

LARRY'S LIGHTNING BUG



By Bob Bates

Comments:

Many anglers considerate it their go-to pattern, and it has even been specified as the only fly to use in a fishing contest. Note: Many of us do not condone fishing contests especially on public waters. Catch and release is acceptable, especially if the fish is handled carefully and returned to the water quickly. Aaron Cully tied this fly at the Washington Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg, WA, May, 2008. This pattern is a creation of Larry Graham from western Washington. With the iridescent glow of the Mylar it could imitate a hatching insect.

Aaron said that this is usually a moving water pattern, but some anglers also use it in lakes. In moving water look for places where fish might be waiting to ambush an insect as it drifts by. Anyplace there are different currents like eddies near shore. Cast the fly so it moves along the current seam. If that doesn't work try a little deeper into the eddy. There however, there is not much time to attract a fish. It sometime takes a bit of skill to keep the fly from getting ripped out by the faster current. Mid stream boulders offer several more targets. The upstream face of the rock has a dead zone that fish can use as an ambush point. Cast the fly so it moves toward the front of the rock, and drifts around the side. The quieter water behind the rock is also a good resting place. Fish all the places where a fish can hold without spending a lot of energy.

In lakes I usually try around weed beds, especially if there are channels in the weeds. Pull the fly along the channel, and it is a thrill to see a fish to rush out of its cover to nail it. Holes in the weeds are good hiding places also. One problem is that the fish know where the weeds are and rush back into them for safety. So be alert, and use a tippet strong enough to control the fish. Depending on conditions a floating or sink tip line is the thing to use. Also, if there are near surface weeds this pattern might be too heavy. If there are no visible weed beds try fishing near the bottom. Use a full sinking fly line, cast as far as you can, let it sink for a length of time, most of us count down the sink time. At the end of the sink time start a retrieve, and expect a hit at any time. If there are weeds on your fly you let it sink too long. If there are no weeds let it sink a little longer. Vary the sink time and retrieve until you have some good luck.

Materials list:

Hook: Tiemco 3761, 2xh, 3xl size 12 - 20

Weight: Bead and lead wire.

Thread: Olive, dun, brown and gold

Tail: Pheasant tail fibers

Rib: Copper wire

Body: Mylar or silver holographic tinsel

Thorax: Peacock herl, color side out black side toward shank. One strand

Wing: Hen feather with good color out to end.

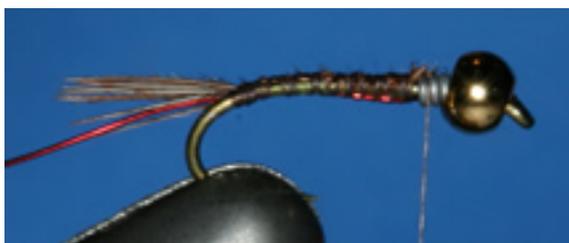
Tying steps:



1. Smash down barb with smooth jaw pliers. Thread bead on hook with small hole to front. Put 6 wraps of lead wire on hook. Make sure that the lead wire is well imbedded in the back of the bead. Start thread near front of hook and wind to a point over the barb. Larry specified tungsten bead.



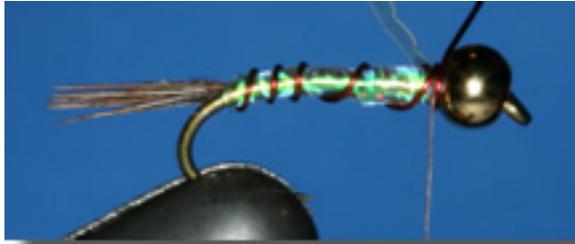
2. Tie in 9 to 11 pheasant tail fibers. The tail is a little more than a gap length long. Secure the tail on top of hook from the lead coil to the bend.



3. Secure the copper wire between the bend and lead coil, and wind thread to back of hook. Keep wire on the bottom of the hook. Move the thread behind back to the bead.



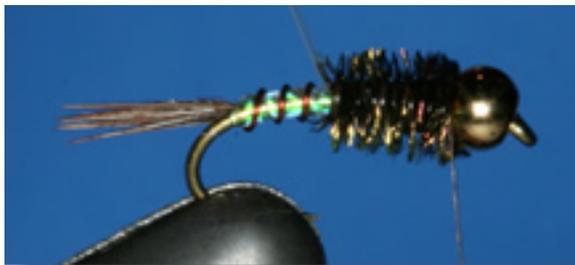
4. Use a soft loop to trap pearlescent Mylar. Wind thread over the Mylar back to the bend. Winding from front to back lets you hold the Mylar to keep it under control, and keep it on top of hook. Use small on size 20 hook and medium on sizes 16-18 hooks, and wide on larger hooks.



5. Move thread to back of bead, wrap Mylar forward to bead, and tie it off behind the bead. Do not cut Mylar. Spiral three turns of copper wire from the tail tie in point to about mid-shank, then put an open spiral to bead, and tie in there.



6. Trim copper wire. Pull Mylar back along top of shank, and wind thread over it to a point about half way between the tail tie in and the bead. Do not cut Mylar.



7. Anchor one peacock herl at about mid-shank, wind thread forward to bead, wrap herl forward in close wraps to bead and secure.



8. Select a hen feather with even color to the tips and barbs about half shank length long, Cut out tip of feather. Stroke some of the barbs away from the cut tip as shown. Put feather on top of hook with cut end facing backward as shown. Secure with only the weight of bobbin to hold it.



9. Carefully trim feather, pull Mylar forward and secure with light thread wraps. Trim Mylar leaving about a 16th of an inch. Put a little head cement on thread and whip finish right behind the bead

Closing comments: This is a great pattern that has taken all kinds of fish, including steelhead. Sizes are not given for beads and lead wire for all hook sizes. I usually start with a 1/8-inch bead for a size 12 hook. Pick the size of bead, tungsten or brass, to fit your needs. Your friendly fly shop owner can offer suggestions. A guideline for the lead is: Use a diameter equal to the diameter of the wire in the hook. It works when you are fishing without hatches, but it is excellent when there are hatches. Aaron mentioned that a smaller version worked great when PMDs were hatching. The largest PMD is size 16, and some are smaller than 20.

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