



Woolly Bugger

Presented by Gerry Crow

Just about every fly tyer starts out tying this fly. The origins of the woolly bugger extend back to fly fishing antiquity, and the variations are endless. I like to call this the "meat fly" because if you ever needed to rely on a fly to put meat on the table, this is it. The woolly bugger is impressionistic of a number of different types of fish food.

Depending on color, where and how it is fished, it could resemble bait fish, leeches, crayfish, stonefly nymphs, damsel or dragon fly nymphs. Optionally, you can tie it weighted, with beadhead or dumbbell eyes, with crystal flash or flashabou in the tail, and reinforced with wire,

Popular variations include: all olive, black, brown or white; black hackle and tail with body of olive, purple, yellow, orange or brown chenille. Early in the season when the water is often high and cloudy try hackle, tail or body of chartreuse. If tied with a loop of red chenille for a tail it is a woolly worm, which can imitate a stonefly nymph and also is a popular warm water panfish fly.

As you can see, the woolly bugger can be adapted for almost any fishing situation and species of fish. My fishing technique for this fly is as follows: first, dead-drift it like a nymph. After you have covered the water, use a slow, hand-twist retrieve, especially in deep pools or in ponds and lakes. Then retrieve it in short, quick strips of 2 to 6 inches. Then let it sink, and on the swing strip it in really fast. Finally, position yourself above the best holding lie in the pool and let the fly swing gently back and forth with the current.

Create your own variation of color and presentation

Hook: Streamer hook size 2 to 10 or straight nymph hook size 12 or 14 for "Micro-bugger"

Thread: Black or olive 6/0

Tail: Black or olive marabou with a few strand of crystal flash or flashabou

Body: Black or olive chenille

Hackle: Black or olive saddle hackle

Variations: Bead or dumbbell or bead-chain eyes. Rubber legs, wire ribbing to reinforce body