



OSU EXTENSION
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Making a Rubber Water Spider

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service • Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

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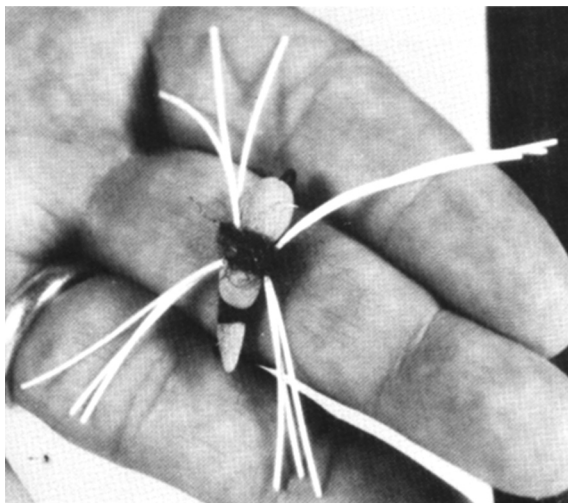
The rubber bug or water spider is a fly rod lure that ranks at the top of fish catching lures. It's primarily used for bass, bluegill, crappie, and species of sunfish, bream, or perch in Oklahoma. In areas where they are common, trout and pike are readily taken on this lure.

The bug, as we will refer to it from now on, can either be wet, a deep runner, or dry, a floater, if you are unfamiliar with fly-fishing terms.

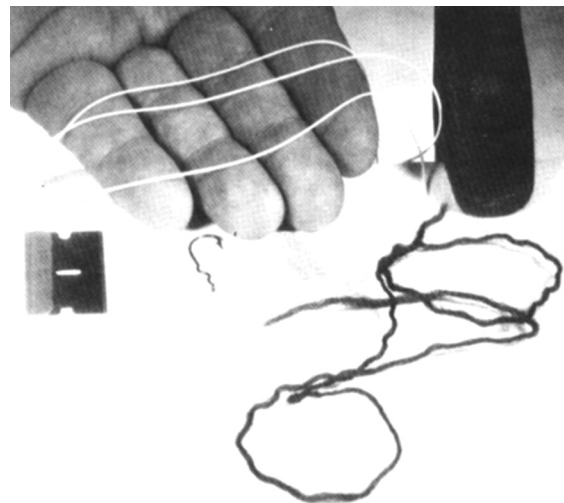
The tools needed to construct the bug are: (1) a vise, (2) rubber sponge bodies, (3) rubber hackle (thin strips of rubber), (4) thread, (5) scissors, (6) razor blades, (7) hump back hooks (size #6 for large sponge bodies; size #8 for small sponge bodies), and (8) fly head cement or clear nail polish.

Wet bug bodies are very porous, and dry bug bodies are almost smooth the choice is yours. But bodies come in several colors; however, black, yellow, white, green, and orange are the favorites.

Be extra careful with the razor blade, hooks, and scissors. Use patience and care when making any cut - it is impossible to add something on after it has been cut off. Use care and caution all the time.



The Rubber Bug or Water Spider.

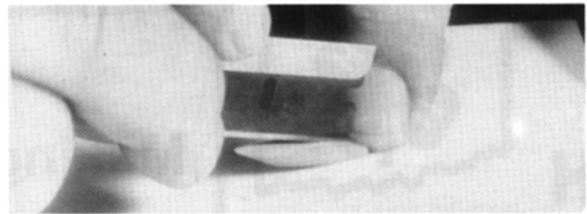


Some of the tools you will need.

Steps in Assembly

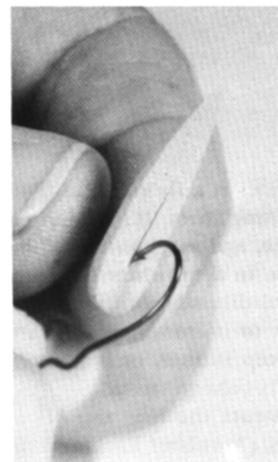
First, adjust the vise. Make sure when the jaws of the vise are closed that the control level is pointed down and away from the head of the vise.

Next, select a bug body of your choice. Notice the rounded side is the top and the flat side or bottom, while the small or pointed end is the head, and the blunt end is the abdomen or posterior. Turn the bug body on its back flat side up. Place your thumb on the blunt end of the bug about $\frac{3}{16}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the blunt end; hold it firmly. Pick up the razor blade and cut away from your thumb straight down the middle for about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch toward the head or pointed end and about halfway through the bug. Do not cut deeper.



