

Fort Worth Fly Fishers
March 2017 Fly of the Month

This month's fly of the month comes to us from the tying desk of Dutch Baughman. Most of you know Dutch, but for those of you who do not, he's our Regional Director for the International Fly Fishers Federation (Northern district of the Texas Council) and is an active member of both the FWFF and the Dallas club. He lived in Oregon as part of his coaching career and became an avid steelheader (anadromous rainbow trout, ie ocean run rainbows) while living there. He travels often to the Pacific Northwest to pursue his passion and is a great resource for anyone interested in Steelheading and Steelhead flies (as well as Classic Atlantic Salmon flies).



The Spruce Moth (Western Moth)

Choristoneura Occidentalis

For many years, a very popular hatch in Montana has been the Spruce Moth. This hatch is very limited, being evident only from only mid-August to October, and typically between early morning, and early afternoon. When the Spruce Moth hatch occurs, the fish activity is frenetic!

The experience I personally had turns out to be very typical of so many people who visit Montana, and return home to fish the local fisheries (fresh and warm water). While fishing our local water, I reached in my fly box for an elk hair caddis type of pattern, and saw the Spruce Moth fly from a recent visit to Montana. I tied on the Spruce Moth, and the result was spectacular! So for many years, I have kept a great supply of the Spruce Moth in my fly box (and no Elk Hair Caddis), for use while fishing in Montana, but now locally, to use anytime I would normally be tying on an Elk Hair Caddis or Stimulator. The reaction of Bass and local trout has proven to be consistent and reliable with this fly.

The Spruce Moth is typically tied on a size 10 to 14 dry fly hook, but they are also very handy on a wet fly hook. The color for this fly is best in cream,

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white, or pale yellow. The natural Spruce Moth is not an aquatic bug, but instead a parasitic moth, found in Spruce trees*. The Spruce Moth has an attraction to water, and will frequently land on the water, like a terrestrial pattern. There is also a good population of the Spruce Moth throughout the Rocky Mountain States, and particularly in western and southwestern Colorado. Like so many fly patterns, there are variants to the fundamental pattern, and the Spruce Moth version shown here is the fundamental pattern, as used by Bob Jacklin in West Yellowstone, Montana.

Whether you are fishing near Spruce trees or Mesquite, try the Spruce Moth at any time you would normally use an Elk Hair Caddis or Stimulator pattern.

Recipe:

thread: cream, white, or pale yellow

hook: size 10 (10-14)

wing: elk hair, cream, white, or pale yellow

body: dubbing (tan, or cream), hackle (cream, white, pale yellow, or ginger)

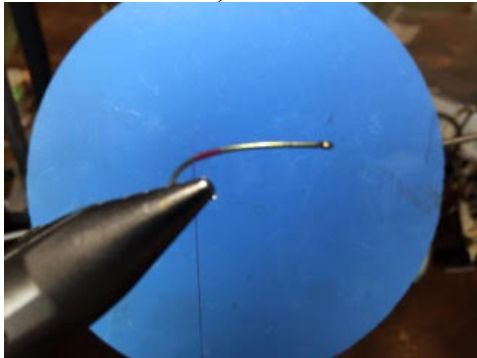
*Spruce budworms work on a one-year life cycle, The eggs are deposited in the tops of trees in mid-August. By late September, the immature larvae hatch. They don't feed during winter, they just spend their time in a silken case. In the early spring, just as the buds are developing and expanding, the larvae leave their cases and bore into the buds or feed on foliage. Spruce moths typically feed until the early part of July before they pupate and become adults. This happens over a two-week period. During warm years it may happen earlier, and during cold years it happens later. Typically, they are ready to fly by early August. Once airborne, they mate and then deposit eggs.

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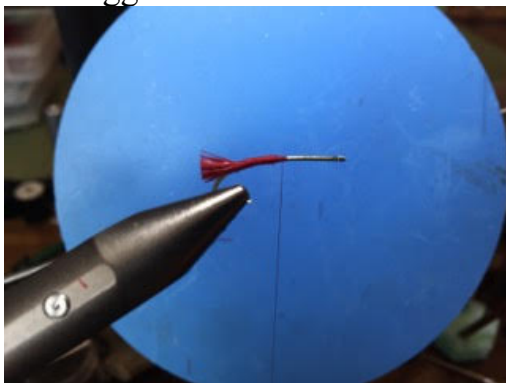
Tying Instructions:

1). After de-barbing the hook, this is a size 10, TMC 200R. Begin the thread wrap directly above the hook point, and wrap toward the hook bend with touching wraps.

Stop wrapping when your thread hangs directly above where the barb would be. (for purpose of this instruction I am using red thread to enhance visibility; red thread can be used for this portion of the fly, but normally, I would begin with white or cream colored thread.)



2). Cut a small bundle of red deer hair. Tie in the bundle directly above where the barb would be. Tightly hold the bundle in your left hand as you begin to wrap thread toward the eye; tightly holding the deer hair bundle reduces the tendency for the bundle to flair as you wrap the thread, and helps to keep the bundle on top of the hook shank. Continue edge-to-edge wraps of thread toward the eye until the deer hair bundle is covered. Cut the deer hair bundle directly above the bend of the hook. This is the egg sack.



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3). Here, I changed the thread to white. Advance the thread to the hook eye, and be sure the thread is as close to the eye as you can get. Cut a bundle of cream (white or yellow) deer hair that is about 3 times as much as the egg sack bundle. Stack the deer hair, then measure the length of deer hair so the tips are at the hook eye, and the butt ends are directly above where the barb would be (this length of deer hair will be the length of the hook shank). Tie in this bundle of deer hair that is a hook shank length where your thread is hanging at the hook eye. Once tied in, the wing of deer hair will be the length of the hook shank. Tightly hold the deer hair bundle butts and wrap thread back toward the bend of the hook until the deer hair bundle is covered.



4). Continue the thread toward the hook bend to the point above where the barb would be, and tie in a hackle feather. It helps to fold the hackle barbs by hand before tying in the feather. Dub a thread noodle then wrap the dubbing toward the hook eye. Be sure to dub right up to the base of the deer hair wing



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5). You may notice the dubbing noodle gets becomes a thicker diameter toward the bottom of the noodle. This will create a tapered body



6). Wrap the hackle feather toward the hook eye. Notice the feather is wrapped with space between each wrap. Tie off at the base of the deer hair wing.



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7). Position the thread about a width of the hook eye, behind the hook eye. Fold the deer hair wing toward the hook bend, and secure the wing with thread wraps, so the “bullet” head is formed, but the head should only be on top of the hook shank. Clip the hackle barbs on the bottom of the fly near the hook point, leaving a few of the hackle barbs as a collar or legs. Whip finish.



The instructions below pertain to the YouTube video by Bob Jacklin. Note: Bob does not use a red egg sack, but instead ties in a long bundle of deer hair that becomes the egg sack and the wing. This is also a good/quick fishing fly, but the egg sack and the wing are the same bundle of deer hair, so the egg sack may be too big, and the wing may be too small.

Tying instructions:

1. tie in bundle of elk hair very close to the eye;
2. spiral wrap a “pontoon” body back to the hook barb;
3. cut elk hair to form an egg sack at the bend of the hook;
4. tie in hackle in front of egg sack;
5. dub the body from the egg sack to the wing;
6. palmer the hackle forward to the wing;
7. pull the wing backwards toward the bend of the hook, keeping the elk hair wing on the top and sides of the body
8. with secure wraps, form the bullet head;
9. trim the hackle from the bottom of the fly
10. whip finish

Dutch Baughman