



## Tying Classic Dry Flies

Ronald A. Howard Jr.<sup>1</sup>

### Objectives

Participating young people and adults will:

1. Practice following patterns and proportioning flies
2. Practice applying wings for dry flies.
3. Reinforce application of tail, body and hackles.
4. Critique personal flies and practice techniques to improve them
5. Have fun while learning

### Youth Development Objectives

Participating young people will develop:

1. Enhanced fine motor skills
2. Enhanced self concept and personal image
3. Enhanced ability to communicate with adults
4. Enhanced concentration and listening skills
5. Enhanced ability to communicate with adults and peers

### Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders

1. Demonstrate tying the patterns explaining each step
2. Assist participants having problems with any step
3. Evaluate flies and assist in improving later attempts
4. Encourage young people as they learn tying skills
5. Assist with room and equipment set up and clean up

### Potential Parental Involvement

1. See "Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders" above
2. Arrange for or provide teaching location
3. Arrange for or provide materials and/or equipment

**Best Time:** any time of year, recommended as third to fifth lesson

**Best Location:** Well lighted, comfortable setting

**Time Required:** 60 to 90 minutes

### Equipment/Materials

tying vice                      hackle pliers  
 tying bobbin                 bobbin threader  
 dubbing needle  
 black tying thread (amber, yellow or tan)  
 brown dubbing (raccoon or fox)  
 cream red fox dubbing  
 urine burned pink fox fur dubbing  
 cream fox                      hare's mask  
 stripped peacock herl  
 stripped brown hackle quill  
 muskrat fur (or mole)  
 grizzly hackle                 brown hackle  
 red variant (red grizzly ) hackle  
 ginger variant hackle  
 light ginger (straw) hackle  
 dark dun hackle              ginger hackle  
 bronze blue dun hackle  
 fine gold tinsel               head cement  
 dry fly hooks

### References

<sup>1</sup>Professor and Extension Specialist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University System, State 4-H Office, 7607 Eastmark Drive, Suite 101, College Station, TX 77843-2473

4. Arrange for or provide transportation
5. Arrange for or provide refreshments

See references in introduction

### Safety Considerations

### Evaluation Activities/Suggestions

1. Critique flies for improvement and skills development
2. Observe personal interactions and apparent satisfactions
3. Observe progress in tying skills and handling materials
4. Observe behavior during tying sessions

### Lesson Outline

#### Presentation

#### Application

#### I. Classical split-wing dry flies

##### A. Wings

1. Approximately shank length
2. Materials
  - a. Wing quill slips
  - b. Hackle points
  - c. Flank feather sections
  - d. Duck breast
3. Tied split and upright

**Show** an illustration of one or more dry flies, **pointing out** the various parts of the fly and **discussing** the types of materials used in making it. Use this as a means of introducing the types of materials available for this session.

##### B. Tail

1. Hackle fibers
2. Hackle points
- 3 Tied approximately shank length

##### C. Body materials

1. Dubbing
  - a. Fur
  - b. Polypropylene
  - c. Other synthetics
2. Quill
  - a. Stripped peacock
  - b. Stripped hackle quill
  - c. Wing quill cuticle
3. Peacock herl
4. Mylar tinsel
5. Floss
6. Palmered hackle

**Display** an assortment of body materials commonly used in dry flies or dry flies featuring these various body materials. Placing them in small, clear plastic tubes is an excellent way to pass flies around for observation.

**Demonstrate** the preparation of stripped quills for body materials. **Emphasize** the use of glycerine and water or warm water as a softening agent for stripped quills or for making the stripping job easier.

##### D. Hackle

1. Stiff cock hackles
2. Approximately 1 2 gap width
3. Generally two hackles per fly
4. About 5 turns each split on wings

**Show** several grades of hackle feathers, pointing out the differences and the characteristics of good dry fly hackle.

#### II. Tying Flick's March Brown

##### A. Pattern

1. Hook - size 10 or 12 dry fly
2. Thread - brown or black
3. Wing - lemon wood duck flank
4. Tail - red grizzly hackle fibers
5. Body - tan fox mixed with sandy hare's ear
6. Hackles - mixed red grizzly and grizzly or coachman brown and grizzly

