

Tying a Buzz Ball by Don Fine (01/22)

Introduction – the Buzz Ball was developed by Gary Lafontaine (creator of the famous caddis sparkle pupae and caddis emerger). Gary, one of the most innovative fly tiers of his era, is accredited with tying the Buzz Ball to simulate a cluster of fresh water midges.

Materials –

- Hook – standard dry fly hook, sizes 12-20
- Thread – 8/0 , preferably orange
- Hackle – orange/grizzly +light dun+ grizzly (neck) sized 1 1/2X hook gap

Tying Steps-

- Pinch down the hook barb and begin wrapping thread immediately behind the eye and proceed to wrap the thread toward the bend of the hook, stopping directly above the hook barb.
- Select one (pre-sized) grizzly hackle feather and strip off the fluff at the butt end of the feather, leaving ~1/4" the hackle stem exposed.
- Tie the grizzly hackle feather in directly above the hook barb such that the bare stem of the feather is lying alongside the hook shank with the butt forward and the feather tip to the rear of the hook. Cover the bare stem with thread wraps forward and then return wraps to the rear (i.e. above the hook barb).
- Select one small orange/grizzly hackle feather and one small light dun hackle feather and strip off the fluff at the butt end of the two feathers. Also trim about 1/8" of the fibers on one side of butt end of the feather (preferably trim the right side as the concave side of the feather is facing down).
- Hold the two feathers together with the butts facing forward on the hook. Make thread wraps forward over the butts stopping just short of the hook eye.
- Using hackle pliers to hold the orange/grizzly and dun feathers together, begin to palmer wrap these two feathers forward over the hook shank, stopping just short of the hook eye. Make several thread wraps over and behind the loose end of the feathers, then 2 thread wraps in front of the feathers. Use 2 half-hitches to secure the thread and clip off the excess feather tips.
- Clip the hackle fibers parallel to the hook to create a miniature 'porcupine' appearance.
- Wrap the pre-sized grizzly hackle fiber forward palmering it through the entire shank of the hook, stopping immediately behind the eye. Make several thread wraps over and behind the loose end of the grizzly feather, then 2 thread wraps in front of the feather. Use several half-hitches to secure the thread and clip off the excess feather tips.
- Then trim the grizzly hackle fibers both on the top and underside of the hook to the length of the orange/grizzly and dun feathers, while leaving the grizzly hackle fibers on each side of the hook shank at the full length of the pre-sized hackle feather.