none

Post: none

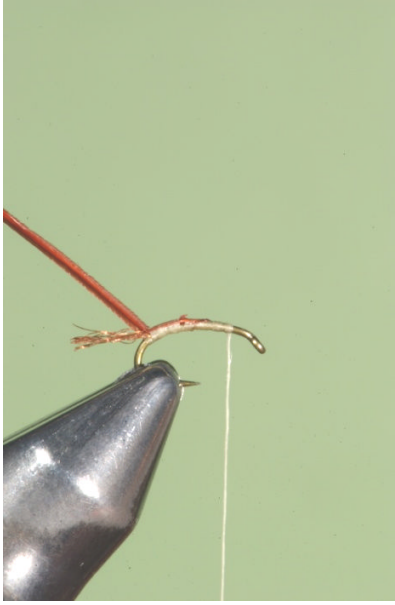
Thorax: Beaver Dubbing, sulphur yellow or light olive

Tying instructions:



- 1) Tie in the thread and the Zelon for the “tails”





2) Tie in the turkey biot



4) Tie in two CDC feathers as shown



3) Wrap the biot to the front, leaving enough room for the thorax (about 5 wraps on this size 16)



5) After tying in the feathers, fold the webby ends back along the sides of the fly as shown



- 6) This photo shows another view of how the webby ends of the CDC feathers are folded back on either side of the fly.

thread) already provides a built-up thorax area. After whip-finishing, cut the folded-back CDC feathers to create the “cheeks” on either side of the fly.



- 8) Finished fly shows the short CDC fibers along each side (right behind the thorax) that stabilize the fly in the surface film.



- 7) Dub the thorax area and whip finish. Note that not very much dubbing is needed because the folded-back CDC feather (after wrapping them with

## Miracle Nymph



### Tying instructions

This is a really simple tie but it is important to keep the proportions slim and with the proper number of segments. The finished product will tend to turn grayish in water, as is shown in the photo above .

Materials:

Hook: Tiemco 2487

Sizes: 18-20

Thread: Uni-thread 8/0 black

Tails: none

Ribbing: Ultra Wire, XS, gold

Body: White floss (single strand)

Head: Black thread

- 1) Tie in gold wire (appears black in photo).



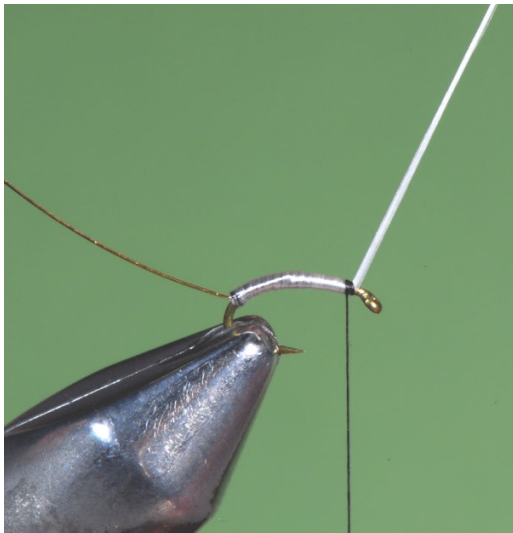
- 2) Choose only a single strand of floss (usually floss has 4 strands).



- 3) Tie in the floss at the same place as the gold ribbing – about 1/3 to 1/2 around the bend of the hook.



- 5) Wrap the gold wire forward, then tie the head slightly wider diameter than the body, in the width shown. Whip finish.



- 4) Wrap the floss forward being careful to lay it flat with little overlapping. Cut off the floss leaving enough room for the thread head.

Note that a version of the Miracle Nymph can be tied using white turkey biot and the same gold wire or black wire or black thread for segmentation. This fly does NOT turn gray in the water and is useful over trout that have become used to store-bought “miracle nymphs.”

## Lee's Indicator Fly – HiVis PMD Parachute

The truth is that many fishermen will never be able to see the mini-micro-indicator needed to fish the sunken fly on 8x to difficult fish in August and later. For these fishermen, it is quite acceptable to use a fairly large “indicator” fly with a 24 inch segment of high-quality 7x tied to the bend of the hook on the indicator fly. In the early months of the season, there will be times when a trout takes the indicator fly. But the main purpose of the indicator fly is that the trout will think the floating fly is the offering, and the trout will continue to feed under the indicator fly, confidently sucking in the artificial nymph or pupa. During the tough times, later in the year, this won't work on most of the trout in the spring creeks. But it's worth a try for the very near-sighted fisherman. The smaller size 18 or 20 indicator fly works best. And a few fish a day are better than nothing.