**Lay out** the materials for Flick's March Brown in preparation for tying the demonstration fly.

##### B. Tying instructions

1. Secure hook in vise
2. Attach thread at shoulder
3. Set wings
  - a. Select well marked wood duck flank
  - b. Pluck clump from feather
  - c. Even tips if needed
  - d. Hold clump in place, tips over eye
  - e. Bind tightly in place
  - f. Raise tips to vertical
  - g. Wrap thread in front to set upright
  - h. Divide wings equally
  - I. Secure with figure 8 wraps
  - j. Trim butts of feather fibers
4. Carry thread to tail area
5. Tie in tail
  - a. Pluck red grizzly hackle fibers
  - b. Secure tail in place
  - c. Trim butts of hackle fibers
6. Apply dubbed body
  - a. Mix tan red fox and hare's ear fur
  
- b. Apply to tying thread
  
- c. Wind tapered body to base of wings
- d. Bind with several turns of thread
7. Apply hackle
  - a. Select matched hackles
    - 1) Red grizzly
    - 2) Grizzly
  - b. Strip webby bases away
  - c. Bind in behind wings
  - d. Carry thread to back of head area
  
- e. Wind each hackle and tie off
- f. Trim tips of hackles
  
8. Wind tapered head
9. Whip finish and apply cement

### III. Additional patterns

- A. Light Cahill
  1. Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly
  2. Thread - primrose or white
  3. Wings - lemon wood duck flank

**Remember** to attach the thread slowly enough to reinforce the “open x’s approach” to attaching the thread. Continue to do this until you are certain that the youngsters have the concept down to a habit.

**Demonstrate** the complete series of steps in tying a split flank feather wing, from the selection of an appropriate feather or section of feather to splitting the wings and wrapping over the butts of the trimmed fibers. **Make sure** that each step is clear to the participants.

Attach the tail, showing the “**hold-tightly-bind-tightly**” technique and the selection of appropriate materials and length.

**Demonstrate** plucking the fur from the skin and mixing it by holding both pieces together and pulling bits into the other hand. Repeat the process until the colors are well mixed, then spread the fur thinly along a short length of the tying thread.

**Spin** the fur and the tying thread together forming a yarn-like spindle. If necessary, do this several times or allow the kids to try just spinning fur on the thread at their vises.

**Wind** a smoothly tapered body to the rear of the wings and bind it in, removing any excess dubbing from the thread.

**Demonstrate** the selection and preparation of the hackle feathers, stripping them until only the high quality part of each one is left.

**Demonstrate** how to bind in the hackle feathers with their upper surfaces facing the tier, tips to the rear of the fly, and excess quill extending over the eye of the hook. Wind the thread to the front of the wing and trim the hackle butts carefully, carrying the thread to the back of the head area.

**Demonstrate** the hackle winding process. **Note** that the hackles should be nearly balanced in front of and behind the wings with about two to three turns behind the wing and about three to four turns in front of it. **Stress** the importance of carefully binding down the hackle tips before trimming. **Caution** the tiers not to cut the thread while they are doing their trimming work!

**Leave** the finished fly in the vise as a sample for the young tiers to check for proportion and materials.

**Display** samples of these flies. If some tiers are much faster than others, allow them to attempt an additional fly using one of these or a similar pattern.

4. Tail - light ginger or straw
  5. Body - creamy fox fur
  6. Hackles - straw or light ginger
- B. Flick's Hendrickson
1. Hook - size 12 dry fly
  2. Thread - primrose or tan
  3. Wings - lemon wood duck flank
  4. Tail - light blue dun
  5. Body - urine burned pink red fox
  6. Hackles - light blue dun
- C. Flick's Gray Fox
1. Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly
  2. Thread - tan
  3. Wings - mallard flank
  4. Tail - ginger
  5. Body - fawn colored fox fur
  6. Hackles - light ginger and light grizzly mixed
- D. Sulfur Dun
1. Hook - size 16 dry fly
  2. Thread - primrose or white
  3. Wings - mallard flank or dun hackle tips
  4. Tail - pale dun
  5. Body - sulfur yellow rabbit fur
  6. Hackle - pale blue dun

