

Tying Bench – The Juletrae (AKA Christmas Tree) Tied by Toni Fernstrom

This go-to fly for cold water sea run brown trout has Suncoast potential too.

This simple pattern was originally designed to catch sea-run brown trout near the shorelines of the Atlantic and the Baltic seas. The pattern is the creation of Steen Ulnits, a fly-fishing Dane who also happens to be a marine biologist. Yes, I want to emphasize that the Danes are to blame for creating this hideous fly. Despite its ugly appearance, nobody in Scandinavia (except for some few Swedes) denies the effectiveness of the fly, especially during the early part of the season with water temperatures around 50 and below.



Having mentioned that, I can hear some objections from the local fly angling community. However, I still believe the pattern (with all its variations) has potential here in sub-tropical Tampa Bay. Also, in its favor, is that it is extremely easy to tie. The only two materials used, except for the hook and tying thread, are Mylar tubing and yarn. So tie up a few, give them a try and let me know what you find out. Trust me, if the fly fails I'll be the first in line to let the Danes know.

When you finish tying your first *Juletrae* you are entitled to a shot or two of *Gammel Dansk*, a bitter, traditional Aquavit that will make your eyes water and your whole body cringe.

I will be happy to answer questions about the pattern as well as Danish drinking habits at the upcoming monthly meeting. I will also be giving a lesson how to properly pronounce the name of the fly in Danish.



Materials

Hook: typically a #1-#4 long shank hook. Personally, I like Mustad 34011.

Thread: originally red 3/0, but any contrasting and/or fluorescent color is suitable.

Overbody: originally medium silver Mylar tubing. Pearl (and other) transparent Flashabou tubing is also used.

Underbody: small/medium sized yarn, color of less or no importance. However, when using Flashabou the color of the underbody will shine through, so choose the yarn with this in mind. Fluorescent yarns work great in combination with this kind of tubing. Try pearl Flashabou over fluorescent red or orange. Other popular combos are chartreuse over fluorescent green and black Flashabou over fluorescent blue.

Eyes: originally no weight was used but you can use small or medium bead chain or barbells.

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Tying Bench, continued- The Juletrae (AKA Christmas Tree) Tied by Toni Fernstrom

Tying Sequence

1. Attach red 3/0 tying thread about 1/8" behind hook eye. Cover hook shank down to above the barb.
2. Tie in a 6-8" length of thin/medium size red yarn. Wrap the yarn up to 1/8" behind hook eye and then back to the tie in point, creating a smooth body. Tie off and cut the yarn but leave the tying thread.
3. Cut a piece of medium silver Mylar tubing, the length of about 2.5 to 3 times the hook length. Carefully remove the inner core of the tubing and discard.
4. With your dubbing needle or the tip of your scissors, fray about 1/2-1 inch of the tubing and carefully slip this end over the hook eye and shank down to the bend. Try "threading" the frayed ends past the tying thread all the way to the "clean spot" where the tubing remains intact.



5. With the frayed ends sticking out as a tail, tie in the tubing firmly right at the "clean spot". Whip finish and cut the thread.
6. Stretch the tubing over the body by pulling on the end sticking out past the hook eye. While keeping the tubing stretched, attach the tying thread and tie down the tubing at the same time. The ideal spot is a point halfway between the eye and the front end of the yarn underbody. This operation is a little tricky and may require some thread maneuvering and adjustments.
7. With the tubing firmly tied down, fray the protruding end, again using a dubbing needle or the tip of your scissors. The "fibers" of the tubing should be completely separated all the way down behind the hook eye to the tying thread. (If you want to add weight, now is the time to tie in the bead chain or barbell eyes.)
8. Stroke the frayed "fibers" back over the body, making sure that the "fibers" are uniformly distributed around the hook shank. Tie down and secure the "fibers".
Don't be concerned about the fact that the fibers are all crinkled and twisted, and that the fly has a sort of "the crazy scientist" look... This is ok and will actually add to its appearance once it gets in the water.
(If you chose to add eyes, make sure to tie down the frayed "fibers" behind the eyes.)
9. Create a nice tapered (slightly oversized) head and whip finish.
10. With your scissors, trim the tail and wing to preferred lengths.
11. Secure the head and the rear tie in spot with cement. I prefer to first put on a thin layer of Zap-a-Gap, let dry and finish off with 2 layers of Hard-as-Hull or Sally Hansen's Hard-as-Nail.

Have a drink. Tight Lines -- Toni Fernstrom, the Swede