

On The Fly

October 2012

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

PATTERN OF THE MONTH: Leisenring Spider

Hook: Daiichi 1550, Standard wet, size 12-16.
Thread: 8-0 Yellow.
Ribbing: Fine gold wire.
Body: Hare's mask.
Hackle: Natural brown partridge.



Tying Instructions:

Step 1: Mash the barb and mount the hook in the vise.

Step 2: Start the thread just behind the eye and lay down a thread base reward to the point just above the hook barb

Step 3: Form a dubbing loop on the hook shank above the barb and advance the working thread forward to the front of the shank. Select a small amount of hare's mask dubbing form it into a noodle and insert it evenly between the two threads. Twist the loop with the dubbing captured between the threads until fairly tight. Grab the end of the loop with your hackle pliers and wind the dubbing loop forward in touching turns to within 1/8" of the hook eye. Tie off and trim the excess.

Step 4: Select a brown partridge feather with barbs long enough to reach the bend of the hook. Prepare the feather and tie on by the tip at the front of the body. Wind the feather forward two turns, tie off and trim excess.

Step 5: Form a neat tapered thread head, whip finish and cement.

This month's pattern, The Leisenring Spider, is part of my favorite category of flies, the soft hackles, spiders and flymphs. They are also referred to by many as wingless wets. I first became intrigued with them after receiving the classic little book, *The Art of Tying The Wet-Fly and Fishing The Flymph* by James E. Leisenring and Vernon S. Hidy. The book was given to me as a gift from my friend and tying mentor, Dick Bonamarte. It was a natural step to then acquire the more contemporary books of Sylvester Nemes and Dave Hughes. Now I am proud to have joined the ranks of the soft hackle fly addicts.

Even though I teach and tie many other patterns, I rely upon the wingless wets as my flies of choice. I recognize that more and more fly fishermen are coming around to the same conclusion. The nice thing about these flies is that they can and do represent many different insect forms like caddis as adults, larva, and pupa, mayfly nymphs, emergers, and adults. I also rely on this fly form to help me imitate aquatic insects I could not find an adequate likeness for in my fly box. Many of my Steelhead flies are tied in the soft hackle style incorporating soft feathers from different birds dyed in the bright neon colors. The soft hackle encourages movement which I believe is the key factor to their success.

Tying Tips

Color variations are possible on both the body and hackle. Dyed hare's mask and partridge feathers are available. You can also vary the stiffness of the hackle for current speed and water conditions. Two elements are important, sparse hackle and a buggy looking body. A couple turns of hackle are sufficient and don't trim the long guard hairs off the dubbed body. You can tie this pattern on any number of hook styles and sizes, dries, curved, light and heavy. You will find this fly to be quite easy to tie, using very common inexpensive materials. If you would like to tie and try other wingless wets, go online and search for Soft Hackles, Flymphs, or North Country Spiders for amazing information and tying ideas. So tie some up, give them a test flight and let me know how you do.