#### IV. Tying Flick's Red Quill

- A. Pattern
1. Hook - size 12 dry fly
  2. Thread - brown or black
  3. Wings - lemon wood duck flank
  4. Tail - dark dun (smoky)
  5. Body - stripped brown hackle quill (lacquered)
  6. Hackle - dark blue dun
- B. Tying instructions
1. Secure hook in vise
  2. Attach thread at shoulder
  3. Attach well-marked wood duck flank wing
  4. Secure, stand and split wing
  5. Trim wing butts at angle
  6. Wind thread to tail area
  7. Bind in dark smoky dun tail fibers
  8. Attach stripped brown hackle quill by tip
    - a. Select a dark, well-marked feather
    - b. Strip the flue and barbs from the feather
    - c. Soak the feather in water if necessary
      - 1) Water-glycerine mix for long term
      - 2) Warm water (30 minutes to an hour)
  9. Carry thread to shoulder in even wraps
  10. Wind quill to shoulder in even wraps
  11. Tie off and trim quill
  12. Tie in two dark dun hackles behind wing
  13. Wind hackles and tie off at head
  14. Trim hackle tips and wind head
  15. Apply head cement to head and body quill

**Display** the pattern components for Flick's Red Quill as the pattern is read.

**Demonstrate** the pattern and leave the example in your vise for the young people to use as an example.

**Demonstrate** the selection, preparation and attachment of a hackle quill body. **Stress** the techniques for making them more pliable whether needed or not with the hackles being used.

**Note** the importance of a smoothly wound underbody to get a well proportioned, smoothly tapered quill body.

**Emphasize** using head cement over coating for both durability and effectiveness on quill-bodied flies. **Leave** the pattern in the vise as a sample for the tiers.

- C. Pattern for the Quill Gordon
1. Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly
  2. Thread - primrose
  3. Wings - wood duck flank
  4. Tail - bronze blue dun
  5. Body - stripped peacock herl
  6. Hackle - bronze blue dun

V. Tying the Ginger Quill

A. Pattern

1. Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly
2. Thread - tan or black
3. Wings - mallard wing quill slips
4. Tail - ginger hackle fibers
5. Body - stripped peacock herl
6. Hackle - ginger

B. Tying instructions

1. Secure hook in vise
2. Attach thread at the shoulder
3. Cut wings
  - a. Matched mallard wing quills
  - b. Matched slips
  - c. Cut from upper half of feather
4. Bind wings in place
  - a. Butts of slips toward bend
  - b. Matched surfaces together
  - c. Long edge down
  - d. Hold-tightly-bind-tightly
  - e. About shank length
5. Set wings
  - a. Stand up with several wraps in front
  - b. Figure eight wrap to separate
6. Trim butts of wings
7. Bind in tail material
8. Bind in stripped peacock herl
  - a. Bind in toward tip
  - b. Fine silver wire as rib if desired
9. Carry thread evenly to wing base
10. Wrap stripped quill
  - a. Touching, not overlapping
  - b. Smooth, even body
  - c. Rib if desired
11. Prepare and bind in hackles
- 12 Trim butts of hackle feathers
13. Carry thread to head area
14. Wind hackles and bind tips down
15. Trim and wind head
16. Finish with head cement
  - a. Drop or two on head
  - b. Light coat on body

C. Similarly tied patterns

1. Blue Dun
  - a. Hook - size 10-18 dry fly
  - b. Thread - black
  - c. Wings - gray duck quill slips
  - d. Tail - medium blue dun

**Allow** faster tiers to tie a Quill Gordon while the slower ones finish the Red Quill, **if** their finished fly is well constructed and proportioned.

**Assemble** and **display** the materials needed to tie a Ginger Quill. **Tie** a demonstration fly if needed while the materials are being discussed.

**Note** that the major difference between this pattern and the previous ones is the use of duck wing quill slips for the wings.

If a demonstration pattern is tied, **leave** it in the vise to serve as a model for visual learners and as a comparison fly for members completing their own ties.

**Demonstrate** the wing preparation and application process, including trimming the wing butts at an angle to allow for a smoothly tapered quill body.

**Note** that feather slips taken from the center toward the tip of the feather produce more compact and manageable dry fly wings, but slips toward the base of the feather from the middle produce much more curved, softer wings, as well as longer ones.

Although it adds a bit of weight, fine silver wire can be wrapped in the opposite direction from the quill body as a rib for increased durability.

**Allow** faster tiers to continue with a selection from these patterns to reinforce the skills used in the Ginger Quill if they are done in sufficient time.

