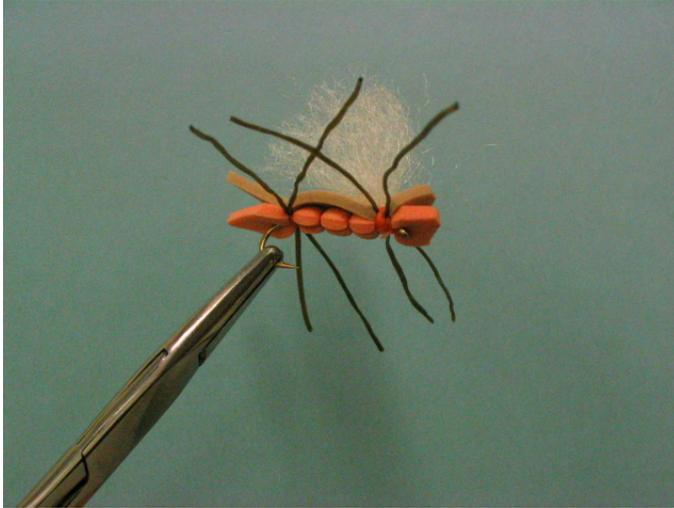




FOAM FLIES – BETTER LIVING THRU CHEMISTRY **By Bruce James**

Foam flies are relatively new on the fly tying scene. When they were first seen in fly tying catalogs there were only a few varieties, but there are over a hundred at this time. Although some fly fisherpersons hate the sight of foam flies, they have become incredibly popular with fishing guides, fly tyers and fly fishers in many areas of the country. Foam flies quickly became popular among fishing guides in the faster Western streams. They needed a fly that was cheap and easy to tie, floated well in turbulent waters and was visible to clients while it sits on the water. At first many foam flies were tied without a wing, but soon it was discovered that the wing added to the visibility enough so that many tiers added the extra step into their patterns.



One of the things that makes foam so popular is the ease with which you can vary the pattern or create your own. Considering that there are over ten different colors of foam and at least twenty different colors of legs, several wing materials and different body designs, the possible combinations are in the hundreds. Foam lends itself to the creation of a huge variety of different insects. You can tie ants, beetles, hoppers, stoneflies, caddis, mayflies and attractor patterns effectively with foam.

A variety of materials can be used for a wing, but the most popular are Float Vis , EP Silky

Fibers, EP Sea Fibers and Polypro. Personally I have found that the EP Silky Fibers are a little kinkier in texture and allow for a fuller wing.

The colors and variety of leg materials is virtually astounding. Many tyers use standard round rubber legs in a medium size; white and black are the most popular colors. Recently, Flexifloss has become popular for leg material because it is so durable and not as effected by sunlight as some of the others are.

Here are a few hints for tying with foam:

1. Since foam is slick and tends to slide around the hook the addition of some super glue at tie in spots will keep it in place and make the fly more durable.
2. Use a 6/0 or better thread and make a thread base on the hook before tying in the foam.

With a little care, you can create an enormous number of foam flies to stock your fly boxes. Not only will you spend less on the flies, but you will also have a huge number to fish with.