

Three easy, year-round flies for spring creeks
Prepared by Bob Dietz
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Schenk's cress bug

This is a pretty well known pattern around the Pennsylvania limestoneers. It turned out to be very effective in Montana, as well when we floated the Beaverhead. The guide had never seen it before, although he had several cress bug patterns of his own. It caught enough fish that he wrote down the pattern.

Hook: any curved shank "pupa" hook, sizes 14 – 18

Thread: black 8/0

Body: Muskrat, either natural or dyed olive, guard hairs removed.

"Vein" (optional) : Head cement

Wrap the thread the length of the hook. Form a dubbing loop at tail, and fill with muskrat. Spin tightly. Wrap the length of the hook, tie off. Trim flat top and bottom. Optionally, you can form a "vein" by dipping a bodkin in head cement, and laying it along the length of the hook on the top.

Red worm (midge larva)

I first encountered this pattern about ten years while fishing the Ditch on Big Spring in the pouring rain. I was getting skunked; the guy beside me was hooking up almost every cast. He finally took pity on me and showed me this pattern. He tied it to represent the red midge larva that ate the fish excrement being washed out of the hatchery. I caught a 20 inch brown on the first cast (those used to be common in the Ditch.) I used them every trip to Big Spring after that while the hatchery was still operating, and always had success. Until recently, I had only tried them in one other stream, one time. That was Owen's Creek on opening day; the hatchery rainbows really liked it. I hadn't fished it since the hatchery closed until last November. The hatchery excrement may be gone, but the now-wild rainbows and brookies still seem to like the fly. (I've heard it works on the Gunpowder, too.) I noticed the latest Orvis catalog lists a bead head version; they call it the "Red Bird." They don't get much easier to tie than this one!

Hook: any curved shank "pupa" hook, sizes 14 – 18

Thread: Red 8/0

Body: Red Larva Lace midge

Rib: Tying thread

Head: Peacock herl

Wrap the thread the length of the hook, covering the hook. Tie a piece of larva lace in at the tail, It should extend to slightly behind the eye of the fly. Wrap a thread rib to head. Tie in one or two pieces of herl, wrap around the thread to form a rope. Make two or three wraps at the head, and tie off. Trim the Larva Lace at the rear of the fly so that it extends 1/8" to 1/4" inch beyond where it's tied in.

Scud

I tie any number of variations on this pattern, they all seem to work at one time or another. A weighted version, with the red midge larva described above as a dropper was pretty much the only setup I ever used on Big Spring for years.

Hook: any curved shank "pupa" hook, sizes 14 – 18

Thread: Olive

Antennae: Wood duck dyed mallard fibers (don't waste good wood duck on this!)

Rib: Fine gold wire

Legs (optional): cream hackle palmered the length of the body, or dubbing picked out

Shell: A few strands of iridescent Flashabou, or a strip of Scudback, or a piece of plastic bag.

Body: synthetic dubbing, olive or orange, or "mixed"

Tail: The shell extended over the eye

This fly is backward – the antennae are at the curve of the hook, and the tail extends over the eye. Wrap the thread the length of the hook to bend. Tie in some dyed mallard fibers as a "tail" (really the antennae). Tie in the rib, the shellback, and if using one, the hackle. Spin dubbing onto the thread and wrap almost to the eye. If using a hackle, palmer that in now, and tie off. Trim the top of hackle flat, and pull the shell back forward, pushing the hackles fibers on the side, so that they point down. Tie off the shellback, and trim so that it extends over the eye of the hook. Wrap the rib forward and tie off. If using hackle, trim so that all fibers are point down, and are somewhat shorter than the gap of the hook. If not using hackle, pick out some dubbing fibers to represent legs.

Note: This fly can be weighted with lead wire, or tied with a bead head. If using the latter, it can be either put in the usual spot, or right in the middle of the body (which is where the naturals have their egg sac.)