- e. Body - stripped peacock quill
  - f. Hackle - medium blue dun
2. Olive Dun
- a. Hook - 14-16 dry fly
  - b. Thread - black or light olive
  - c. Wings - gray duck quill slips
  - d. Tail - olive hackle fibers
  - e. Body - stripped olive quill
  - f. Hackle - olive

## VI. Tying the Adams

### A. Pattern

1. Hook - 10-20 dry fly
2. Thread - amber or black
3. Wings - grizzly hackle points
4. Tail - grizzly
5. Body - muskrat or mole dubbing
6. Hackle - grizzly and red brown mixed

### B. Tying instructions

1. Attach thread at shoulder
2. Prepare and attach wings
  - a. Grizzly hackle tips
  - b. Shiny sides together
  - c. About shank length
  - d. Tips toward eye
3. Set wings
  - a. Stand up with several wraps
  - b. Figure eight warp to separate
4. Attach tail material
5. Apply dark gray fur dubbing
  - a. Wind dubbing strand on thread
  - b. Wind body material to wing base
6. Prepare and attach hackle feathers
  - a. One grizzly, one coachman brown
  - b. Fibers about 1/2 times gap width
7. Wind hackles
  - a. 2-3 turns each behind wing
  - b. 3-4 turns each in front of wing
  - c. Bind down tips at head
8. Trim tips of hackle feathers
9. Wind and whip finish head
10. Apply head cement

**Note** that the Adams is a suggestive pattern for many aquatic insects, including both mayflies and caddisflies. Many fly fishermen consider it one of the fundamental patterns all over North America. **Share** the components and process while tying a demonstration fly.

**Demonstrate** the winging process. **Note** that the wings are more easily positioned and set in place if the barbs are trimmed with scissors, leaving short stubs on the feather shaft. For economic reasons **suggest** using hackle tips from feathers located on the edges of the cape or from otherwise low quality feathers.

**Suggest** the use of either mole or dark muskrat fur for the body.

Have participants **compare** their first Adams to the example left in the tying vise as a model.

## VII. Tying the Spirit of Pittsford Mills

### A. Pattern

1. Hook - 12-18 dry fly
2. Wings - grizzly hackle points
3. Tail - ginger
4. Body - dubbed gray duck down
5. Rib - clipped ginger hackle - palmered
6. Hackle - ginger

### B. Tying procedure

1. Same basic elements as above
2. Rib
  - a. Tied in before body is wound on
    - 1) Tied down by the tip of the feather

The Spirit of Pittsford Mills is tied in the classic mayfly style, although it was developed as a caddisfly imitation. The palmered hackles and the use of duck down as dubbing material are the major new elements included. **Demonstrate** the fly while explaining and showing the components.

If needed, **refer** back to the earlier pattern instructions to reinforce the procedures used.

- 2) Trim the tip after it is secured
- b. Palmered over body
  - 1) Wound from tip toward butt
  - 2) Often "folded" to control hackle fibers
- c. Clipped short before applying hackles
  - 1) Scissors parallel to fly body
  - 2) About 1/4 to 1/2 gap width
  - 3) Caution around wings and tail

**Demonstrate** tying in and applying a palmered hackle, including "folding" the hackle, if necessary. **Emphasize** winding an open spiral as a rib to the butt of the wings.

**Demonstrate** holding the scissors parallel to the fly body while clipping the ribbing hackle and **emphasize** caution to prevent removing tails or damaging wings.

## VIII. Summary

**Summarize** the techniques learned or adapted to a dry fly situation in this lesson by leading participants to state what they have learned.

### Summary Activity

Display the set of dry flies tied in this session. Note that they are all classic patterns with wings, hackles, bodies of various types, and tails. Some have ribs. The body materials differ, as do the wing materials. Several fundamentals applicable to all dry fly patterns were practiced. Lead participants to describe the things they have learned in this session and to critique their flies for possible improvement.

### Lesson Narrative

Classical dry flies are tied with split wings, tails, and body materials of some type and wound hackles. Most of them have a mayfly silhouette even if they do not suggest any living insect or the silhouette is inaccurate for resting insects of those types, e.g. caddisflies and stoneflies. The wings are approximately the length of the shank on standard patterns. They are made from many materials, but three types are common to the patterns included in this group -- wing duck quill slips, waterfowl flank feathers, and hackle points. Fan wing patterns, tied with duck breast feathers, will be covered later. The wings are usually the first things to be tied in and set on standard dry fly patterns.

