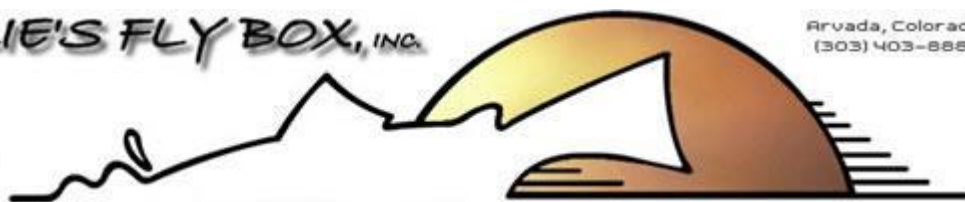


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## Soft Hackle \*



### Fly Patterns brought to you by Charlie's FlyBox

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Charlie Craven and Charlie's FlyBox, Inc.

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### step: 1

#### Pattern Description

Traditional soft hackled flies have experienced a resurgence over the past few years here in the West. Syl Nemes is a name that comes to mind when the subject is brought up, and his pattern books are must read material for tyers interested in these effective flies. In this tutorial, I will (attempt) to explain how to tie a small soft hackle fly, using Hungarian Partridge feathers for hackle. Traditional tying techniques tend to preclude these feathers from use on smaller patterns, as the feathers are relatively large. Tying the feather in as I will show here allows you to tie soft hackles in very small sizes, without depending on the natural size of the feather to determine the hackle size. I should mention that the fly I'll present here is just one of a variety of options when it comes to Soft Hackles. You can certainly tie them without the tinsel tags, and even skip the dubbed thorax, and still have an effective fly. Some tyers prefer super sparsely \*wrapped\* hackle, while others like a bit more...purely up to you and perhaps, the waters you intend to fish. At any rate, try this technique out and see if it doesn't alleviate the small soft hackle issue for you too. Charlie

#### Materials Needed:

Hook: TMC 760 TC #12-16 or hook and size of your choice>>>>>>> Thread: I used 10/0 black here, although, nearly any small thread will work fine>>>>>>>Tag: Silver Mylar Tinsel>>>>>>>Abdomen: Silk Floss (although there is no reason that rayon floss wouldn't do the job here)>>>>Thorax: Gray Beaver Dubbing>>>>>Hackle: Hungarian Partridge Body Feather

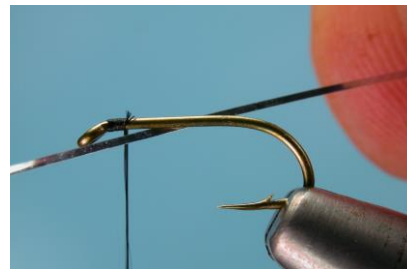
**step: 2**

Start the tying thread immediately behind the eye of the hook and clip the tag end.



**step: 3**

Lay a piece of flat mylar tinsel under the hook and in front of the thread. We want this tinsel to wrap silver side up, so I am going to tie it in with the gold side facing up at this point. Stay with me..it will all make sense in minute.



**step: 4**

Grab the front end of the tinsel (that is facing toward the hook eye) and pull it up under the thread to the top of the hook shank, with the GOLD SIDE UP!



**step: 5**

Pull the back end of the tinsel backward so the front end creeps down tight to where the thread wraps are holding it on the hook. Be sure the tinsel stays on the top of the shank. Make a couple more tight turns of thread over the tinsel to lock it in place.



**step: 6**

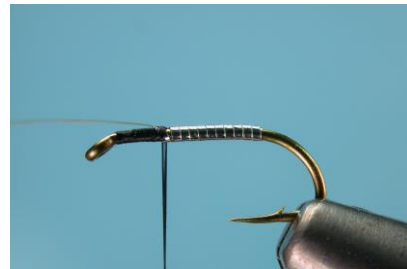
Lift the tinsel straight up and make a wrap at the back edge of the binding thread wraps. When you make this wrap, the tinsel will fold on itself over the hook shank and leave the SILVER side of the tinsel exposed. Wrap the tinsel in tight, butted wraps back to midway between the hook point and the point of the barb.



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**step: 7**

Now reverse the direction of the tinsel and wrap it back to the front of the hook. All the wraps should go over the top of the hook, but you are essentially wrapping one layer of tinsel back to the bend of the hook, then another layer over the top back to the front of the shank. Dig? Tie the tinsel off with three tight turns of thread about one third of a shank length back from the eye.



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**step: 8**

Divide a piece of silk floss in thirds. To do this, cut a short, six inch or so length from the spool. Use your bodkin or fingertips to separate about one third of the strand from the rest near the center of the strand. Pull the strands apart very slowly and gently to divide the strands. If you are using Rayon floss you may be better off to shoot for half and half. Tie in the one-third strand of floss where you tied off the tinsel, with just a couple firm wraps of thread.



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**step: 9**

Wrap the floss back to just short of the end of the tinsel, about to the hook point or so, just as you did the tinsel. Take care to keep the floss very flat and smooth as you go.



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**step: 10**

Make a second layer of floss over the first back to the front of the shank. Tie off the floss with a couple firm wraps of thread. Clip the excess floss.



