

Federation of Fly Fishers Fly of the Month

**Joe & Dave's Hoppers
August 1998**

	Joe's Hopper
	Dave's Hopper

Comments by Jim Abbs

Throughout the U.S., this is the time of year when grasshoppers become abundant. If you are in luck, a blessed wind will blow these wonderful fish snacks into your favorite waters. When that happens, whether it is the Bighorn River in Montana, a little creek in northern New Hampshire or some mid-south tailwater, it is a great time to be a fly fisher.

The advantages are many. First, a delicate presentation is not critical because even big selective trout (largemouth or smallmouth bass, bluegill, etc.) are looking for the tell-tale splat of this helpless terrestrial as it flops into their food lane. Second, these are big flies and you can use short leaders that are easy to cast. Moreover, even if a hopper has been chewed on a few times, the fish don't seem to mind.

So, what is the downside with hopper patterns, aside from the fact that they don't work all year round?. The biggest problem with hoppers is keeping them afloat. One of the most famous hopper patterns is that of the famous Joe Brooks, appropriately named **Joe's Hopper**. Joe's hopper has a body of synthetic dubbing, with the rest of the fly constructed of turkey wings and regular hackle. This is a dynamite pattern, but because of its materials, it will start to get fatally waterlogged after a dozen or so casts, and especially gunked up by a fish.

Other hopper patterns appear to be attempts to devise a hopper that is as successful as the one by Joe Brooks, but floats better. These include **Dave's Hopper** (by Dave Whitlock), The **Letort Hopper** (by Ed Shenk), **Deer Hopper** (By Jack Dennis), and a Dave's Hopper with legs, **Jay's Hopper** (by Jay Buchner).

The Deer Hair Hopper takes Joe's Hopper (with its dubbed fur body, palmered hackle and conventional hackle wound behind the eye of the hook) and adds a body of yellow spun deer hair, which helps it float a lot better. Dave's Hopper is different yet again because it has a yarn body but a spun deer hair head, and also retains the palmered hackle of Joe's Hopper.

To give you some choices, I have provided materials and tying instructions for both Joe's Hopper (the classic) and Dave's Hopper (the best floater, with a Joe's Hopper kind of look).

Materials	Joe's Hopper	Dave's Hopper
Hook:	Mustad 9672 or equivalent 3X long, # 6-14	Mustad 9672 or equivalent 3X long, # 6-14
Thread	Brown or gray	Brown or gray
Tail	Red hackle fibers	Red deer hair fibers
Body	Dubbed yellow fur	Yellow yarn
Rib	Brown saddle hackle trimmed - palmered	Brown dry fly hackle, tied palmered
Wings	Mottled brown turkey quill	Laquer turkey wing quill, with yellow calf underwing
Hackle	Brown & Grizzly mixed behind head	None aside from palmered rib
Head	Thread, whip finished	Spun and trimmed deer body hair (natural colors)

Tying Steps	Joe's Hopper (JH) Dave's Hopper DH
1.	Tie in several fibers of red deer hair (DH) or red hackle fibers (JH)
2.	Lay down a thread base from the middle of the hook and tie on one brown hackle (saddle-JH; dry fly-DH).
3.	Wrap body with yellow dubbed fur (JH) or yellow yard (DH)
4.	Wrap brown hackle forward in a palmered fashion and tie off.
5.	Place one of two matched turkey quills with the curve down and the tip pointing up on one side. place it flat against the body. Tie in quill wing, fairly tightly so it does not stick straight out or down.
6.	Tie in second wing on other side in the same manner. Cement tie-in point for wings.
7. JH-	Wind in a brown and grizzly hackle and tie off.
7. DH-	Spin several small bunches of light brown or light gray deer hair and trim to form a head.
8.	Trim bottom of palmered hackle rib so it is even with the point of the hook.

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