

FFF Fly of the Month

ROYAL CHRISTMAS



Webkeepers Note: As some of you may remember, 1 year ago this month, Bob Bates took on the the task of being my Fly of the Month contributor. Bob keeps very busy maintaining the Washington Council website as well as other various projects and still manages to find time to tie, fish and ski, so volunteering to do this for us is a very generous deed. I just wanted to take a minute to thank Bob for the great work he does for the Federation and wish you all a Happy Holiday.

By Bob Bates

Julie Nielson designed this pattern for brook trout, but it also interests cutthroat, browns and the occasional rainbow or two or three, etc. Years ago it was expressed that if you want to catch brook trout, put red on your fly. Julie certainly did that, just look at the picture of the fly she tied at the 2002 FFF Show in Livingston, Montana. Everyone who has seen the fly said something along the lines of "It's a good looking fly; if I were a brookie I would bite it."

Brook trout "squaretails" are native to eastern North America from Georgia to the Arctic Circle. However, with human help they are found throughout the United States, Canada, South America, Europe and probably the rest of the world. Sometimes the introductions were detrimental to the native species and even the brook trout themselves. They overpopulated waters and becoming stunted fish with big heads. Such fish are not much value for food as originally intended. But they have one redeeming social value, they are so hungry that they will hit anything. When you do find larger brookies they are a lot more fun to catch.

Brookies energetically feed on insect hatches when they are available so always be on the lookout for rising fish. In streams cast the fly above rising fish and let it drift, drag free, into them. With the bright white post it is easy to follow and see when a fish takes it. In lakes or ponds cast near rising fish and let the fly stay still for a little while. If nothing happens, give the fly a twitch to attract their attention. If the brookies want a moving target strip the fly across the water, and let them slash, smash and splash across the pond after it.

Materials List

Hook: Tiemco TMC100 or equivalent, sizes 12 to 18

Thread: Red, Griffith 6/0

Tail: Brown, Hoffman Tailing Pack

Wing/Post: White, Hi Vis from L & L Products or Para Post from Hairline Dubbing Co

Body: Metallic green, Krystal Flash

Hackle: Brown

Thorax: Mahogany dubbing

Tying Instructions

If you want, smash down the barb before you start tying.

1. Attach thread near front of hook, and wind it smoothly to bend. Spin bobbin and make a tight micro-bump, two wraps, just past the bend. Wind thread forward of bend a little.
2. To prepare the tail fibers, hold feather by the tip and stroke the fibers downward. This makes the barbs angle out from the shaft and evens tips of the barbs. Pull off a dozen or so fibers and attach them on top of the hook to make a shank length tail. Splay the barbs by winding the thread rearward against the micro-bump. Trim butts and wind thread forward to the 2/3rds point on the shank.
3. Since the post material will be doubled, select an amount that is one half of what you would normally use. If the strand of material is too thick for doubling just split it before tying it on. Lay a small amount of material parallel to shank and tie it in at the 2/3rds point with two thread wraps. Pull up both sides of the material and put two thread wraps in front of post and two in back. Wind thread neatly up and down the post to build a smooth base for the hackle. Wind thread back to just in front of tail.

4. Attach three strands of metallic green Krystal Flash above the barb. Wind thread forward and leave it hanging at hook point. Wind two of the strands together, wrap them forward to thread and secure. Bring third strand forward over the rear bump and secure. Wind thread forward over Krystal Flash to make red segment. Hold up Krystal Flash and wind thread forward toward post. Twist all three Krystal Flash strands together and wrap them forward to make the front green bump. Secure tightly.
5. Wind thread forward to eye, form a head and then wind it back to the post.
6. Select a brown hackle with barbs about 1-1/2 gap widths long. Modern saddle hackle is best. Prepare the feather by trimming barbs close to the shaft, leaving a little stubble. Lay the feather shiny side up on the near side of the post with the feather tip pointed toward the rear. Tie it in securely. Hold feather up along post and wrap thread smoothly up and down post securing the feather to the post.
7. Put a little dubbing on the thread, make one or two wraps behind the post and the rest in front. After wrapping thorax, return thread to the post. Keep a thin layer of dubbing on thread to hide the color.
8. Wrap hackle clockwise around the post. Use more hackle wraps for wilder waters and fewer for calmer waters - (Western VS Eastern??? Maybe) Tie two dubbed thread half hitches against the post and over the hackle tip. Trim hackle tip and thread. The dubbed thread half hitches are hidden in the thorax. Trim post.

This time of the year in northern parts of the U.S. any hatches are small chironomids, but just wait until next spring. If your part of the world has larger insects hatching to demand the attention of brook trout, tie a few Royal Christmas flies, and go fishing.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
You can direct any questions or comments to flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org