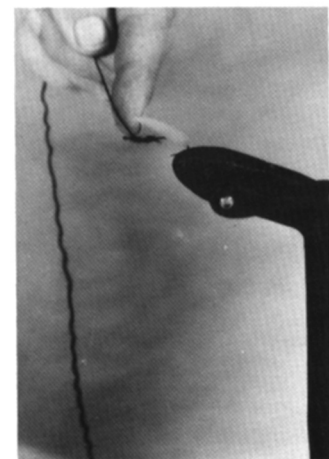
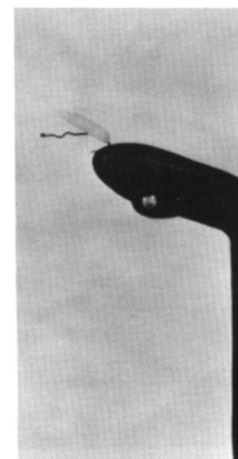
Step 2 is another one that requires caution and care. Pick a hump back hook, and grasp it firmly in your fingers with the point of the hook pointed down. Pick up the bug body with the slit cut in it. Now insert the hook into the slit. With a firm slow motion, try to make the point of the hook come out of the bug's blunt end exactly at the edge of the bug's flat bottom. It is much easier said than done, and it takes care and skill.

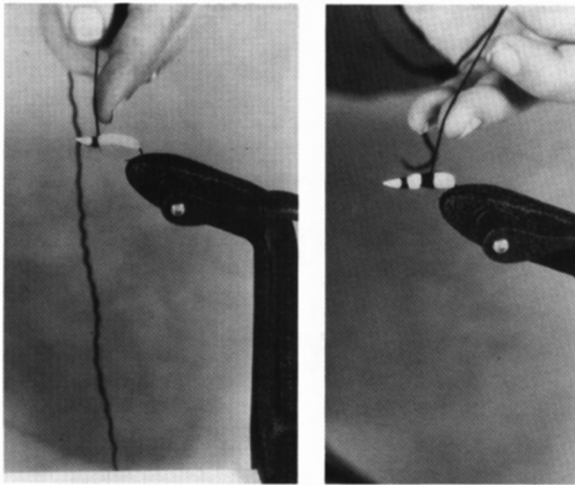
Step 3. Slowly, carefully, but firmly force the hook through the rubber bug. Stop when the body is at a 45 degree angle to the hook.



Step 4. Put the hook in the vise, keeping the hook shank level and being sure the point is just covered. This must be done to keep the hook from cutting the thread. Tighten the vise so that the hook will not move. Make sure the bug body is still at a 45 degree angle from the hook shank.

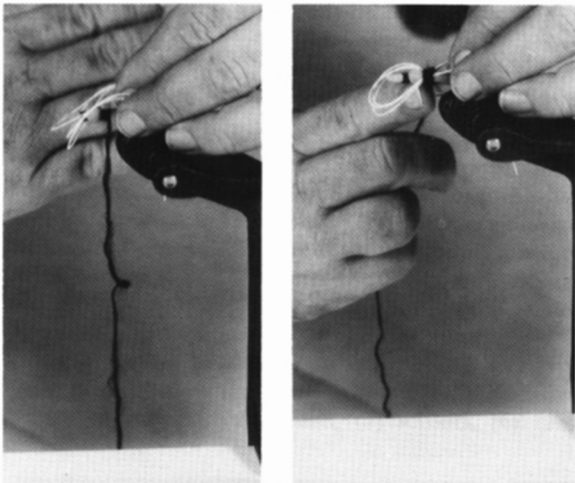
Step 5. Cut a piece of thread 20 inches long. You will not cut or break this thread until you are finished. Throw a half hitch just behind the eye, again wrap very tightly seven times, and finish with three half hitches, making sure they are tight.



