

George Herter on Variants

The variant is simply a spider fly made with small hackle tip wings or with sections of primary or secondary flight quills tied in upright to form small wings. They can also be tied spent and still conform to tradition. Some tyers use two sizes of hackles on both variants and spiders, tying one regular small hackle and one large one. If this is done, slightly different colored hackles should be used or nothing is gained. The idea is copied from Dr Baigent's "refracta" flies made in England. His "refracta" flies are nothing but variants or spiders. He always tied the long hackle in gray, cream, or misty gray neutral shades and the small hackles, representing the legs of the fly, in a darker shade. The large neutral hackles, long in fiber, disturb the surface of the water on which the fly is floating and produce an alternating refraction which, he claimed, gives the appearance of wings fluttering on the water and also provides a semi-transparent look to the shorter hackles representing the legs. They produce well and are fish getters everywhere.

Page 254 "Tying the Crane Fly, Spiders and Variants".

***Professional Fly Tying and Tackle Making Manual and Manufacturer's Guide* by George Leonard Herter.**

Brown Publishing Company, Minnesota, 1950