

Ft. Worth Fly Fishers

September 2017 Fly of the Month

Soft Hackle

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the Fly Fishers International Fly Fishing Fair in Livingston Montana August 1-5. This was a great event in a great location. This allowed me the opportunity to watch incredible fly tyers, including a number of Buz Buzsek Memorial Award winners (<http://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Resources/Awards/tabid/587/Default.aspx>). This Buszek award is the most prestigious award given by the FFI Tying group. One of the Buszek award winners is Wayne Luallen. I was fortunate to be able to take two classes from Wayne during my visit to Livingston (about 10 total hours). One class was on thread control and the other on tying small flies. This was an absolutely amazing learning experience. Wayne is a published author (https://www.amazon.com/Basic-Fly-Tying-Skills-Started/dp/0811724735/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1502821657&sr=1-1&keywords=Wayne+Luallen) and a prolific article writer for various magazines. Here's an example of some of his articles: <http://www.ftgflytyinginstructorresource.org/Download%20Handout%20list.html>

In one of the classes, as a sample fly for us to tie, Wayne used a simple soft hackle fly to demonstrate tying techniques. This particular fly had a body that used a simple but elegant technique I have never seen before. Our September Fly of the Month will be a soft hackle pattern, Wayne Luallen style:



Soft Hackle:

Hook - Daiichi 1310 (I'm tying it on a TMC 206BL in size 12)

Thread - Black Danville Flymaster 6/0 - 70 Denier

Body - Two colors of rayon floss and Pearlescent mylar tinsel (I'm tying mine on DMC Satin embroidery floss in purple and yellow - single strand of each). Uni-floss or a strand of 4-ply Danville Rayon would also work.

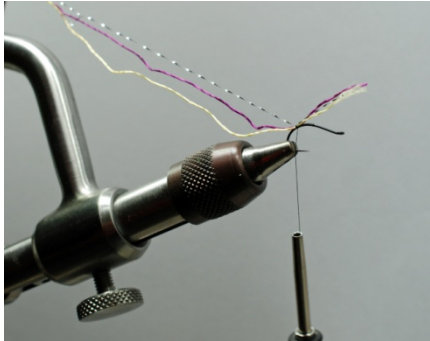
Hackle - Hungarian partridge saddle feather (you could substitute Indian hen cape feathers)

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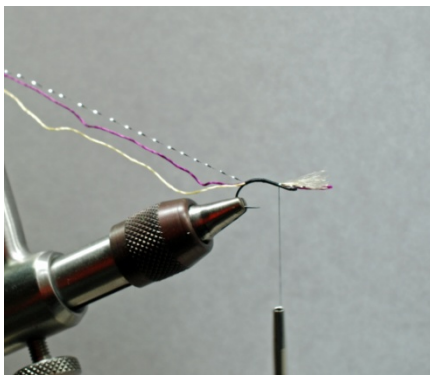
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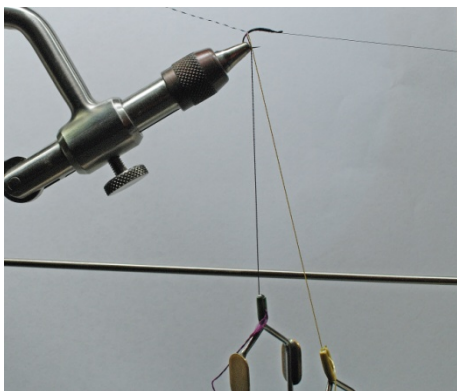
Step 1: Attach the two strands of floss and the single strand of tinsel on to the hook (at about where the hook begins to bend).



Step 2: Wrap the two pieces of floss and the tinsel forward onto the hook, building a tapered body. Stop the thread several eye diameters behind the eye (leaving room for the hackle collar) and trim the tag ends.



Step 3: Attach a hackle plier to the floss at a point where the hackle pliers hangs just above the surface of the vice. Use the hackle pliers to twist the floss into a tight rope. You want the floss to be completely wound up, to the point where if you release tension on the hackle pliers, the strand of floss kinks up. Repeat for the other stand of floss with a second hackle plier.