## Tying the indicator fly

Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 100

Sizes: 16 to 20

Thread: Uni-thread 8/0, olive or sulphur

Tails: Micro-Fibbets

Body: Turkey Biot, olive, or sulphur

Ribbing: none

Dubbing: for thorax, olive or sulphur

Hackle: Bleached grizzly hackle

Post: Antron, orange



- 1) Tie in thread and tail fibers. No need to split the Micro-Fibbets, since the parachute hackle provides great stability.



- 2) Tie in the Antron post at the spot indicated, leaving room for the dubbed thorax. Then use the tying thread to wrap several turns vertically (up, then down) on the post, to transform it into a stiff column. Make sure the wrapped portion of the post is high enough to accommodate the wrapping of the hackle and the dubbing of the thorax.



- 3) Tie in the turkey biot at the tail.



- 4) Wrap the biot forward to end immediately behind the post.



- 5) Tie in the bleached grizzly hackle behind the post and with a wind of thread at the base of the post.



6) Dub the thorax area.



8) Whip finish the head, then trim the post to the size shown. The photos are of a size 16 fly. Choose hackle that is slightly smaller than shown here, so that the extended hackle fibers do NOT reach all the way to the end of the fly.



7) Wind the hackle around the post, ending at the bottom front of the post.

Note that the bleached grizzly hackle provides what Lee regards to be a better color for the PMD/Sulphur flies than ordinary ginger. Below is a regular grizzly super saddle hackle before and after bleaching.



## Troth Midge Emerger



### Tying instructions for the Troth midge emerger

This fly, and the accompanying mayfly emerger, appeared in Al's "little red catalogue" in the early or mid-1980's. Several versions can be found in the fly shops. The photo above has the shuck consisting of Antron fibers. Al would singe and fuse the ends of the tail fibers in order to have them formed into a "V" shape.

Materials list:

Hook: 1640 Dai-ichi for size 20; 1110 Dai-ichi for smaller sizes.

Sizes: 20-22

Thread: Uni-thread 8/0, black

Tail fibers/wing case: White Antron

Body: Muskrat dubbing, black

Hackle: Very small grizzly



- 1) Tie in 15-18 Antron fibers for the "tail", to imitate the shuck. These should be about 1/2 the length of the hook shank. Secure with 2 wraps of thread and leave tag end for forming the wing case.



- 2) Dub a small black body and wrap to front, leaving room for the hackle



and a small head. Tie in the grizzly hackle.

is imitating the midge emerging from its shuck.



- 3) Wrap the hackle with 2-3 wraps. Pull the Antron yarn over the body and the hackle. Wrap the thread head and whip-finish.



- 4) Trim any stray fibers or hackle. Don't be afraid to trim the hackle on the bottom into a V-shape, to help the fly float flush in the film (not yet done in this photo). When fishing the fly, treat only the "body", which

## Troth Emerging Mayfly



### Tying the Troth emerging mayfly

This is a killer fly for the sulphur hatch in July and August. Due to his Parkinson's, Al wasn't able to provide instructions for either this fly or the midge emerger, so we are providing instructions based on deconstructing some of the remaining samples we have.

Materials list:

Hook: 1640 Dai-ichi for size 20; 1110 Dai-ichi for smaller sizes.

Sizes: 20-22

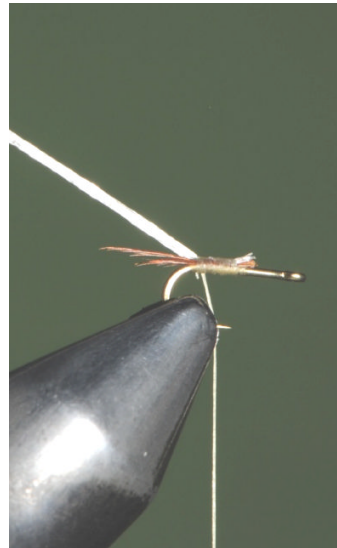
Thread: Uni-thread 8/0, yellow or olive

Tail shuck: Small brown hackle tip

Wing case: White Antron fibers

Body: Muskrat dubbing, yellow

Hackle: Very small grizzly



- 1) Tie in the brown hackle tip as shown, then the 15-18 Antron fibers.



