

It Started as a Joke: The Trude Family



Royal Tude

Lime Trude

In the early 1900's, the mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison, was taking a vacation on the Idaho ranch of his friend, Alfred S. Trude. As a gag, the mayor created for his host a gift fly made from strands of the rug on the floor and the hair of Mr Trude's spaniel, tied on hook large enough to be used for muskie. (They had previously had a heated discussion about hook sizes.) When they both looked at the fly the next morning, they thought it might actually catch fish if tied on a more trout-sized hook. They proceeded to do so, and indeed caught more than either could carry. Word of the success of the fly spread, and it was soon christened the Trude.

This was before bucktail streamers or Wulff style flies; it's often credited as being the first hairwing fly of any sort. Originally fished wet, it soon became more popular to tie it as a dry fly. It spawned numerous variations, the most enduring of which are the flies presented here, the Royal Trude and the Lime Trude. Both are still commonly sold in fly shops, especially in the West. The Royal variation is a great attractor fly, and the Lime version is possibly the single most recommended dry imitation of a yellow or lime sally.

(That said, there are actually two flies called a Lime Trude, the one shown here, and the other simply a Royal Trude with lime green floss substituted for the red.)

Tying instructions are similar for both flies, so I'll only give them once.

Royal

Hook: 2x long dry fly hook sizes 10 – 16.

Thread: Black 8/0

Tail: Golden pheasant tippets

Body: Red floss between two sections
of peacock herl

Wing: White calf tail

Hackle: Light Brown

Lime

Standard length dry fly hook sizes 10-16.

Yellow or white 8/0

Golden pheasant tippets

Lime green dubbing

White calf tail

Light Brown

Trude Tying instructions (continued)

Proportions are hard to get right on these flies. The wing takes up more space than you think it should, so the trick is leave plenty of room. The best way to achieve this is to start the thread at point where the body needs to end. On the 2x long hook recommended for the Royal version, this will be about 1/3 of the shank length back from the eye, on the Lime version it should be approximately the mid-point of the shank. From there, wrap back to bend and tie in the tail. The tail should be about the length of shank on the shorter hook, maybe just a bit shorter on the longer hook. Trim the butts of tippet where you started the thread; this reinforces the visual point of where to stop the body. Wrap up to that point, and then back to tail.

For the lime version, simply dub a body, using your favorite dubbing method, up to the tie-in point. For the Royal version, tie in 4-8 strands of peacock herl, depending on the size of the herl. Tie in by the tips. Mentally divide the part of the hook that's being used for the body into three sections, and wrap the herl over the rear section. You'll probably want to twist strands of herl into a rope before doing this; whether or not you include the thread in the ropes is up to you. Tie off the herl, but DO NOT TRIM yet. Wrap the thread over the herl the length of the middle section that you mentally noted above, and then move the thread back to butt section. At this point, tie in a strand of Uni-Floss or 4 strands of 4-stranded floss, advance the thread to the beginning of the middle section, and trim the forward end of the floss. Now, wrap the floss over the hook, thread, and herl up to where the thread is hanging. Tie off and trim the excess. Now advance the thread to the front of the body and wrap the remaining herl to the thread (you'll probably have to re-rope it). Tie off the herl and trim the excess.

Now wrap the thread to the eye of the hook, and back to the tie-in point. (This helps keep the wing from spinning around the hook shank.) Cut off a piece of calf-tail appropriate to the hook size (you'll have to experiment), grasp by the tips, and pull off any fluff/short pieces from the butts. (Try to align the tip before cutting off from the tail -- calf tail doesn't stack very well. Use a stacker anyway. It helps a little.) Tie in the calf tail just in front of the body with a few "soft loop" wraps, and then a few hard wraps. If you like, wrap the thread once or twice behind the wing to get it to stand up just bit. Trim the butts of the calf tail as close as you can get to where it's tied in (which won't be very close.) Completely cover the butt ends with thread, and try to make a smooth taper to the eye. You'll be hackling over this.

When choosing a hackle feather, keep in mind that you'll be wrapping over the thickness of the hair as well as the hook. This means choose a feather that's slight smaller than you might otherwise for this size hook. If you use a hackle gauge, use a feather that's somewhere between the size hook you're using and the next smaller hook size.

Tie in the hackle at the base of the wing and hackle as you would any other dry fly. This fly is intended for rough waters, so get as many turns of hackle in as you can. You should get at least 6 full turns, and 7 or 8 is better. Tie off the hackle, trim the stem, and whip finish.