



Spring Creek Flycraft and Guide Service

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Fly Tyers Corner February, 2012 Hacklestacker Midge

by **Bill Carnazzo**



Winter trout fishing can be an exercise in mind-bending frustration if you fail to adjust your strategies and your mental vision of what the fish are up to during this time of cold, clear, low water. Contrary to some misconceptions out there, winter does not automatically mean high water—this year being a prime case in point. Last year—well, that’s a fish of a different color.

During periods of cold, clear, low flows fish still must eat to survive. Yes, their metabolism slows down as a defense mechanism to deal with the cold and the paucity of available food; and no, they will not move far for a bug or fly. Reality: they are hunkered down at the bottom of deeper holes and runs and you have to practically hit them on the nose with your fly. But there are exceptions—a warm,

sunny day presents a situation for one of those exceptions, because on such days the water surface may warm just enough to create a short time window when a hatch of tiny *baetis* may occur, or midges may become active. If that happens, fish may move up in the water column and feed more actively.

Typically, however, we are forced to dredge with midge larva patterns because they form the biggest portion of a fish’s diet during winter conditions. But let’s assume that conditions are right, and there is a midge hatch with adults on the surface. Should we automatically switch to a small “dry” imitation? My approach, while it may seem contrarian to some, is to use an emerger pattern as my first choice. The relatively simple pattern I’ve chosen for this month’s fly resembles a midge that has become stuck in the surface tension or otherwise failed to complete its hatch cycle (i.e., a “cripple”), haplessly adrift and easy prey for hungry, predacious trout. Only the hackle shows above the water, while the abdomen is presented sub-surface in a realistic, enticing manner. This pattern was taken from a recent article in *Fly Tyer* magazine; because there were no tying instructions in the article to go with the fly, and because it’s such an elegant little bug, I felt that it would be appropriate to use it for this article.

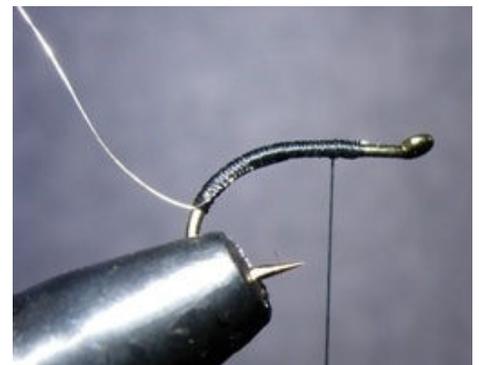
Materials

Hook: Tiemco 2487 or similar hook, sizes 20 to 16
Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier)
Abdomen: Tying thread
Ribbing: Fine silver wire

Hackle post: 5x monofilament
Hackle: Dry fly quality grizzly rooster neck hackle
Thorax: Black dry fly dubbing (such as “Fine and Dry” by Spirit River)

Tying Instructions

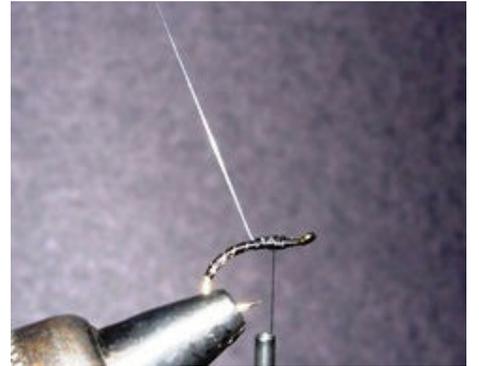
1. Smash the hook barb. Beginning at a point about 2 eye widths behind the hook eye, carefully cover the shank with even thread wraps; stop halfway down the hook bend.
2. At that point tie in a short piece of fine silver wire, and carefully wind the thread forward to form a smooth abdomen. Stop the wraps where the thread was originally tied on.



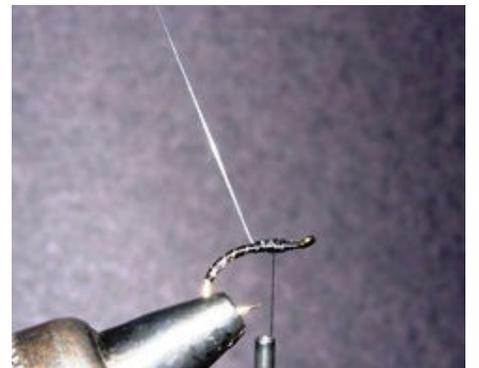
- Rib the abdomen with evenly spaced turns of wire and tie the wire off at the front of the abdomen.



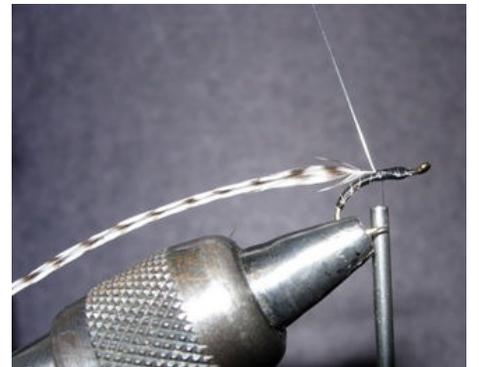
- Tie in a 7" piece of 5x monofilament at the front of the abdomen and wrap it down in a rearward direction from that point to about the halfway mark on the shank. Place the other end of the monofilament in the jaws of a gallows tool, or a jury-rigged clip attached to your light. When you are done with this step, the monofilament should be tightly stretched.



- At the base of the monofilament, tie in a properly sized grizzly rooster hackle after cleaning the fuzz off the butt of the stem.



- Wrap 3 turns of the hackle clockwise up the monofilament, and then wrap the hackle in tight turns down to the shank. Tie it off there and clip the monofilament, leaving enough of it to form a "handle."



7. Dub a slender thorax with fine dry fly dubbing, leaving one eye-width open behind the hook eye.



8. Grab the tip of the monofilament and pull it forward so that it is tight over the top of the thorax; tie the monofilament down just behind the eye. If this step is done properly, all of the hackle will be stacked on top of the shank.
9. Wrap a nice, small thread head, whip finish, and trim the thread. Apply a tiny drop of superglue to the head with your bodkin.



Tying Tips

You're done. Don't apply floatant to the abdomen, because we want that part of the fly to sink. Do apply floatant to the pulled-over hackle. Enjoy, and....See ya on the creek.