

Fly of the Month

by Bob Zagar

Archives Fly of the Month — Sowbug Pattern

Our fly this month is a Sowbug pattern from our archives. The pattern sheet was dated “reissue Sept. 83” so I assume it goes back even further. The pattern is quoted as it was published in 1983.

SOWBUG PATTERN .(Frank Brown – Little Rock, Ark., with modifications by Renick and Taylor. Fly produces in any stream containing this crustacean. Check the weed beds. Particularly useful in the North Fork River below Norfork Dam as this stream is crawling with Sowbugs.)

THREAD: Gray

HOOK: #10 to 18 1X long Mustad Sproat #3906B or equiv. Use large weighted ones for fast, rough water, or small unweighted flies for quiet shallow water. #14 weighted is an all around useful size.

FEELERS: 2 fibers from gray mallard flight feather. These are tied in, divided, at bend of hook (fly is actually a “backwards” tie).

WEIGHT: Lead wire .020” for large hooks, .015” for med. hooks, 010” for small hooks.

UNDERBODY: Solufloss, tapered fore and aft, dipped in solvent, squeezed flat with pliers. Flattened body effect is very realistic, but fly still produces using ordinary dubbed body over lead wire.

BODY: Gray muskrat underfur. Mix in some clippings from back of gray or fox squirrel to roughen mixture.

COVERT: Strip of poly plastic (from smooth plastic bag) 1/8” to 5/16” wide by 1-1/2” long. Taper one end to about 45 degrees with scissors.

RIBBING: Gray nylon thread or fine gold wire.

1. Tie in feelers at bend of hook, divide with thread and cement in position.
2. Wrap in lead wire, tie down and cement (don't crowd eye or bend of hook).
3. Tie in and wrap Solufloss (any dull color) into tapered body (both ends). Tie off with several half hitches, cement hitches and set aside to dry. It's a good idea to make 5 or 6 bodies in various sizes so they may be dipped in solvent and flattened consecutively.
4. Holding fly body by bend of hook, immerse in solvent for 5-10 seconds, shake off excess, let dry 10-15 seconds, flatten with pliers (smooth jawed needle nose preferred). Let dry 10-15 minutes.
5. Tie in at bend of hook: ribbing, pointed end of plastic strip. Apply dubbing to tying thread (use sticky wax if necessary) and wrap body to head, covering Solufloss completely.
6. Stretch poly strip forward, folding it down around eye of the hook, and tie off. Poly should cover lateral edges of dubbed body so that some squirrel hairs will protrude from bottom to simulate legs of this crustacean.
7. Rib closely with gray nylon thread or gold wire. Whip finish and cement. Pick out some fibers on bottom of fly with a needle for legs.
8. Tie it to 4X and go fishing.

I have really enjoyed going back through our archives. What a wealth of information. Let me know if you would like to see more from our rich history.