



The Sow Bug or Watercress Bug

Ask any fly fisherman on the stream if he has a Sow Bug fly in his box. The majority of them will open their fly box and show you a fuzzy oversized Scud fly.

NOT EVEN CLOSE!

The Sow Bug has two tails, seven sets of distinct legs, two long curved antennae and is 'Flat as a Pancake". The Sow Bug can range from 5 to 20mm in length not counting the antennae or tails. Like most freshwater invertebrates the Sow Bug has the chameleon like ability to be colored to blend with the color of the stream bottom. The Sow Bug of this area are grayish or black the same as the Sow Bugs of the spring creeks of Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Sow Bugs of the high mountain country of Montana and Idaho spring creeks are yellowish orange color.

I first fished the Sow Bug in the 1950's in the spring creeks of Southeastern Minnesota that had big watercress beds. The Sow Bug was called a "Watercress Bug" in Minnesota. I have fished the Sow Bug in the mountain spring creeks of Montana and Idaho and the famous spring creek "Arroyo Pescado" south of Esquel Argentina.

Since I like to have a watercress salad in the spring time, I probably have eaten a Sow Bug or two myself!



Photo #2 - High-COUNTRY SPRING CREEK SOW BUG

This is a fantastic macro-photograph of a high country Sow Bug by Ted Fauceglia illustrating the yellowish orange coloring.

TYING THE "STANEK'S"
SOW BUG or WATERCRESS BUG

Materials:

HOOK	"TMC" 200R — Size 16/18 or Equal
THREAD	"GUDEBROD" - 10/0 Black
LEGS	"ONE COATER PLUS" Paint Brush Bristles - .008" Dia.
ANTENNAE	"ONE COATER PLUS'T Paint Brush Bristle - .011" Dia.
CARAPACE	Thin (.032") protective Packaging Foam Color — permanent Marker Pens "CHARTPAK" - Warm Gray *5 "PRISMACOLOR" - Mineral Orange "PRISMACOLOR" — Terra Cotta
TEMPLATE	"3M POST—IT" The Adhesive Part of the Pad
ADHESIVE	"3M PRONTO CA40H" Thin Super Glue "HARD as NAILS" Sally Hansen Head Cement "LOON" Water Based Head Cement
BODY	"3M SCOTCHLITE K—I" Microsphere Glass Bubbles Craft Acrylic Paint — Water Based Color - Medium Gray School Bus Yellow Black Water

NOTE

Tying the "Stanek's" Sow Bug is a BATCH - SEQUENCE tying operation requiring cure time between tying steps. It is best to tie a batch (6 to 12) of flies at one time.

You will notice except for the hook and tying thread, the materials in my Sow Bug come from the hardware store, the craft store and packaging materials.

TYING THE “STANEKS” SOW BUG

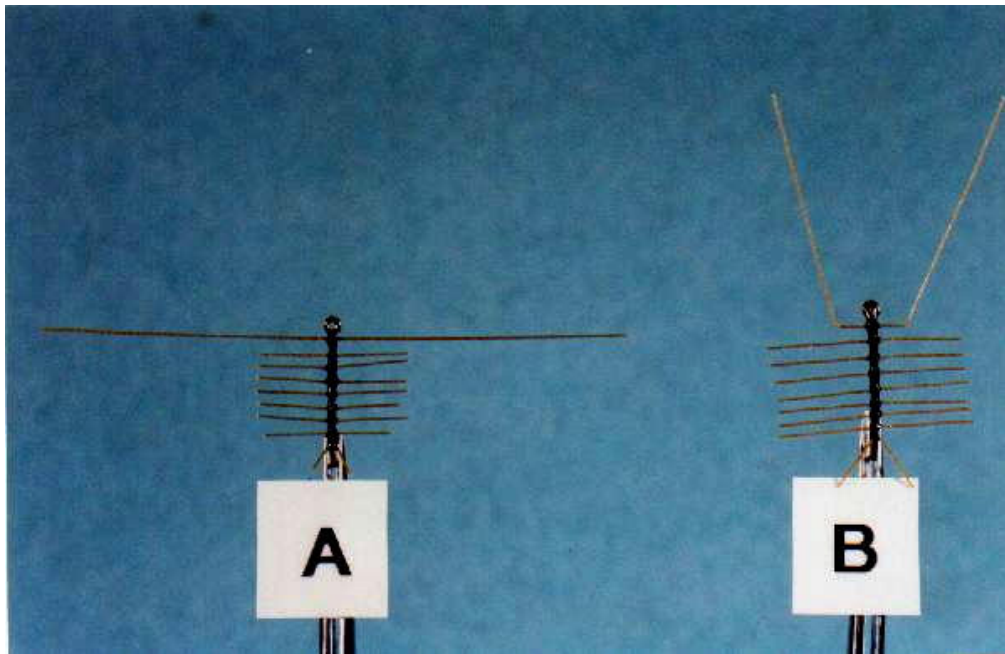


PHOTO #3

STEP #1

Mount the hook in the vise and wrap a solid double thread base from the hook eye to the point above the barb.