- 2) Dub the body and tie forward, leaving room for the hackle and head.



- 3) Tie in the grizzly hackle and wind forward 2-3 turns.



- 5) Don't be afraid to cut a V-shaped portion out of the lower hackle fibers, to help the fly ride lower in the surface film.



- 4) Bring the Antron fibers over the back of the fly and tie off; wrap the head and whip-finish.

## Troth Scud



### Tying instructions for the Troth scud

This is the fly that out-performs other scud patterns. Tying instructions are from the article "Spring Creek Scud" in *Fly Fisherman*, July-September, 1981, p. 48-53.

Materials list:

Hook: Mustad 7948A or Tiemco 2487

Sizes: 6-20

Thread: Uni-thread 8/0, olive

Tail: Olive hackle fibers (in this tying sequence we use peacock breast feathers).

Antennae: Olive hackle fibers (we omit these on the smaller sizes).

Back strip: Clear Zip-Loc bag plastic, or Scud-Back.

Ribbing: Mono sized to match fly (3x for size 10; 5x for size 16).

Body: Mixture of seal furs (cream, olive, yellow, orange, red). For small size hooks,

where you are not using a dubbing loop, the binder fur is not necessary.



- 1) Wrap lead wire if this is to be a weighted version. If using the Mustad hook, bend the hook shank (photos show the Tiemco hook).



- 2) Tie in 4 or 5 fibers for the "tail" or jumping legs; tie these in at a point around the bend of the hook. Wind thread to eye, then tie in antennae (deleted in this sequence).



3) Tie in the mono used for the ribbing.



5) Dub the muskrat for the body. Note that for sizes 16 and smaller you do not form a dubbing loop with the thread, but rather dub the muskrat fur directly to the thread.



4) Tie in the Scud Back or Zip-Loc strip.



6) Wrap the dubbing forward.



- 7) Pull plastic over the back and tie down, then rib the body with the mono and tie off; whip-finish head.



- 9) Trim the fur so that fibers come down approximately to the level of the hook point.



- 8) Pick the fur out with a bodkin so that it extends well below hook point.

## Details matter



Note how much darker is the olive-dyed pheasant tail compared to the natural pheasant tail. Lee also ties a “blonde PT” using natural PT and a bleached peacock herl thorax.



The bleached peacock herl is on the left, compared with a regular peacock tail in the middle. The right-hand herl in the picture is called a peacock “sword” and its fibers are especially small, for use on size 20 and 22 PTs.



This storage box shows, clockwise from the lower left compartment, some of Lee’s sow bugs, white larvae, black-biot pupae, and various sizes of PT with size 24 in the upper left corner and size 16 in the lower right corner. These PTs, all un-weighted on Tiemco 101 hooks, constitute about 50 dozen flies – they will be enough to last us a whole season and part of the next.

## Other very useful patterns



Swisher-Richards no-hackle dun



Harrop emerger – he calls it the Biot Captive Dun (p. 196, [Trout Hunter](#))



Foam-top floating nymph – Lee tied this for us but we don't know its originator. It is essentially Tom Travis' emerger, but with turkey biot as the body instead

of pheasant tail. Tying instructions are like those for the indicator fly, except for foam in place of Zelon post.



CDC quill-bodied dun – notice that this particular tie doesn't have the CDC flaired to the side (see the photos of tying the curved-body emerger discussed earlier). Thus, the fly is less stable than it should be.



Orange-biot-bodied "emerger" (from Anderson's *Yellowstone Angler*)





The sign at the old barn at Betty's Riffle, site of the Spring Creek Specialists shop.



Nelson's in the "old days", before the removal of the old corral and the installation of the wing dams to improve flow.



Mother, father and 5 cygnets on DePuy's.



Male *Baetis tricaudatus* -- the "sulphur."



Male Pale Morning Dun.



Male PMD spinner.