

Fly Of The Month by Jim Ferguson

March Brown Dry



- Hook: 10 to 12 (TMC 100BL)
- Tail: Ginger cock hackle fibers
- Body: Greyish yellow-brown fox-fur dubbing or Hareline March Brown
- Wing: Wood duck drake brownish flank feather, with distinct barring, divided
- Hackle: Dark grizzly and dark ginger wound together (or separately)
- Head: Orange (8/0 UNI)

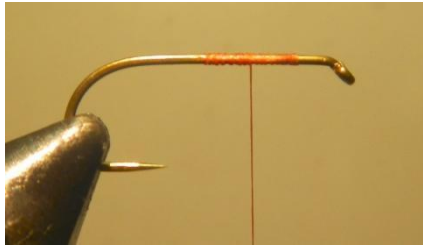
The March Brown pattern has roots in England. Preston Jennings created the American March Brown from those English roots. Here, in the United States, there are two prominent versions, one called the Eastern March Brown (or just the March Brown) and one called the Western March Brown. The Eastern version is what I would call a more delicate tie while the Western version is more robust for the heavier waters we fish. Then, there are all sorts of pattern variations in between depending on who tied the pattern and what dubbing they found available. Some people like to use the fibers close to the vent for the urine on a fox skin which gets a great pinkish tone from the urine stain. Add a pinch of Adams grey muskrat to a bunch of the pinkish fox fibers and throw them into a blender to get a beautiful March Brown dubbing. Jeff Smith gave Bill Meier a book containing some great classic trout patterns and Bill loaned the book to me. This version of the March Brown was cited in the book.

Step-By-Step Tying Directions

1. Place the hook into the vise. De-barb the hook if needed prior to tying the pattern.



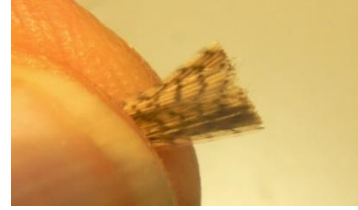
2. Attach the tying thread to the shank about one eye length to the rear of the eye and wrap a thread base to the half shank position, then wrap the thread forward to about the 1/3 shank position.



3. Select a wood duck lemon flank feather with long fibers. Try to choose one with close to equal length fibers on both sides (a center) and remove the fluff from the lower part of the stem. Using your thumb and finger, splay out the fibers from the stem so they have their tips aligned and lie perpendicular to the feather stem.



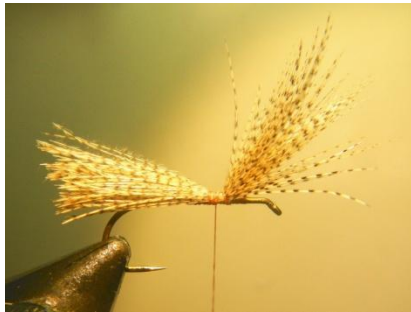
4. Pull several sections off of the stem while keeping the fiber tips even. Stack then into a bunch as in the first picture with the tips as even as possible. When you pull the fibers off, sometimes part of the stem will remain attached holding the fibers in a flat orientation. Pick up the bunch using your thumb and middle finger as in the second picture so the butts are sticking out. Cut off the butts to remove any of the stem holding the fibers together. Now, only the little velcro like fibers on the stems hold the fibers together.



5. Lay the bundle down carefully so the tips remain aligned. Using the thumb and middle finger again, wet your fingers and pick up the bundle so the tips are sticking out where you can see them. Roll the fibers back and forth, keeping the tips aligned as best as possible. This will blend the sections together and separate some of the feather fibers from each other as shown in the second picture. Wetting your fingers helps in maintaining pressure on the feather fibers while you roll them back and forth.



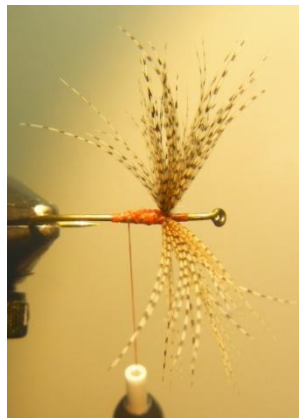
6. Mount the wing fiber bundle (with tips pointing forward) on top of the shank at the 1/3 shank position



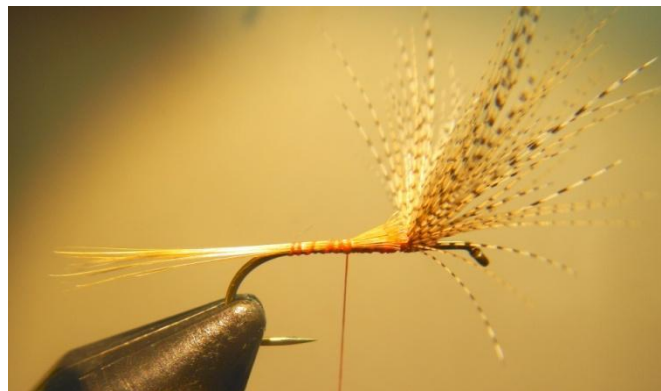
7. By holding up the butts while cutting the wings bundle waste you can create an angled cut that will help in producing a tapered underbody.