The most commonly used wing quills for split-winged dry flies are waterfowl (duck) primary feathers. Generally, more compact and durable quill slip wings can be tied with slips taken from about the middle of the feather to nearly the tip. Longer, softer and more curved slips can be taken from the section of the feather from the center to the base. In most cases, these are better for wet flies.

Flank feather wings are tied using clusters of feather fibers from wood ducks, mallards or similarly marked birds. Immature feathers taken from birds bagged early in the season are still in a rolled condition and are pre-formed for tying. Fibers from mature feathers are usually stripped, evened in length (if necessary) and bound to the hook as a clump. Once bound on they are stood upright and divided with a figure eight wrap.

Hackle point wings are exactly what their name implies. They are tied using the tips of hackle feathers of the appropriate color. The fibers at the base of the hackles are simply stripped away or clipped away with the scissors, leaving a tip of the appropriate length to be tied in. Hackle points are paired, tied in together, stood up and separated.

The shank-length tail is usually tied in second. In most classic patterns the tails are constructed of stiff hackle fibers. These are taken from large neck or saddle hackles or from spade hackles taken from the shoulders of cocks. A few patterns use stripped hackle quills, stiff hairs (e.g. javelina, porcupine), or similar materials.

Body materials are extremely varied. They may be wound using dubbed materials, like fur or polypropylene, in a wide variety of colors. Frequently different colors of dubbing material are mixed or blended to produce the desired effect, and egg sacs or other bits of contrasting material may be called for by the pattern. Many natural or synthetic materials can be used to make dubbed bodies. Some feathers, like ostrich or peacock herl can be wound on the shank for body materials. Lacquered quills make excellent and effective bodies. Most frequently these are made from stripped hackle quills or peacock herl.

Some patterns use strips of the cuticle from flight feathers. Floss or mylar tinsel is used in some patterns. Fine gold or silver wire or tinsel may be used as ribbing for the bodies. Palmered hackles, either left full length or trimmed may be used as ribbing as well.

Hackles for dry flies are made from hard, stiff neck or saddle hackles taken from roosters. Normally they are wound with about equal amounts of hackle fibers behind and in front of the wing. Most commonly dry flies use two hackle feathers per fly, either mixed, separated by color, or all of the same color. The fibers should be approximately one and one-half times the width of the hook gap. Many feel that proper balance requires three turns behind the wings and two turns in front of the wings, but this is not a requirement.

### **Tying Flick's March Brown**

The March Brown is a relatively common clambering mayfly that provides excellent fishing in many parts of the country. In addition, the pattern suggests many other species that provide fishing across North America. The pattern for Flick's March Brown (Art Flick) follows:

Hook - size 10 or 12 dry fly (e.g. Mustad 94840)

Thread - brown or black

Wing - lemon wood duck flank

Tail - red grizzly hackle fibers

Body - tan fox mixed with sandy hare's ear

Hackles - mixed red grizzly and grizzly or coachman brown and grizzly

Start tying the March Brown by securing a dry fly hook in the tying vise with the shank parallel to the tying surface. Attach the thread at the shoulder by crossing warps over each other in an open x pattern. Strip a small bunch of wood duck flank feather fibers from the feather (or use an immature feather or the tip of a feather) with the fiber tips pointing out over the eye of the hook and extending about a shank length beyond the tie down area. Secure it with several turns of thread before pulling the fiber tips back and wrapping in front of them with several turns of thread to stand the clump upright. Using a dubbing needle or your fingers separate the clump into two equal clumps. Pass the tying thread between the clumps, under the hook and back between the clumps in a figure 8 pattern several times to set the wings apart in a split-wing pattern. If the clumps seem to fan out forming broad fans, wrap a turn or two of thread around each base and around the shank to hold them together. Hold the butts of the fibers up and trim them at an angle to form a sloped base for the tying thread, then wind back over them to the tail area.

Strip a small bunch of long, stiff hackle fibers from a red grizzly hackle feather. Measure the fibers against the shank length and hold them firmly in place while binding them down with several turns of thread. Wind over the butts of the fibers to make them firmly secure and trim the ends. Return to the base of the tail with the thread.

