

FFF Fly of the Month

MARTIN'S MEANY, VAR.



By Bob Bates

Frank Knapp is one of the senior (and youngest) professional fly tiers in the Spokane, Washington. In 1992 he gave me the pictured fly at a fly casters gathering in Clarkston, Washington. It looked like a great dragonfly nymph. This is a variation of Martin's Monster that was created by Darrel Martin in about 1973. (One reference is: *Flies of the Northwest*, Fourth Ed., 1981, p.30) Darrel's original was tied with gold tinsel tip, woven chenille body, knotted pheasant tail legs, chain eyes painted black and turkey flue head. It was widely used in the early 80's.

Tying a Martin's Meany is a little more involved than most flies in this column. However, from what Frank said, tying it is worth the effort. I have used it with pretty good success. Besides it will give you something to do during the slow winter days between hatches.

Dragonfly nymphs are a big mouth full, and I guess a tasty one to boot. As mentioned last month, dragonfly nymphs are around all of the time, and trout will attack them any chance they get. Frank suggests fishing a Martin's

Meany with a sinking line and working it around weed beds. Move the fly with 6-inch strips so it looks like a natural searching for something to eat. Look for channels in the weeds or drop offs that provide fish a hiding place from which to ambush passing insects. If you can see the weeds, you will have an extra thrill seeing a big trout suddenly appear from nowhere and grab your fly. If you are fishing blind there will be no question about the strike.

Materials:

Hook: Tiemco TMC200R, 4

Thread: Monocord, olive 3/0

Underbody: Art foam

Body: Vernille or Ultra Chenille, Golden olive and dark olive

Eyes: Mono eyes, medium

Wingcase: Ozark original mottled turkey, dyed olive

Legs: Pheasant tail, olive dyed (picric acid color)

Head: Vernille, dark olive

Tying Steps:

1. Most of us smash down the barb before starting to tie. Barbless hooks are easier to take out of the fish when we release them.

2. Start thread about one eye width behind the eye and build a little thread base for the mono eyes. Attach the eyes by holding them on top of the hook parallel to the shank and wrapping the thread two or three times. Then rotate them to a right angle on the shank and secure tightly with figure eight wraps.

3. Wrap the thread smoothly back to a point just over the barb. Make it a uniform thread base to help keep the other materials in place. A fairly short thread length between hook and bobbin will let you wrap quickly using only a little wrist movement. Return the thread forward to the eyes.

4. Attach the lighter color Vernille to the near side of the hook; start just behind the eye and wrap thread over it all the way back to a point above the barb. Bring the thread forward so you can attach the darker color Vernille on the far side of the hook just behind the eye, and wrap it down to the same point as the lighter material. By putting Vernille on the sides you are starting to shape the wide body of the fly.

5. Frank uses an 1/8-inch thick open pore, art foam. He cuts it about 1/4- to 3/8-inch wide, using a ruler and razor blade or supporting it with cardboard

and slicing through everything with a paper cutter.

6. Tie the art foam at the eye on the near side of the hook, and wrap it rearward nearly as far back as the Vernille. When wrapping the art foam you are building a dragonfly nymph shaped body which is fatter in the rear. However, make the wraps and direction changes as smoothly as possible because any steps in the underbody will make Vernille weaving difficult. Wrap the foam forward, overlapping each wrap a little, for about 2/5ths of the distance between the barb and the eye, and then wrap back to the rear end of the foam. Wrap foam forward to mid-shank, and back to the rear of the foam. Finally, wrap forward to about 1/3rd shank length back from the eye. Secure the foam, trim, whip finish and cut thread.

7. Using flat jawed pliers, squash the body flat to look like a natural.

8. Now you are ready for the parallel weaving process. It is the same weave that many tiers use on the Bitch Creek Nymph. Weaving may be performed either from the front or the rear. Frank did his weaving from the rear, so point the vise and fly away from you. From this view the lighter color Vernille is on the right side of the hook. *(One hint: whenever you're moving the darker Vernille, it is always over the hook with the left hand farther away from you than the right hand.)*

9. Hold the darker Vernille in your left hand, and the lighter Vernille in the right. Move the darker Vernille over the hook and to the right. (Your left hand moves beyond the hook's eye to a position to the right and below the level of the hook.) Bring the lighter Vernille from back to front over the darker Vernille and then under the hook to the left. (Your right hand passes beyond the hook's eye in order to bring the material under the hook to the left side.) Bring the darker Vernille over the hook, then wrap the lighter Vernille over the darker and under the hook to the right side. Your hands should be in the starting position.

10. Pull the Vernille toward you a little to prevent weaving gaps.

11. Repeat this weaving process until you are just in front of the underbody.

12. Hold both strands of Vernille and thread from your bobbin under the fly. Reattach your thread and tie off the Vernille under the hook. Trim the Vernille.

13. At no time during this weaving process do your fingers leave your hands or drop the Vernille.

14. Frank prepares his turkey wing quills by pouring undiluted Dave's Flexament on a feather and spreading it around with his fingers. By the time he finishes half a dozen feathers, the first one is ready to use.

15. Trim out a segment of wing quill about 5/16-inch wide, fold it half lengthwise and cut it on a slant to notch it. Open it and tie it right behind the eyes so the front 1/4-inch of the woven body is covered by the wing case.

16. Trim or pull off six to eight fibers from a pheasant center tail feather. Tie them on one side so they angle outward. Then with another six to eight fibers make legs for the other side. The legs should be about 5/8-inch long. Tie on a length of dark olive Vernille behind the eyes on the near side of the hook and move the thread in front of the eyes. Take three wraps of Vernille behind the eyes and use a figure eight wrap across the eyes. Finally, tie it off behind the hook's eye, trim and whip finish securely. Do not use head cement because it will soak into the Vernille.

Now if you think this is too much work for a real good looking dragonfly nymph you might be able to find them in a specialty fly shop or ask a professional tier to do the job. In 1994 they sold retail for about \$2.50 each. No matter how you acquire them, a Martin's Meany or two will get you a bunch of fish.

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