

THE WARMWATER BUCKET

*Our master creator of the
“flug” is at it again with a...*

**‘wobbling, flexible, wiggling, jointed,
weed resistant, flug bugger’**

Many years ago I read about tying hackle on foam; nothing new about it. Recently I tried it. I pushed a needle through a slender piece of foam about an inch long. Then, holding the needle at the eye, I trimmed the excess off the foam until it was about two or three times the diameter of the needle. Then, holding the needle in the vice, I tied on some hackle. It went on surprisingly easy; looked pretty decent too. The next question was, “So what do I do with it?”

There was this needle which had an eye pushed through some foam adorned with hackle. Obviously, the next step was to put some mono through the eye and see if I could thread it through the foam. That took a little grunting but the hackle stayed on and still didn’t look too bad. I added a little fabric paint to the ends of the hackle to fix it permanently and then began to experiment incorporating the hackled foam into lures.

I won’t tell you about some of my early creations but eventually certain benefits of the threaded foam features



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emerged. If I was to use it in a lure, the line had to be a part of the lure. The hook isn’t the anchor of the lure as it is in a fly, it’s just another piece of the lure. And, that turned out to be a good feature. It meant that I could string pieces of foam together on the mono and have a jointed fly. It might even wiggle as I pulled it through the water. I could string (not tie) the hook on the line. It was free to run up and down the line and to rotate around it. If I bent the eye toward the point of the hook and strung it so the eye was in the front it would be weed resistant. If all this stuff was free to run along the line I had to put some stoppers somewhere and I found that small beads tied in strategic places worked great. A sequin pasted on the front formed a lip that would make the lure wobble.

The possibilities seemed endless and it’s been fun putting together lures incorporating components tied—and pasted—on foam. Photos 1-4 show a few of the possibilities:

Photo #1 shows a wobbling, flexible,



wiggling, jointed, weed resistant, flug bugger. By pasting a sequin on the front of the forward piece of foam—which is adorned with hackle—a lip is formed. That makes the lure wobble. Since the forward body is tied on foam, it’s flexible—so it wiggles. By bending the eye of the hook up toward the point of the hook and sliding it on the mono so it rides backwards when pulled through the water—it’s weed resistant. Note that the hook is free to slide up and down the mono and to rotate so it will always hang with point up. The aft piece of foam—the tail—is adorned with fluff, pasted on with fabric paint. Since the main body, hook, and tail are spaced on the flexible line—it’s jointed. It all turns out nicely: wobbling, flexible, wiggling, jointed, and weed resistant. And it catches fish—at least it catches blue gill. I don’t get out a lot any more but I did have a good day at San Vicente and can’t wait to do that again, as soon as it warms up.

Photo #2 shows another design. This time the fluff is pasted on the end of

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the foam that is adorned with hackle. The hook is put on the line in the rear. It's hard to see that the hook is free to rotate just like before because of the fluff. Just for the heck of it, it's coated with colorful fabric paint and sparkle. Like the first lure, the hook rides, point up and is weed resistant. A small bead and a knot forms a stopper at the aft end of the lure; keeps everything from sliding off. There are also a couple of other beads that you can't see because they are covered in fabric paint, spaced along the line that keeps the components separate. The lure is a wobbler because of the large sequin pasted on the front with fabric paint. Everything is strung on the flexible mono so it can wiggle.

The first 2 examples put the hook in the middle and end of the lure respectively. Obviously you've got to ask, "What happens if you put the hook first?" Well that's pretty easy, see Photo #3. Here the line goes through the eye of the hook and then through foam adorned with hackle. Knotted beads at the fore and aft end of the foam keep everything in place. As the lure is worked through the water, the position of the hook relative to the hackle changes each time the lure is jerked. I don't know how this will work out but it should have some unique action. The foam-mounted

hackle also acts as a weed deflector. It is sized to leave the hook point clear but should deflect the assembly as it is pulled through weeds or grass.

Photo #4 shows yet another example of how this flexible, hackle adorned foam may be used. Here the foam is slid off the needle and no line is threaded through it. It is then tied and pasted on the top of a fly. It looks sort of like an exaggerated parachute fly. I call it an umbrella fly. It's flexible and wiggles back and forth as it's worked through the water. Again the hackle adorned foam acts as a weed guard that shouldn't impair the hook up capability of the fly.



Well, for what it's worth, there are four examples of how adorned foam, strung on mono, may be used to make lures for fly-casting. You can tie hackle or fluff on the foam or paste fluff, feathers, or hair on it. Then you can string it together with hooks, plastic, or sequins to form any number of arrangements. The objective is to impart motion and flexibility to the lure just like the plugs used by spin and bait



casters. It's a whole new dimension because of the light weight and flexibility of fly fishing components.

Oh, the bottom line—are these more effective than the classic flies? I doubt that very seriously. When I first took up fly fishing, Ken Armer told me, "Nothing beats a woolly bugger". In my opinion that was true then and it still is. When I wasn't having much luck with my flies, Ned Sewell said, nothing beats fluff. So I used more and it worked. Will these lures ever become very popular? I doubt it.

They take a lot of time to put together. Only those who like something a little different will go for them.

Using flexible lure arrangements with lips and weed resistant hook arrangements is simply an attempt to give a little more motion to the fly and to allow you to put the fly in weedy places. On days when nothing else is working, it's something else to play with.

