Henryville Special

As tied by Pete Yarrington

The pattern for the Henryville Special has not changed much over the years. It is sometimes tied with olive dubbing rather than floss, and the grizzly hackle is sometimes trimmed along the top of the body.

The Henryville is an adult caddisfly imitation originated by Hiram Brobst in the 1930s for fishing the Henryville section of Pennsylvania's Brodhead Creek. The Brodhead area of the Poconos is one of the birthplaces of American fly fishing, and the Henryville Special is certainly a "special" fly pattern. It may be the earliest, still-recognizable dry fly intended to imitate an adult caddis, having come about when most dry flies were tied to imitate mayflies. It is still effective today, and it remains one of our most popular caddis dry flies.

Hook: Mustad R50/94840, or other standard-length dry fly hook, #12-18

Thread: Olive 6/0 or 8/0

Body: Olive floss or fine dubbing, ribbed with an open spiral of grizzly hackle. Hackle should be one size smaller than normal for the hook you are using

Underwing: Sparse clump of fine Wood Duck breast feather fibers

Wing: Matched slips of Mallard or other duck primary feather, tied tent-style over the body. The feathers can be lightly sprayed with Krylon Satin Clear Polyurethane beforehand for durability

Hackle: Dark ginger, sparse.

Tying Instructions - Henryville Special

1. Crimp the hook barb and position the hook in the vise as shown in the picture.

2. Start the thread near the eye of the hook and wind it back in close wraps to the hook bend.

3. Strip the fluff off the grizzly hackle feather, trim it, and tie the feather in by its butt end at the hook bend.

4. Wrap the thread back forward to a distance 1/3 of the way back along the shank from the eye. Tie in one strand of olive floss (if using standard 4-strand floss).

5. Wind the floss back to the hook bend where the grizzly hackle is tied in, and then wrap the hackle back forward to where you tied it in, forming a smooth, level body. Secure the floss with several wraps of thread and trim off the remainder.

6. Palmer (wrap) the grizzly hackle forward in 4 to 5 open wraps to where you tied off the floss body material. Tie off the hackle at the front of the body and trim off the remainder.

7. Select half a dozen or so fibers of Wood Duck breast feather and tie them in over the top of the body so they extend a little beyond the hook bend, as shown in the picture. Trim off the remainder.

8. Select two slips of Mallard primary wing feather, one from a left wing feather one from a right wing feather. The slips should each be approximately the width of the hook gap. Tie a slip on each side of the body, so that the natural curve of the slips each cup the body sightly. The slips should about the same length as the Wood Duck underwing. The slips should be positioned so they meet on top of the fly, separating in a V towards the rear of the fly so some of the grizzly hackle and underwing protrude above, as in the picture. The slips should be far apart enough from below that the body and the hackle are clearly visible.

   You can make the wings of this fly more durable by spraying the Mallard wing feathers lightly with Krylon Satin Clear Polyurethane spray before removing slips for tying. You will want to check and be sure that the fibers on the feathers are aligned properly before applying the spray. Let the feathers dry thoroughly before removing slips from them to tie the fly. I prop each wing feather up with clothes pins while they dry. Do this somewhere out of the way, with good ventilation.

9. Strip the fluff off a single dark ginger hackle feather, trim it, and tie the feather in by its butt at the wing tie-in point. Make any necessary extra thread wraps to provide a smooth area on which to wrap the hackle. Wrap the hackle forward in 3-6 touching wraps, leaving enough room for a small, neat head. Tie off the hackle and trim off the extra. Form the head, whip finish, and apply a small drop of head cement such as Sally Hansen's Hard as Nails nail polish.