

# On The Fly

## March 2010

“Fly tying is a school from which we never graduate”

### PATTERN OF THE MONTH-Two Feathers Fly

Hook: Daiichi 1170, standard dry fly, 12-24  
Thread: Your choice, 8-0  
Tail, body, wing: Mallard breast feather  
Hackle: Your choice



#### Tying Instructions

**Step 1:** Mash the barb and mount the hook in the vise. Start the tying thread one eye width behind the eye and wrap a thread base back to a point halfway down the shank.

**Step 2:** Feather preparation. Select a symmetrical Mallard flank or body feather with a natural curve up. Cut the stem at the tip if the feather forming a “V”. Trim the stem of feather to just slightly longer than the desired length of the extended body (about one shank length).

**Step 3:** Now take the prepared feather, stroke the fibers down on each side towards the base of the stem. Then take a bodkin and separate two fibers from the rest on each side of the stem at the tip to form a tail of the extended body.

**Step 4:** Pull the remaining fibers tightly towards the base of the stem and with the concave side up, tie in where the thread is hanging on top of the hook shank.

**Step 5:** After the extended body is secured, stand up the excess Mallard fibers with additional thread wraps in front to form the wings of the fly.

**Step 6:** Tie in and wrap the dry fly hackle, 3wraps behind and 3 in front of the wing. Tie off and trim. Form a small neat head, whip finish, and cement.

**Step 7:** Trim the wing to length. Should be just slightly longer than the hackle

I just returned from a mini conclave in Reedsport, OR and saw a tier from Roseburg doing his version of an old extended body mayfly pattern. The Two Feather Fly was developed in the Catskills by Harry Darbee in the 1950's when asked by Terrell Moore to make him a dry fly pattern that weighed no more than a natural mayfly. His “Darbees” as they became known, were a unique method of fly tying using only one feather for the tail, body and wing, and another for the hackle. The fly was meant for smooth, glass-like water, on rivers and streams. The pattern can easily be scaled from imitating large hex down to the tiniest BWO's. Most extended body flies are quite complicated requiring they be built on a separate needle before tying to the hook. This one is simple enough for any level tyer.

#### TYING TIPS

On smaller sizes try a curved grouse breast feather for tail, body, and wing. Simply vary the feather colors and size proportions for the different hatches. For more buoyancy on swifter waters use more turns of hackle. So tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you did.