Pluck a small amount of rusty tan fur from a red fox pelt and a small amount of material from a hare's mask. Remove the guard hairs and blend the furs together. Hold both furs together and pluck small bunches of both at the same time until they are well mixed. Touch small amounts of fur to the tying thread and rotate both the thread and the fur together forming a thin, tightly twisted yarn. Wrap the dubbed fur from the base of the tail to the shoulder in nicely tapered shape, and tie the body off with several turns of thread.

Select a red grizzly and a grizzly hackle of appropriate width. Prepare the hackle feathers by cutting or stripping away the soft fibers (often collectively called "flue") from the bases of the feathers. Holding them with the shiny or upper sides facing the tier and the tips pointing back over the hook, grasp the tip of the front feather with the hackle pliers and wrap it around the hook with about equal amounts in front of and behind the wings. Bind the tip down with several turns of thread and trim it closely. [Be careful not to cut the thread here!] Grasp the second hackle feather and repeat the process, thoroughly mixing the hackles. Compact the hackles slightly by pressing them toward the wings with the thumbnail and index fingernail. [Again, be careful not to push them out from under the wraps securing them to the hook.] Wind a compact, neatly tapered head and whip finish the fly. Apply a drop or two of thin head cement to complete the fly.



Some additional patterns that use this same basic set of tying skills are included below.

#### Light Cahill

Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly  
Thread - primrose or white  
Wings - lemon wood duck flank  
Tail - light ginger or straw  
Body - creamy fox fur  
Hackles - straw or light ginger

#### Flick's Hendrickson

Hook - size 12 dry fly  
Thread - primrose or tan  
Wings - lemon wood duck flank  
Tail - light blue dun  
Body - urine burned pink red fox  
Hackles - light blue dun

#### Flick's Gray Fox

Hook - size 12 or 14 dry fly  
Thread - tan  
Wings - mallard flank  
Tail - ginger  
Body - fawn colored fox fur  
Hackles - light ginger and light grizzly mixed

#### Sulfur Dun

Hook - size 16 dry fly  
Thread - primrose or white  
Wings - mallard flank or dun hackle tips  
Tail - pale dun  
Body - sulfur yellow rabbit fur  
Hackle - pale blue dun

### **Tying Flick's Red Quill**

Flick's Red Quill is an early season pattern that suggests a male Hendrickson. It is often one of the earliest patterns to produce action on the surface, and in smaller sizes, it can be useful for smaller species hatching later in the season. Flick's pattern for the Red Quill follows:

Hook: size 12 dry fly  
Thread: brown or black 6/0  
Body: stripped brown hackle quill (lacquered)  
Wings: lemon wood duck flank  
Hackle: dark blue dun  
Tail: dark dun (smoky)

The Red Quill is tied much like the earlier patterns. After securing the hook in the vise, the thread is attached at the shoulder and secured with several wraps. A clump of well-marked wood duck flank is stripped from a feather and bound in place at the shoulder with the points forward. The shank-length wing is stood up and secured in that position with several wraps of thread, then split with figure-eight wraps to suggest split wings. Once the wing is upright and secured in place, the butts of the wings are trimmed away at an angle to form a nicely tapered base for winding the body materials.

Carry the thread to the tie-down area for the tail, forming a smooth and even underbody. Attach the tail material securely and trim the butts to aid in forming a smooth underbody. Attach the stripped brown hackle quill by its tip and wind forward to the shoulder. [Keeping all wraps, smooth and even is critical to getting a good-looking body when the quill is wound on, so take time getting it right.] Wrap the quill evenly to the shoulder. Each turn should touch but not overlap. The dark side of the quill should be facing outward, producing a shiny, red-brown body. Bind the quill down at the shoulder and trim the butt end neatly. Select, prepare and bind in two dark dun hackles behind wing. Flick prefers dun hackles that are "smokey" or about the color of a thundercloud. Grasp one of the hackles by the tip with the hackle pliers and wind it in place. Bind it down at the head, and repeat with the second hackle. Bind the tips down and trim the ends before winding a smooth, even head and whip finishing the fly. Complete the pattern by applying a drop or two of head cement to the head and lightly coating the body with head cement. This should bring out the color and pattern in the body materials, giving the body a segmented appearance.

