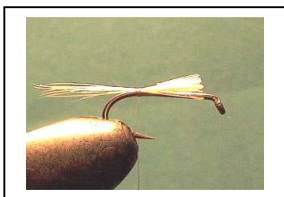




Instant Soft Hackle

Not really a soft hackle fly at all in the true sense but born of the desire to produce patterns that would fish in much the same way as soft hackles do. It isn't any surprise that the main ingredient to the effectiveness of standard soft hackle patterns is their inherent and subtle movement under water. Despite this we all tend towards exact imitation and close copy of natural insects which often results in a very stiff style. These patterns work but then so do the more mobile and loosely tied ones. This is a simple nymph pattern that can be produced in any number of colours and sizes in short order. The key ingredient is the application of a Velcro dubbing teaser at the end of the tying process to pull out all the guard hairs and get some subtle movement into the fly. Effective as a floating nymph, soft hackle and emerger pattern, this quick and super easy to tie fly in a variety of colours and sizes should never be out of your fly box unless it is tied onto the line.

Fashions in fly fishing and fly tying come and go much as in other areas of one's life, the soft hackle and the soft nymph styles come back into vogue every now and then amongst various groups of anglers but I suspect that they are always in vogue for the fish. As a general imitation of something alive, be it hatching, drowning, egg laying or simply swimming soft and loosely tied imitations can sometimes outfish their more exact counterparts and it behooves one to carry at least some of these general purpose flies.



Although one can add weight in the form of copper or lead wire in the underbody the easiest manner to dress most soft style flies is simply on a heavy nymph hook. Tie in 70 denier thread, colour to suit the dubbing you are going to use. Wrap touching turns to the bend of the hook and tie in some rooster hackle fibre tails..



Then dub on a fairly tight and thin dubbing body of natural fur blend. I am particularly fond of the Hend's Hare's ear and UV blends but any number of other soft fur dubbings will do the trick. Take the dubbing almost all the way to the eye of the hook.



Then dub on a thicker and much more loosely wound ball of dubbing to form the thorax, it should look slightly oversize as we are going to brush much of the fur away shortly.



Whip finish behind the hook eye and then brush vigorously with some Velcro or a dubbing brush. The guard hairs in the natural fur will pull loose in part, forming legs and wings and all manner of movement producing fine fibres which will wiggle about underwater. Patterns can be tied with all the same dubbing or frequently with a slightly darker tone in the thorax which better imitates a great many aquatic nymphs and larva.



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