This fly can be tied with the hook point up or hook point down. I prefer that it be tied hook point up — it produces a fluttering natural retrieve.

Tie in a 7/8' long .008" diameter paint brush bristle on top of hook with two "X" wraps at the point above the barb. Sweep the two tails back 45° over the bend of the hook.

Mentally divide the hook shank into eight equal spaces -- this represents the seven legs and antennae tie in spots. On a "TMC" 200R size 16 hook, the spaces will be approximately .050". Double "X" wrap the seven legs and the antennae on top of the hook shank as shown on PHOTO #3-A. The legs will be trimmed to length at a later step. The antenna is a .011" diameter paint brush bristle cut to two inches in length. It is very important that the legs and antennae are tied in parallel to each other and perpendicular to the hook shank. Coat all the legs and antennae "X" wraps with CA4OH Super Glue to lock them in place. Tie off the thread and remove the hook from the vise.

Place the hook on its back on a piece of 1/10" graph paper. With pointed tweezers grab the antenna exactly 1/10" from the hook shank and bend the antenna 90 degrees to the front of the eye as shown PHOTO #3 - B. Coat the bend of the antenna with CA4OH Super Glue to stiffen.

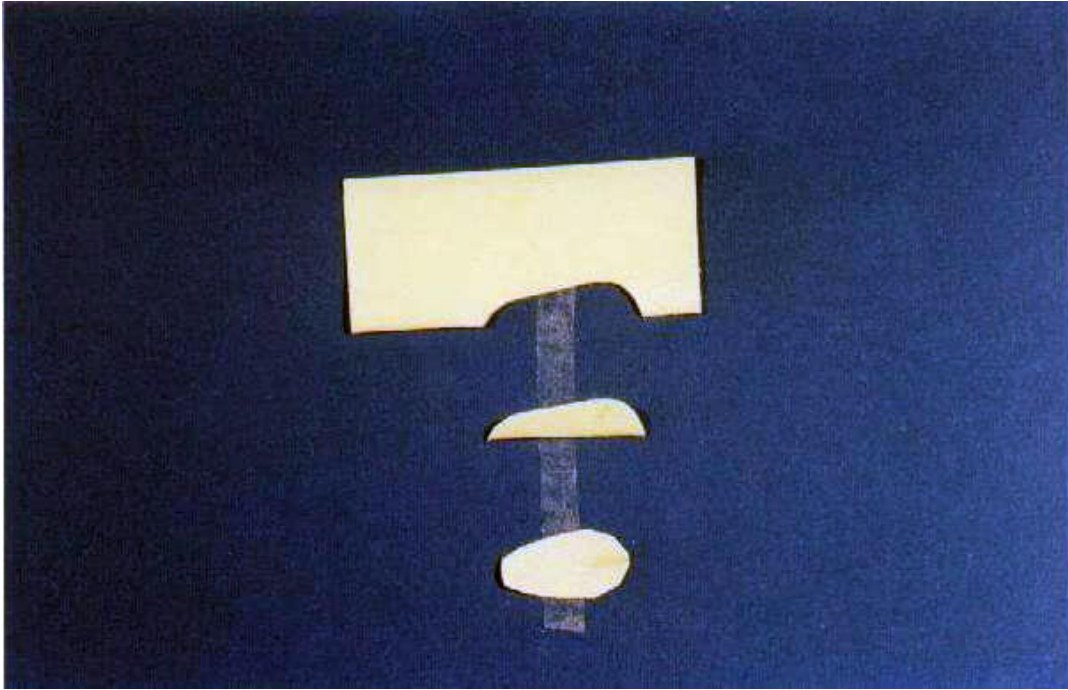


PHOTO #4

STEP #2

Prepare the template to make a symmetrical carapace pattern by using "3M POST-IT" note pad. Fold the adhesive part of the "3M Post - It" note pad in half and cut a half silhouette shape of the carapace. Check the template for length from the eye of the hook to the point where the two tails are tied in. Open the template and check the overall shape. Do not make it too wide.