The Quill Gordon is another early season pattern, tied in much the same manner as the Red Quill. It uses a stripped peacock quill for body material and has a lighter appearance overall. Some tiers use very fine silver wire as a rib, claiming it toughens the fly, making it more resistant to teeth. Flick's pattern for the Quill Gordon is as follows:

Hook: size 12 or 14 dry fly

Thread: primrose pre-waxed 6/0  
Wings: wood duck flank  
Tail: bronze blue dun  
Body: stripped peacock herl  
Rib: fine silver wire (optional)  
Hackle: bronze blue dun

### **Tying the Ginger Quill**

The Ginger Quill is part of the same class of patterns as the other quill bodied flies. The primary difference in the pattern is the use of wing quill slips for wings rather than using flank feather clumps. The pattern for the Ginger Quill follows:

Hook: size 12 or 14 dry fly  
Thread: tan or black pre-waxed 6/0  
Wings: matched mallard wing quill slips  
Tail: ginger hackle fibers  
Body: stripped peacock herl  
Hackle: medium ginger cock

The Ginger Quill is tied in the conventional manner. Once the hook is secured in the vise and the tying thread is firmly attached at the shoulder, a pair of wings are prepared. Select matching feathers from the right and left wings of a mallard. For dry flies, slips cut from the outer half of primary feathers are usually best. Slips of matching size (about 3/16 to 1/4 inch wide) are cut from approximately the same locations on the matching feathers. Place the feather slips together with the longer tips (this will be fairly obvious) down and the tips pointing toward the eye of the hook. Grasp them between the thumb and forefinger of the holding hand and hold them firmly in place at the tie down area. Using the loop technique, bind them in place with several turns of thread before relaxing the grip with the thumb and forefinger. Pull the tips upright and take several turns in front of them to hold them upright. Split the wings, keeping each slip together by using figure-8 wraps. Trim the butts of the wing material and bind them down securely. Carry the thread smoothly to the tail tie-down area and bind the tail in place. Prepare a stripped peacock quill by pulling it between the thumbnail and fingernail of one hand, removing all the flue from the quill. Bind it in place by the tip, and carry the thread forward to the shoulder. Wind the body quill evenly in place, forming a smoothly tapered body. Bind the body material down at the shoulder and trim the excess material away. Select and prepare a pair of medium ginger hackles with fibers about 12 times the width of the hook gap and bind them in by their bases behind the wings. Carry the thread forward to the head area before winding the hackles in place one at a time. Bind down the hackle tips, trim the tips, and wind a smooth and even head before whip finishing the thread. Trim the thread, apply a drop or two of head cement to the head, and lightly coat the body with a thin layer of head cement. Your first Ginger Quill is complete.

Several similar patterns are listed here for your interest.

#### **Blue Dun**

Hook: size 10-18 dry fly  
Thread: black  
Wings: gray duck quill slips  
Tail: medium blue dun  
Body: stripped peacock quill  
Hackle: medium blue dun

#### **Olive Dun**

Hook: 14-16 dry fly  
Thread: black or light olive  
Wings: gray duck quill slips  
Tail: olive hackle fibers  
Body: stripped olive quill  
Hackle: olive

### **Tying the Adams**

The Adams is an extremely useful pattern that finds advocates all over the country. It is included here, not only because of its utility, but also because it teaches the use of hackle point wings. The pattern for the Adams follows:

Hook: 10-20 dry fly  
Thread: amber or black pre-waxed 6/0

Wings: grizzly hackle points  
Tail: grizzly hackle fibers  
Body: gray muskrat or mole dubbing  
Hackle - grizzly and red brown mixed

The tying procedure for the Adams is essentially the same as that used in earlier patterns. The thread is attached at the shoulder and firmly bound in place. A pair of matching hackle points are selected from the cape. Straight tips are preferred and easier to use, but slightly curved tips can be used if matching ones are selected from the cape and placed so the curves align with one another. If they do not form a symmetrical pair, they will tend to cause the fly to spin during casting, twisting the leader. Trim the quill tips and bind them in place at the shoulder with the shiny (upper) sides together. Hold them upright, bind and divide as usual. Wind back over the butts of the quills, and trim away the excess before carrying the thread to the tail tie-down area. Bind in the tail fibers and trim the butts before spinning a dark gray fur body. Wind the dubbing strand and the thread to the shoulder and bind the body down. Select and prepare a pair of hackles one grizzly and one coachman brown or red grizzly with fibers about 12 times the gap width of the hook. Wind about 2-3 turns on each hackle behind the wings and 3-4 turns in front of the wing with each hackle feather, leaving a mixed pattern of brown and grizzly hackles. Finish the fly in the conventional manner, winding a neat, compact head, whip finishing and adding a drop of head cement.

