

Phil's Flybox

By Phil Rowley

The Irresistible Adams

My hiatus is over and Phil's Fly Box is back. The book is nearly done. For the first time the light in front of me appears to be the end of the tunnel and not a train coming the other way. A bunch of pictures, some proof reading and final editing and she's off to the publisher.

As I sit and write this column it is the end of August, high season on the Skagit and a host of other rivers and streams around the province. It is a time for dry flies and surface swirling trout. The Skagit holds a special place in my heart, as it was here that I caught my first trout on the fly. The entire river is one of the most beautiful and scenic places to stand and cast a line. The trout are an added bonus. Proof once again that trout don't live in ugly places. From reports I have heard the Skagit has been fishing well. I am looking forward to the September fish out.

This month's pattern is by desperate request from editor Brian Wood. Brian confessed he has difficulty tying this buoyant dressing. The Irresistible is the design of American fly tier Joe Messinger who according to Randall Kaufmann is credited with the amalgamation of a spun hair body and traditional dry wings and hackle. The original design was refined in the early sixties, but Jack Dennis popularized the Irresistible contributing to its renaissance. For additional help tying this pattern, Jack Dennis' video *Tying Western Flies* provides detailed instruction and explanation that will help anyone. I believe we have this video in the club library as long as no one has had it for over a year! (Just a little plug to help Duncan.) Randall Kaufmann's book *Tying Dry Flies* is another excellent reference.

The Irresistible evolved into an Adams with a spun hair body replacing the familiar grey body. The first trick to this pattern is starting off the proportions right. Cover the rear half of the hook with tying thread to ensure that body does not drift past the midpoint. A moose hair tail provides excellent support but controlled thread tension at the base of the tail keeps the tail from flaring wildly. It is critical to get the tail firmly planted on the hook or the tail will spin. For the body I prefer caribou hair. Caribou is the best material for spun body flies. It is soft and flares at the first sign of thread pressure. To form the body, ease the hair around the hook shank and flare the hair in place as opposed to spinning. Once the hair is flared use additional wraps to lock it into place. Depending upon the size of your hair stacks and the fly it should take no more than 3 applications of hair to form the body. I use a hair packer to compress the hair. A tightly packed body floats best. Once at the halfway point either half hitch or whip finish and cut the tying thread. If you are planning on tying a bunch of Irresistibles complete a number of these "rear clips" before going any further. Grab the hook by the bend and begin by trimming the hair as flush as possible along the bottom. This ensures your finished concoction will hook fish. Trim the balance of the body to a neat taper. Be careful not to ravage the tail. Once satisfied with the body, reattach the thread and cover the front half of the shank. Tie the wings in place at the $\frac{3}{4}$ s point on the hook. The wings should be shank-length. Secure them in the upright position with tying thread and then tie in two hackles. Lay the hackles on top of each other shiny side to dull side prior to tying in. Stroke them together so they behave as one. Tie the hackles in together and wind them forward at the same time. The end result will be a dense, bushy hackle. Try using your natural hackle pliers (fingers) to wind the hackle as this makes controlling the two feathers easy.

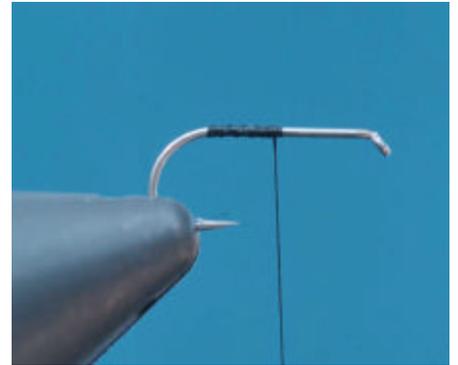
The Irresistible can be difficult especially the first attempts, but if proportions are balanced and you don't pound materials onto the hook you should be able to get the hang of things. If you still find yourself frustrated grab a wobbly pop, take a break, relax and think things through. Better yet, go to the Skagit and give your Irresistible a swim. Chances are the fish won't worry as long as it floats in a natural fashion.

The Irresistible Adams

Hook: Tiemco 100 #8-#16
 Thread: Black
 Tail: Moose Body Hair
 Body: Caribou, Spun and clipped
 Wings: Grizzly Hackle Tips
 Hackle: Grizzly and Brown

Step 1

De-barb the hook and place it into the jaws of the vise. Cover the rear half of the hook with thread.



Step 2

Select and stack a bunch of moose body hair. Measure the tail so it is shank length. Don't wrap the tail so tight that it flares all over the place. The tail must be secure enough however so it does not spin about the hook.



Step 3

Prepare a stack of caribou hair by cleaning all of the short fibers and under fur out. Massage the stack around the hook and place a couple of loose wraps of tying thread completely around the caribou. With the third wrap increase the thread tension. Continue to wind thread in the same spot using a tight, tighter tightest approach. Applying too much tension too fast often results in broken thread. With practice you should be able to form the body using 6/0 thread.



Step 4

With the body occupying the rear half of the hook half hitch or whip finish and cut the tying thread. Trim the body to a neat, balanced and tapered shape. Be sure to trim the body flush along the bottom so the hook point is not impeded. Once trimmed place the completed body back into the vise and reattach the tying thread.

**Step 5**

Cover the front half of the hook point with thread. Place the thread at the mid-point of the front half of the hook. This should place you at $\frac{3}{4}$ s of the hook shank. Select two grizzly hackle feathers for the hackle wings. I prefer the wide feathers found at the base of a saddle patch or those found on a hen cape. Tie the wings in place and stand them upright with tying thread. Trim the excess material.

**Step 6**

Select one brown and one grizzly hackle. Strip away the flue exposing the stem of the feather. Once prepared lay them one on top of each other and stroke them together so they appear as one. Tie the pair into together directly in front of the body with the shiny side facing towards you. Leave a bit of the stripped hackle exposed to help aim the hackles when winding.

**Step 7**

Grab the hackles using your thumb and forefinger and wind them forward to the hook eye. If things go well you should place three wraps behind the wing and three wraps in front. Tie off the hackles and trim the excess. Don't crowd the head.

**Step 8**

Pull down on the tying thread to maintain tension. Gently sweep the hackles back to expose the hook eye. Build a neat head, whip finish and apply head cement.



**Got a favorite pattern you would like to share with fellow club members?
Please let me know and I will feature it in a future issue. - Phil at
flycraft@uniserve.com**

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