

CHARLIE'S FLY BOX, INC.



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Craven's Spant



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

The Spant is my version of a spent ant pattern. I came up with this fly many years ago after encountering a flying ant fall on Brainerd Lake. The ants were blown from the tall evergreens surrounding the lake, and the fish wasted no time in getting on them. I did not have anything suitable to match the ants at the time, so I made do with a few of my larger midge patterns. They worked okay, but after a little time at the vise, the Spant was born. Traditional flying ant patterns have many problems. Number one on this list is; they don't float very well. The Spant has this covered with its buoyant wide-spread deer hair wings and broad hackle legs. The other problem with traditional ties is that they are so hard to see on the water. While the Spant doesn't show up like a beacon, it is much more visible than any of the other patterns I tried. The best part of the Spant is that it looks so realistic from the fishes view. I try to keep a very prominent waist on the fly between the front of the hackle and the head section. I also oversize the dubbing at the rear to imitate the

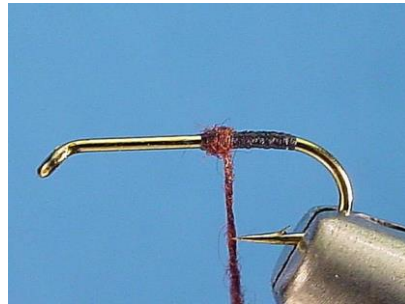
Materials Needed:

Hook: TMC 100 #12-20 Thread: 8/0 Black Abdomen: Mahogany Superfine dubbing Wing: Natural Coastal Deer Hair Hackle: Brown Rooster Head: Black Superfine Dubbing

abdomen (gaster) which is so apparent on the natural. Tie a few of my Spants up and stash them in your box. They have proven themselves on such varied waters as the South Platte, Henry's Fork and Depuy's Spring Creek. This is also a great pattern for high mountain lakes. I like to cast the Spant six to ten feet in front of a cruising fish and let the fly sit. If the fish seems like he doesn't see it, I will give the fly the slightest twitch...that's usually all it takes.

step: 2

Start the thread just behind the mid-point on the hook and wrap a thread base back to the bend and forward again to the starting point. Dub the mahogany dubbing onto the thread in a very tight manner. You don't want a thick dubbing rope, but rather, a tight, thin strand. Begin wrapping the dubbing at the front end of the thread base and proceed back to the bend building an oval shaped abdomen.



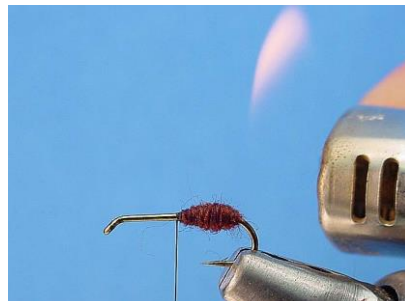
step: 3

The finished abdomen should be shaped somewhat like an egg with the narrow end at the front of the hook.



step: 4

No matter how hard I try, the dubbing on the abdomen always comes out a little fuzzier than I'd like for an ant. One trick I've come up with to remedy this is to singe the dubbed abdomen with a cigarette lighter. This will burn all the loose dubbing fibers off and clean up the shape of the abdomen.



step: 5

In this picture, you can see the difference the flame makes on the finished abdomen. It really tightens up the dubbing and clarifies the shape.



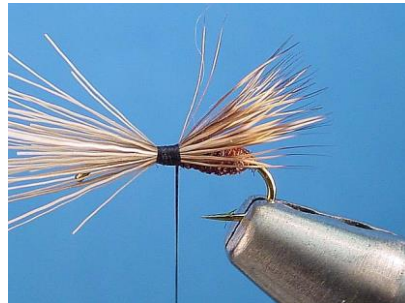
step: 6

Cut, clean and stack a small clump of deer hair. Measure the deer so it is equal to one shank length long. Place the tie down area at the front of the abdomen with the tips extending out past the bend.



step: 7

Grasp the tips of the hair in the fingertips of your material hand and hold them in place at the front end of the abdomen. Make two turns of thread over the elk before tightening the thread by pulling it straight toward you. This will flare the hair and compress it on the shank. Build a small band of thread that travels BACK over the hair butts toward the abdomen to secure the elk hair.



step: 8

Clip the butt ends from the hair as close to the hook as possible and build a smooth thread base over the stubs. Divide the tips of the elk hair into two equal bunches on either side of the hook with your fingertips only. Do NOT make any figure eight or X-wraps through the hair.



step: 9

Wrap the thread back again to the front edge of the abdomen with a few tight turns. This will help to flare the hair out over and along the sides of the abdomen. Think of this maneuver as you would a split tail on a mayfly pattern, made with a small dubbing ball at the bend of the hook. The dubbed abdomen will force the hair out along its sides when the thread pushes the hair up against it.



step: 10

Once the hair is completely flared and firmly butted up against the abdomen, come in and cut the hairs from the center of the wing with the tips of your scissors. This will form two relatively sparse wings on either side of the shank.



step: 11

Select and size (the hackle barbs should be equal to about one and a half to two gap widths) a brown dry fly hackle feather and tie it in at the front edge of the wings with the inside of the feather toward the hook shank. Bring the thread forward to the end of the elk hair butts and let it hang there in wait for the hackle.



step: 12

Wrap the hackle feather forward with three or four tight, concentric turns. Tie the feather tip off at the front end of the elk hair butts. Clip the excess hackle feather and make a thread base from the front of the wrapped hackle to the hook eye. Return the thread to the seventy-five percent point on the hook.



step: 13

Dub the thread with a tight strand of black Superfine Dubbing. Wrap the dubbing to form a ball at the very front end of the hook, right behind the hook eye. This ball should be considerably smaller than the abdominal portion and there should be a distinct space between the front of the hackle and the back of the head. Don't try to singe this front dubbing ball into shape...you'll end up burning off the hackle and will have to start over.



step: 14

Whip finish the thread and clip.



step: 15

Trim the hackle flush across the bottom of the fly just below the hook shank. Don't cut a V into it, just cut straight across the bottom. The hackle will support the fly in the surface film and nicely imitate the legs of the ant.



step: 16

Finished Fly, Bottom View. Notice the sparseness of the wings, the length of the hackle and the distinct division between the abdomen and head.



step: 17

Finished Fly, Frontal View. Notice how the hackle is cut flush across the bottom of the fly.



step: 18

Finished Fly, Top View. Hell, I'd eat it.