### **Tying the Spirit of Pittsford Mills**

The Spirit of Pittsford Mills adds an element to the patterns tied earlier. It includes a palmered hackle that is trimmed to form a rib. This pattern is suggestive of a flying caddisfly. The tying procedure for this pattern is very similar to the Adams with the exception of the use of duck down for dubbing material (it can tend to be a bit unruly) and the palmered rib. The pattern follows:

Hook: 12-18 dry fly  
Wings: grizzly hackle points  
Thread: black or primrose, pre-waxed 6/0  
Tail: ginger hackle fibers  
Body: dubbed gray duck down  
Rib: palmered ginger hackle - clipped short  
Hackle: ginger

The ribbing hackle is tied in immediately after the tail material is bound on. It is tied in by the tip of the hackle feather and secured before the dubbing body is spun and applied. Once the dubbed duck down body has been applied, the ribbing hackle is wound in open spirals from the base of the tail to the shoulder. It is grasped by the base of the quill during this procedure, leaving hackle fibers that tend to point toward the rear of the hook. Once it is bound down at the shoulder and the excess is trimmed away, the hackle points are trimmed to extend slightly above the body material, giving the fly a "hairy" appearance. The ginger hackles are applied in the standard fashion, and the fly is finished conventionally. The palmering technique (winding from tip to butt) used here, is used in a wide variety of patterns to apply either ribbing materials or hackles.

### **Exhibit or Sharing Suggestions**

1. Prepare a poster, models or photographs to show the steps in tying
2. Study fly-fishing books or magazines to see what other types of dry flies might be useful for fishes in your area. Share the results of your studies with your group or other interested persons.
3. Prepare a method demonstration on tying a selected dry fly and present that demonstration in an appropriate setting.
4. Prepare a photographic story of tying a selected dry fly from the beginning of the tying process to using the pattern in fishing.

5. Record your experiences with tying and using flies in a tying and fishing journal. Share that journal with others in an appropriate setting.
6. Make a series of flies and fly pattern cards that can be exhibited at a fair or similar gathering.
7. Try variations of one or more classic dry flies to see if you can develop something that works more effectively for the fish in your area. Record your experiments and experimental patterns in a journal and share your findings with others in your group.

### **Community Service and "Giving Back" Activities**

1. Consider ways of helping other young people learn how to tie flies, setting up tying clinics or instructional programs for interested people.
2. Tie a set of flies that can be used as auction items or door prizes in community events or fundraisers.
3. Donate flies to a local fishing program.
4. Tie flies as a demonstration at a National Hunting and Fishing Day celebration in your community.

### **Extensions or Ways of Learning More**

1. Observe fish and the foods that they eat on your local waters. Using what you know about tying flies, try to develop a pattern that imitates or suggests a food the fish seem to prefer. Research existing fly patterns to see if someone has developed a fly that does what you want. Modify existing patterns or create your own pattern in an attempt to catch the fish you are seeking.
2. Collect stomach contents from fish you like to catch. Observe the contents of those stomachs and record what you find in a notebook. Determine if their food habits are the same all the time or if they change with the time of day and season. Use references to entomology or other fields to assist in identifying what the fish are eating and attempt to create a seasonal reference to their favorite foods.
3. Observe fish actively feeding on a local stream, pond or lake. By careful study, see what they are eating and how they feed. Do they take everything that is a potential food item, or are they selecting something from a set of food choices? What characteristics seem to determine which food items are taken and which ones are rejected? How can that apply to your fly tying efforts?

### **Links to Other Programs**

The link to the rest of the sportfishing program is obvious. Fly tying is a natural link to fly fishing as well as to crafting other types of tackle. Rod building can be a means of having an excellent fly rod at a lower cost. The feathers, furs and other materials needed by a fly tier can lead to interests in hunting, trapping, waterfowl, poultry science or other seemingly unrelated fields. Understanding aquatic ecology as well as keen observation skills are important to success in both tying and fishing flies. This can provide entry into the sciences, either as a future vocation or as an avocational activity. Fishing flies can lead to an interest in several fields of engineering. Tying flies can be a great introduction to economics and marketing for young entrepreneurs. Finally, the hobby of tying flies is both craft and art. It can lead into many other areas of activity from writing and photography to science.