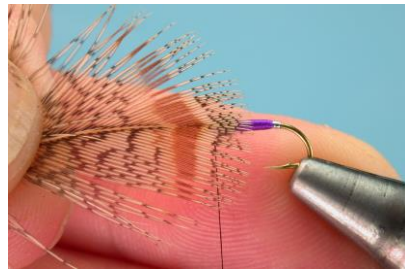
**step: 11**

Dub a short length of thread with the dubbing of your choice. I like fine natural furs like beaver, muskrat or mole, but almost anything will do here. wrap the dubbing to form a small tight ball shaped thorax at the front of the abdomen. Note that there is plenty of room left between the front of the dubbed thorax and the hook eye.



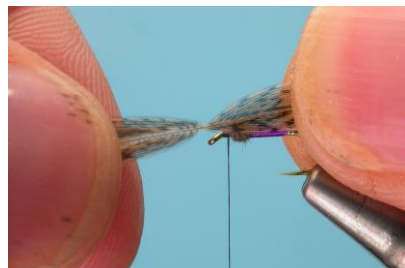
**step: 12**

Select a Hungarian Partridge feather that has a straight square tip like this one here.



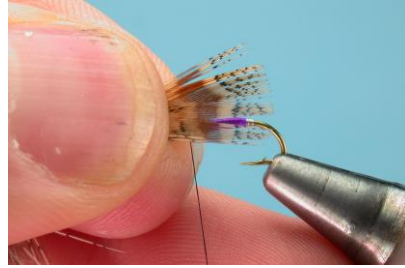
**step: 13**

Grip the tip of the feather in one hand and stroke any short fibers back with the other. Holding the square end of the feather in your fingers will allow you to fold back any fibers that are shorter than those in the square bundle.



**step: 14**

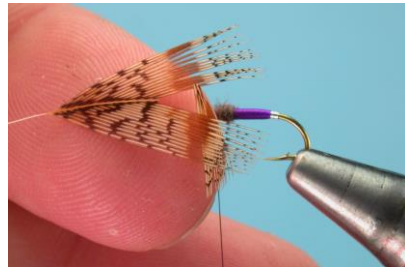
You should now be left with the square(as in EVEN) tips of the feather, with no short or long fibers.



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**step: 15**

Strip the excess fibers from the base of the feather, then put just the very TIPS of your scissors into the tip of the feather and clip the center stem about a third of the way down from the top of the feather. You only want to cut the center stem, but no fibers. You should have a V-shaped feather left at this point. Make sense?



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**step: 16**

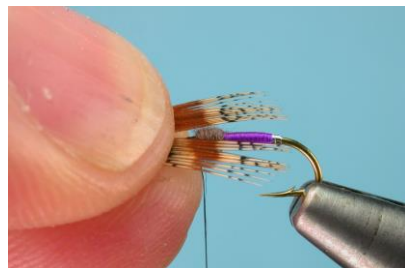
Lay the feather on top of the hook with the tips extended however far back you like them (generally about to the hook point). I lay the feather in with the outside of the feather facing up and the legs of the V on either side of the shank behind the eye.



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**step: 17**

Pinch the base of the feather along with the hook eye in the thumb and forefinger of your thread hand. Make sure the tips of the feather are lined up with the length you decided on before.



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**step: 18**

Now, reach in with your other hand and (without letting go with the thread hand) pinch the fibers along the hook shank as shown here. You should have a bit of space between where the center stem of the feather is and the hook eye. You need this space to allow the fibers to spin around the shank.



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**step: 19**

Hold the feather in place with your material hand and take a couple soft turns of thread over them at the front of the hook. The fibers will still be somewhat divided along the sides of the hook, but we have not made very tight wraps of thread over them at this point. Check the length of the fibers to make sure nothing shifted in the process.



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**step: 20**

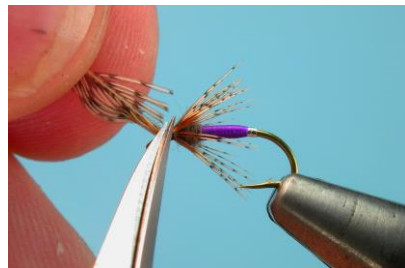
Pick up the bobbin and make a couple more wraps all the way around the shank with the thread drawn tight all the way around. The thread torque *should* twist the fibers around the hook and splay them pretty evenly. As you progress with this technique a bit, you'll find that the tension on the thread can be "finessed" and the torque will be much more controlled. The gist of this is to let the thread spin the fibers evenly around the shank.



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**step: 21**

Reach in with your finest tipped scissors and trim the butt ends of the feathers as close to the shank as you can. Try to get closer than I did here...even go to the trouble of moving the camera out of the way if you have to!! I didn't, but now I know better;)



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**step: 22**

Try to leave as little stub end as possible on this cut...it makes for a much cleaner head.



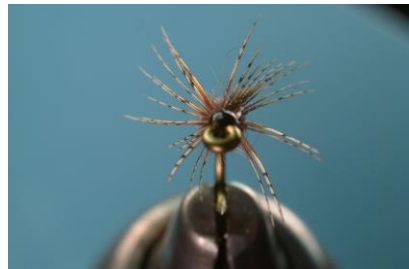
**step: 23**

Use diligently placed wraps of thread to cover the stubs as smoothly as possible. Whip finish and clip the thread.



**step: 24**

From this frontal view you can see that this hackle has come out pretty sparse, and for the most part, pretty evenly distributed.



**step: 25**

You can tie these flies in a variety of colors and configurations...go crazy!