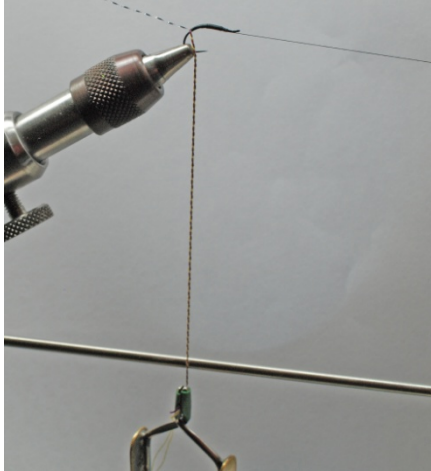


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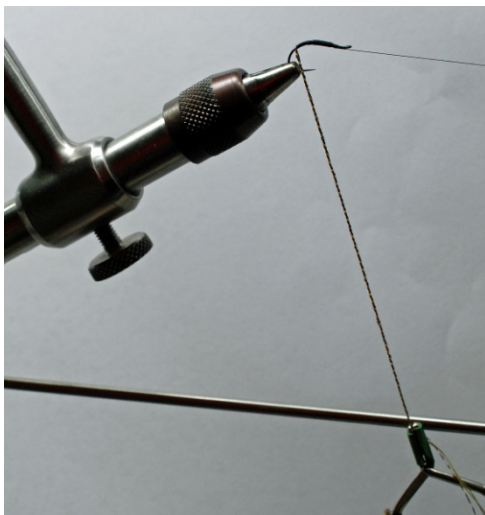
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Step 4: Carefully remove the hackle pliers from one of the strands and add it to the other hackle plier, laying the two strands of floss side by side and both captured in a single hackle plier. Twist both strands together to form a tightly woven single strand out of the two colors.



Step 5: Twist the tinsel around the two combined strands of floss, adding 12-14 spirals down the length of the floss strand. Carefully add the tinsel to the hackle pliers with the two strands of floss so all three are held together. Twist the combined bundle until the tinsel is well wound around the group bundle.

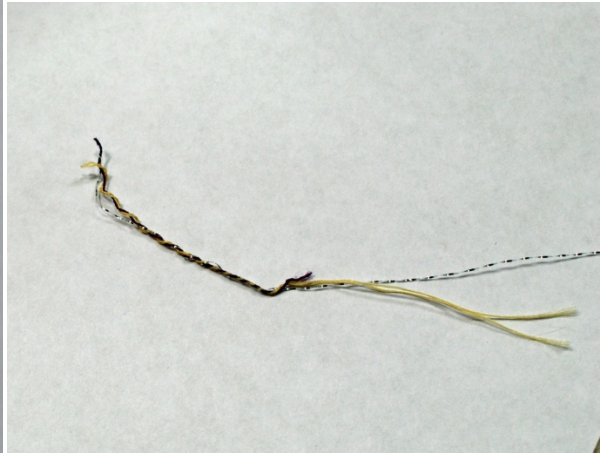


Step 6: Carefully wind the twisted bundle up the hook shank, using touching, adjacent wraps to form the soft hackle body. Tie off the bundle, leaving room to attach the hackle collar. To give you a better idea of what the bundle looks like, I've included a picture of the cut off tag. Note that the bundle has begun to unravel, it was much tighter wound when I built the body.

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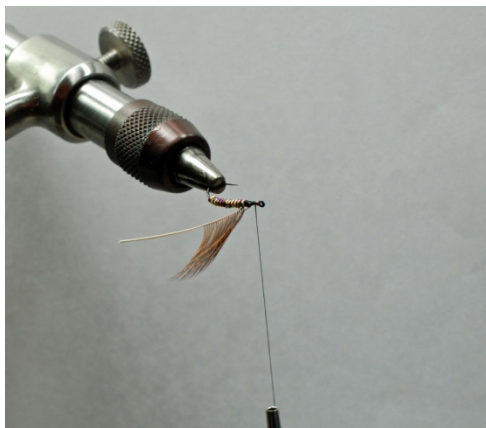
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Step 7: Prepare a Hungarian partridge for the hackle. This picture shows the feather as pulled off the skin and then with the fluffy feathers removed, one side of the hackle removed (you could also fold the hackle) and a small tag trimmed for the tie in point.



Step 8: Wrap the hackle around the hook, one or two turns to get the hackle density that looks right to you. Picture below shows the hackle tied onto the hook shank, ready for palmering around the hook.



Step 9: Tie off the hackle, make a slight thread head and whip finish. A small dab of head cement would add durability to the fly.

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