PHOTO #5

STEP #3

My flies are usually made from non-traditional fly tying materials I find lots of fly tying materials in craft stores, hardware stores and grocery stores. I received an electronic part wrapped in a thin sheet of foam that was textured on one side. This protective thin foam sheet represented the perfect material for the carapace.

Color the carapace on both sides with permanent color markers. I use "CHARTPA.K" warm gray #5 for Sow Bugs of this area and the spring creeks of Southeast Minnesota and Wisconsin. I use "PRISMACOLOR" markers of mineral orange and terra-cotta for Sow Bugs in the spring creeks of the Rocky Mountains. As shown left to right PHOTO #5 - clear foam sheet, high Country orange, and warm gray #5 for Sow Bugs of this area. Stick the template to the back side of the colored thin foam sheet and carefully cut the carapace to shape. Remove the "3M POST - IT" template from the foam sheet as shown far right. The template can be used over and over for a number of flies.

Glue the carapace to the hook using the thick "HARD as NAILS" head cement making sure that the carapace is symmetrical about the hook shank. Let the adhesive dry.



PHOTO #6

STEP #4

The under-side of the body and leg joints is coated with a microsphere - color body filler to produce the abdomen. This also gives the fly a neutral density which allows it to flutter just above the watercress.

In a small mixing bowl; mix a small amount of medium gray #5 craft acrylic paint with 200% by volume of "3M SCOTCLITE K - 1" microsphere glass bubbles. Add two to three drops of "LOON" water based head cement and mix to a smooth slurry. Control the viscosity of the mix by adding micro-drops of water.

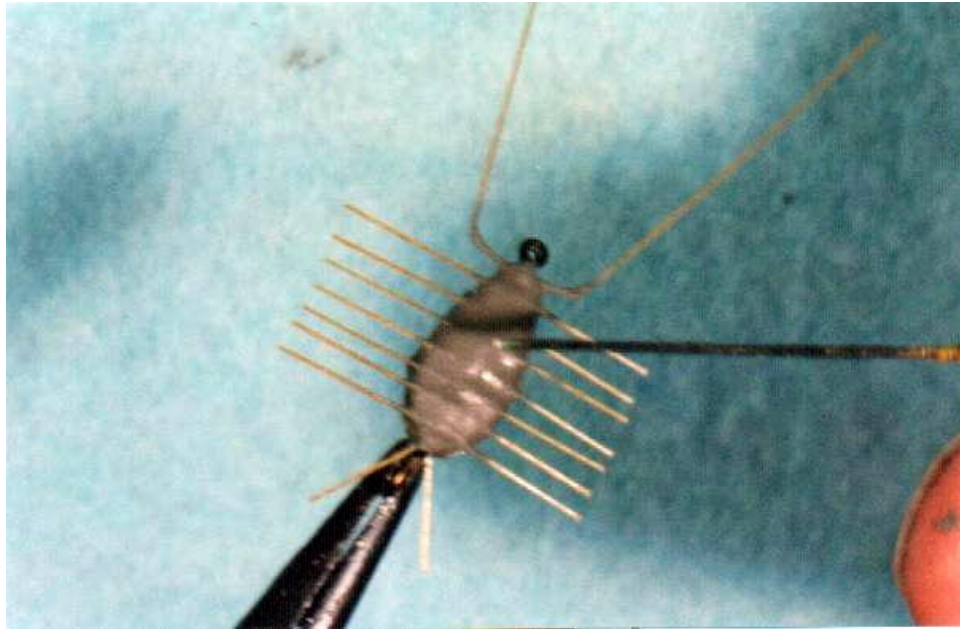


PHOTO #7

STEP #5

Using a pin bodkin pick up small amounts of microsphere mix and coat the under side of the carapace. Coat the legs and abdomen to the edge of the carapace. Allow the microsphere mix to cure. To produce a fat abdomen, add a second coat. Also coat the bend of the antenna to strengthen the joint. Allow the body to cure.



PHOTO #8

STEP #6

The rear legs of a Sow Rug are longer than the front legs. Cut the legs, tapering the length back to front, the back legs are approximately 1/8" and front legs 1/16" long.

Using a sharp pointed tweezers bend each leg down at the edge of the carapace. Train all of the legs to the rear about 45°. Tip each leg with black craft paint to represent the leg claws.

Using the tweezers make short incremental bends of the antennae to sweep them to the rear.

To preserve the coloration of the fly, coat it all over with the thin "3M PRONTO CA4OH" super glue.