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## Spring's Wiggler

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I was first introduced to this fly in the mid 1970s when fishing the Betsy River in Michigan for spring-run steelhead. The river was clear and a fisherman in a wheel chair was fishing below the barrier and hooking steelhead one after another. The fly he was using was called a Spring's Wiggler. It was developed by Ron Spring, a Muskegon sport shop owner.

Since then, this fly has been a difference-maker many times for me on the Brule. My favorite body colors are cream, olive, and orange. The tail and wing case is fox squirrel tail. The legs are a webby brown, olive brown, or olive saddle hackle. It's an unweighted fly that ties up easily. I like fishing it dead drift as I would using a stonefly nymph. The thought is that it's designed to imitate a *Hexagenia* mayfly nymph.

### ***Spring's Wiggler Recipe***

1. *Hook: Tiemco TMC 200R in size 6 is standard for this fly on the Brule.*
2. *Thread: Olive, brown, or black Danville 210 Denier flat waxed. Tie in the thread about ¼ inch behind the hook eye and overwrap to a point on the shank where the thread hangs between the hook point and the barb.*
3. *Tail and Wing Case: A 1/16<sup>th</sup> inch clump of fox squirrel tail that is more than 2 inches long with the fluff removed from the base of the hair. Tie in the clump of hair on top of the hook shank where your thread is above the hook point, making a tail that is about ¾ inch long. Use a loose wrap, then 3 or 4 tight wraps. Next splay out the tail a bit by making 2 or 3 wraps under the tail hairs. Make another wrap or two on top, then stand up the clump and make 3 or 4 wraps in front and tight against tail hairs. This will stand up the butt ends of the hair that will become the wing case. These will be pulled over the body and legs in step 7 to make a wing case over a large thorax. A sparser squirrel tail clump seems to work better for me, perhaps because I like fishing this fly in clear water.*
4. *Legs: Tie in a webby saddle hackle by the tip. The first fibers at the tie-in point should be a little longer than the hook gap. Those at the last wrap should be 1½ times the hook gap at the head. This usually requires about 2" of the saddle hackle to get 4 or 5 wraps. I separate the fibers on the stem where I want the hackle to be tied in. I then set the hackle on the back side of the hook and secure with 3 or 4 wraps. Trim excess hackle tip and advance the thread to ¼ inch behind the hook eye. The hackle will be palmered up the body in step 6.*
5. *Body: Medium chenille or Antron yarn in the color of choice. Tie in a length of material long enough to make the body and use your thread to overwrap it on the side of the hook shank to the rear, ending at the standing squirrel hair. Wrap the thread back to ¼ inch behind the hook eye. Wrap the body material up to the thread and tie off.*
6. *Legs: Palmer the saddle hackle forward over the body for 4 or 5 evenly spaced turns, leaving a 3/16<sup>th</sup> inch space for the head.*

7. *Wing case: Wet your fingers a bit and pull the legs evenly down the middle to each side. This should get the top fibers out of the way to pull the Fox squirrel hair over the top to make a wing case. While holding down the hair, make a loose wrap and then 2 tight wraps. Now you can let go of the hair, and pull any loose hairs forward by the tips. Secure with several more tight wraps, trying not to crowd the hook eye. Whip finish and cut the thread. Once satisfied with the position of the hair put a small drop of UV resin on top of the head. Pull up the excess squirrel hair and hit it with the UV light. Then trim the excess hair. This will leave a small head of hair. Finish the remaining head with the UV resin. It is ok to get a little into the hair on top behind the head as the squirrel hair is slippery stuff and can pull out easily on a fish. I like UVcraft UV curable resin the best (<https://uvcraft.com/>).*