

PURPLE HAZE



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Opening Comments

Ilene Hirsh from Salem, OR called this a variation of the Parachute Adams as she tied it at the 25th Fly fishing Expo, in Albany, OR and later in an e-mail. So out of curiosity I did an internet search. First I tried just “Purple Haze” and received 2.9 million hits for vegetation (cannabis), Jimmy Hendricks, etc. When I entered “Purple Haze fishing fly” I had only 139,000 hits, but there was a bewildering array of patterns: dry flies, wet flies, emergers, bead heads, streamers, etc. all named purple haze. Also two or three different people were given credit for designing it. When I looked at just parachutes there were many ways of tying it. The only common factor with this attractor was it caught a lot of fish. People caught fish in streams and lakes. Even my doctor used it, as does Ilene, on the Madison river.

Ilene wrote in an e-mail “It's used to match BWO, duns, drakes, and tricos.” From the internet search it works great in the spring time and in the fall to match different hatches. Just change the size to match the insect. You can also change the hackle colors to match the insects. So how do you fish it.

For streams I always think “drag free drift.” You want the fly to look like a drifting insect. If there a “v” wake coming off the fly that’s drag, so change your ways. Cast upstream with a slight hook in the leader so the fly is slightly off to the side of the line. Cast across stream with an upstream mend. Remember when mending a line on the water, you cause drag. Cast downstream with a wiggle cast, and hope the fish hits before the line

straightens. Another way of achieving the same effect is to throw your line up a little. It will fall with a series of curves like a wobble cast. If you cast too high the line will land at your feet.

In lakes, remember the wind. If you can cast and let the fly sit, great. However, there are times when you want the fly to look alive, so wiggle it a little. If there is wind, use the above suggestions for moving water, and have fun.

Materials list

Hook: Tiemco 100, sizes 10 – 18 (Or other dry fly hook)

Thread: Black or color to match body

Tail: Natural brown elk

Body: Flex Floss, Purple, light green, light blue, and black seem best

Post: Calf tail or poly yarn, white

Hackle: Grizzly and brown

Thorax: Peacock herl

Tying steps



Step 1

Start with a good thread base, and leave the thread at the point.



Step 2

Tie on a small bunch of elk hair. Clip off excess flared elk hair.



Step 3

Tie in a piece of Flex Floss. Be sure it is secured to right in front of the tail. Wrap the thread forward to about the two thirds point and trim excess Flex Floss.



Step 4

Attach a bundle of poly or calf tail at the one quarter point.



Step 5

Pick up the poly or calf tail, and wind thread around it to stiffen the post, and create a base for the hackle. At first you might have to hold the poly up as you wind the thread around it. Leave the thread at the back of the post.



Step 6

Prepare two feathers, brown and grizzly, by trimming off some of the fibers at the base. If you use Whiting 100 feathers you must trim the fibers rather than pulling them off and thinning the shaft. Secure the feathers, tips forward and dull side down, one at a time to the shank of the hook. Wind thread over the feathers to the base of the post, hold both feathers upright along the post and wind thread around feathers and up post. Return thread to the hook shank, behind the post.



Step 7

Wrap the Flex Floss forward to the post, secure and trim. Secure one peacock herl in front of post and return thread to rear of post.



Step 8

Wrap peacock herl rearward and secure behind post. Trim excess.



Step 9

Wrap both hackles together down the post. Make each wrap tightly below the other. Make at least three wraps with each hackle. Anchor the feathers by passing the thread over the material there by catching the feathers and around the post. If you hold the feathers at a downward angle, just a little, it helps capture the material.



Step 10

Keep tension on the thread and wrap around the post 3 -4 times. Apply glue to the thread after the first two wraps and continue wrapping the thread around the post. This will anchor the thread. Trim the excess feather.



Step 11

Half hitch or whip finish around the post and under the hackle. Trim poly to give a shank length post.

Closing Comments

As I watched Ilene tie this pattern I thought it be a pretty fly for the Fly of the Month. It wasn't until later that I found out how popular and useful it is. Tie a few and test them in your waters. Ilene, thank you for reviewing and editing the article.

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.