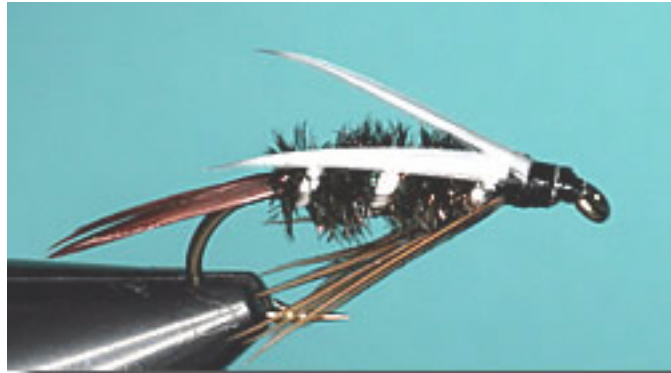


PRINCE



By Bob Bates

There are so many great fly tiers at TU and FFF shows that finding someone to photograph for the FFF Fly of the Month is easy. Just look for an empty chair in front of a tier, and sit down. Such was the case at the 2011 East Idaho Fly Tying Expo when I sat down in front of Milt Jenkins of Taylorsville, Utah. I looked at his nice flies on display, and then I realized he had only one hand. A prosthetic device served as the other hand. He lost his left hand in an industrial accident, and in no way was he going to wither away in a pool of self-pity. He continued his love of fly tying, which started when he was 14, found a way around the limitations of his prosthesis and returned to work two months after the accident. He still ties flies professionally, although he admits that he is a little slower than before when he turned out 5,000 to 6,000 flies a year.

One of the flies that Milt tied was a Prince. Many books and anglers call it the Prince Nymph, so take your choice. This nymph was developed by Californian Doug Prince in 1941. Doug was also a winner of the FFF Buszek Memorial Award in 1981. He tied the original pattern with black ostrich herl, and it survives to this day as the Black Forked Tail. It uses black biots for the tail. However, nearly every Prince (Nymph) that I have seen in books and fly shops is tied with brown biots and peacock herl. It is sometimes called the Brown Forked Tail. Most anglers consider this a moving water fly, but I have used it with success in lakes.

In streams fish it like any other nymph. Cast so it drifts around boulders, through current seams, below riffles and other places where you think trout might be looking for food. Sometimes there are no clear features in the water or indications of subsurface irregularities. Then I usually cast one quarter upstream, and let the fly drift naturally downstream. Sometimes I let it sink a bit more by letting out line. At the end of the drift the fly will swing toward shore. Don't be in a hurry to retrieve the line; let the fly hang for a while in the current below you. You might be surprised by a nice fish. Some writers say that fish follow the fly across the current and hit when the fly stopped. It could also be that the fish was searching the quiet near shore water for a bit of food. For me it is usually several seconds after the swing is completed before the fish hits. Maybe it just got irritated at that bug swinging in the current. Normally I use a floating fly line and a 10- to 12-foot leader. If the water is deep I'll use a sink tip line and a shorter leader.

In lakes I'll use floating to full sinking lines. On the sinking lies, I will shorten the leader to sometimes only five feet. Retrieves range from a slow hand twist to vigorous strip, but most of the time it will be an irregular strip/pause/strip type of retrieve.

Materials List

Hook: Daiichi 1180, sizes 6 - 14

Weight: Optional, can use a thin lead wire for weight

Thread: Black 6/0 or 8/0

Tail: Goose biots, brown

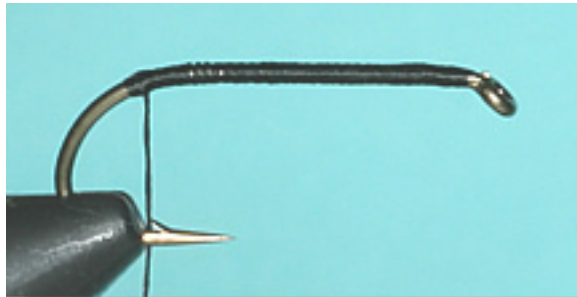
Rib: Silver oval tinsel

Body: Peacock herl, 3 or 4 pieces.

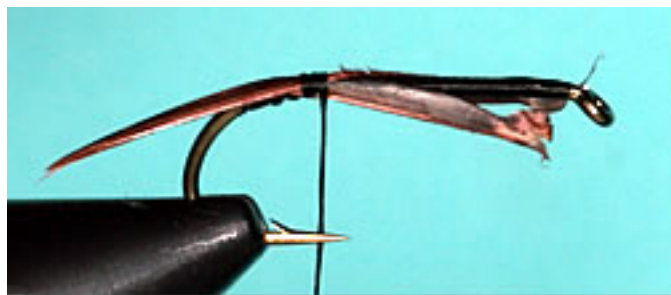
Beard: Pheasant tail fibers

Wings: Goose biots, white

Tying steps:



1. Start thread behind eye and wind back to over barb.



2. Attach the tail. Tie biots in so the concave side is toward the hook, so when the thread is tightened they will flair outward a bit. Want the length to be about half the length of the body.



3. Trim excess butts on tail, and then tie on rib. Milt also uses gold oval tinsel or holographic tinsel.



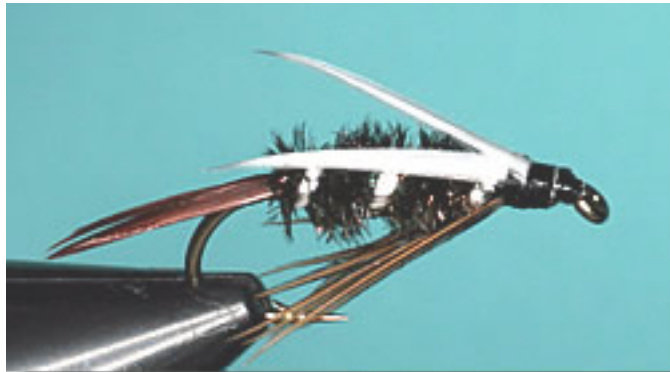
4. Tie 3-4 pieces of peacock herl behind eye, wrap back to the barb and then forward for a full body. Secure herl about two eye lengths behind the eye.



5. Reverse wrap rib so it goes across the herl and doesn't sink into it. Half hitch after the rib is secured to prevent bad language. Trim excess tinsel.



6. The next step is easier when the hook is turned over. A vise that rotates is a convenience for this. Recently Milt has been using pheasant tail fibers for the beard rather than hackle. It is easier to handle. Pull the fibers straight out from the shaft to even the tips, and then pull them off. Tie them on the bottom of the hook with a couple of thread winds. If necessary pull the fibers one way or the other so the tips are just barely touching the point of the hook. When they are in the right place tighten the thread.



7. Turn the hook right side up, and put on the wings one at a time. Adjust them so they are about body length. Put a couple more thread winds to hold them in place. Hold a finger on top as the thread is pulled down so the wings do not roll over. Trim the excess biots. Whip finish to cover the white butts. Put on a little glue on its head to finish it.

Closing Comments: Milt uses different materials for the rib, gold oval tinsel and holographic tinsel. Some tiers wrap a brown hackle and do not make a beard. Others wrap the brown hackle, and pull the barbs down to make a beard. Still others pull off a bunch of brown barbs, and make them into a beard. This makes a good bead head fly also. Most people use gold beads. So what I am saying is there are many ways to tie a fly that will catch a fish. The most important thing is to go fishing.

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