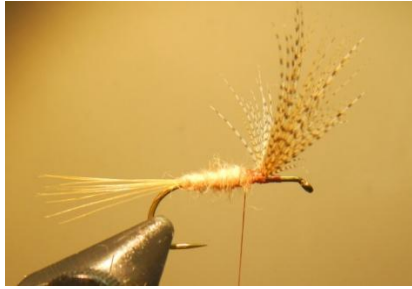
8. Bind down the waste to produce the tapered underbody behind the wing. Wrap the thread forward and wrap several tight wraps in front of the wing up against the wing base to post it up. Let the thread hang. Use your thumb to push the wing bundle back towards the rear. This will make the fibers splay out and separate somewhat into two groups on either side of the shank. Use your thread to figure-eight wrap the wings to provide a divided wing as in the second picture below. Take the tying thread to the tail tie in position at the rear.



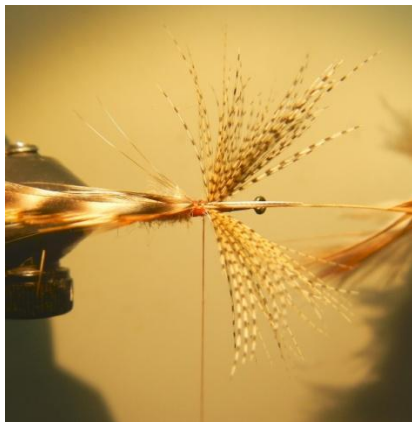
9. Select a ginger cock hackle with nice stiff fibers for the tail material. Splay the fibers out to the side to align the ends and pull or cut the fibers off the stem. Tie in the tail bundle on top of the shank. Tail should be a shank length of slightly shorter. Try to keep the tail fibers level with the hook shank. A turn of tying thread under the tail may help in keeping the fibers level as well as letting them splay a little. This is a mayfly and the natural would have forked tails. Wrap the thread up the shank over the tail waste to the back of the tapered wing tie down assembly. This helps in creating a smooth body taper without any bumps. Trim the remaining tail waste fibers and take the thread to the rear.



10. Dub a tapered body leaving a space behind the wing to attach the hackles.



11. Prepare the hackles by stripping off some fibers from the stems. You will be attaching two hackles, a grizzly and a dark ginger. Place the hackles with their concave sides together. This allows some of the fibers to face forward, and some to face backward when wrapped around the shank. There are at least two ways to tie in the hackles. One way is to attach them to the underside of the shank. Another way is to allow the stems to lie along the top of the shank between the divided wings. This helps to keep the wings divided. Make several thread wraps to bind the hackle stems on top of the shank and behind the wing. Take the thread under the wing and bind down the stems on top of the shank in front of the wing. Let the thread hang.



12. Sometimes both hackles can be wound on at the same time. Care must be taken to keep from twisting the stems as you wrap. You also have to be sure not to trap or pull wing fibers around the shank as you make the under the wing transition with the hackle stems. The genetic hackles with their small diameter stems help in maximizing hackle density without stem bulk. You can also wrap the hackles one at a time but you need to wiggle the stems so they seat down on the shank without trapping the fibers from the previously wound hackle. Here, I have wrapped the hackles separately. Make two or three turns behind the wing, cross over under the shank and wrap two turns in front. Try to leave a place for the other hackle to be wrapped up against the front of the wing. Tie off the first hackle with two or three turns of thread but do not cut the waste. Wrap the second hackle forward while wiggling it so it seats the stem down between the stem wraps of the previously wound hackle. Make two turns behind the wing and cross over under the wing and make two or three turns of hackle in front of the wing. Tie off the hackle stem with a couple of thread wraps, trim the hackle wastes, form the head, and whip finish.



13. If you use head cement, be sure to pull the hackle fibers back out of the way and run a stem through the eye to clear it if needed. A check on proportions and balance can be done by setting the fly down on a level surface. A three point stance is hoped for where the fly will be supported by the (1) hackle tips, (2) bottom of hook bend, and (3) tip of the tail.