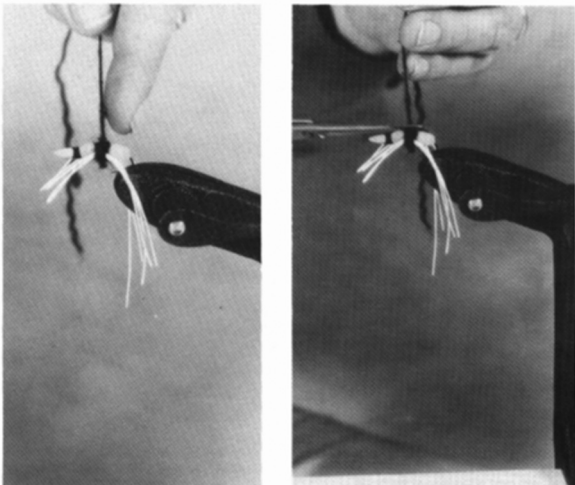


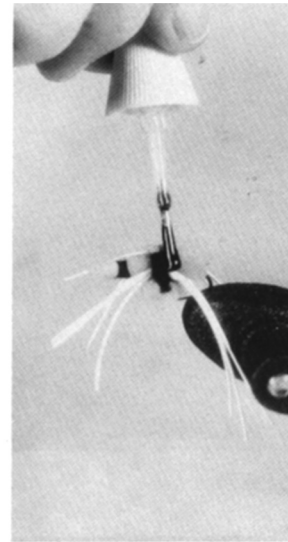
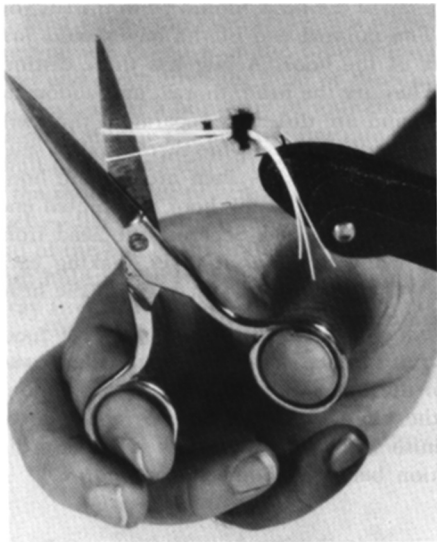
Step 6. With your finger push the rubber body into place. The hump of the hook should be in the slit you cut earlier. The pointed end of the bug should just cover the eye of the hook. A bug has three distinct body parts. They are the head, thorax, and abdomen, in that order, and they are distinctly separated; thus will the bug be constructed. With the thread, put a snug half hitch about $\frac{3}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch around the hook and body behind the eye of the hook or pointed end of the bug. This is the head. Separate the head from the thorax as many wraps as it takes, making each wrap tighter. When you are satisfied, finish the head with three half hitches.

Step 7. Now put another (just snug) half hitch around the center of the bug. Make sure the thread follows the slit in the bug. Apply tight wraps about seven times, and finish with three half hitches. This makes a distinct separation between the abdomen and thorax.



Step 8. Pick up three pieces of rubber hackle with your "off" hand (left if you are right handed). Equalize the three pieces of hackle as much as you can. With your free hand grasp them as near the middle as possible. Now again with your "off" hand grasp the hackle with the middle finger, first finger, and thumb, making a loop of the hackle. Place the loop over the eye of the hackle just behind the separation of the abdomen and thorax of the bug. Rest your fingers holding the hackle on the bug for steadiness. Now with your free hand, hold the free end of the hackle and abdomen of the bug. Hold firmly and wrap tightly seven times, and finish with three half hitches. Now grasp the hackle on each side, and pull into final position. Clip off excess thread.





Step 9. Insert the scissors in the hackle loop. Pull the hackle forward with scissors straight in front of the head until extended. Clip all three strands of hackle here. You will notice now that your bug has twelve legs, six more than the usual insect. Do not worry – fish cannot count above seven. Now clip each set of legs so that each is about one inch long. Take the bug from the vise, and fix the wraps and half hitches with clear fingernail polish. The lure is now complete.

Rules to Remember

1. Always finish each step with three half hitches.
2. Adjust the vise correctly.
3. Be careful all the time.
4. Follow these steps:
 - a. Slit the bug body
 - b. Insert the hook in the rubber body
 - c. Level hook in vise
 - d. Attach thread tightly
 - e. Make the head distinct
 - f. Make thorax distinct
 - g. Attach rubber hackle legs
 - h. Even legs with scissors
 - i. Cement wrap with fly head cement or nail polish
5. Remember that speed and skill come with practice.

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