

FFF Fly of the Month

Glass Bead Emerger



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By Bob Bates

This pattern started as a winter chironomid imitation for Colorado streams. However, its use has spread to warmer waters. Chironomid is the big name for midge. An adult midge looks like a mosquito, however, it doesn't bite. Mayflies receive a lot of publicity, but this is an insect that fly anglers should learn more about. For one reason they hatch when ever there is open water, and for another fish like them. Sizes range from 1/16 th of an inch to about 1-1/2-inch. Usually the late fall and winter midges are on the small size. Some of my friends regularly fish winter streams with size 22 and 24 floating patterns.

The Glass Bead Emerger was featured in the December 1995 issue of Trout Tales, which is a monthly Internet newsletter about fishing around Colorado and sometimes Southern Wyoming. (See: <http://www.bobsflytying.com/> Bob's Fly Tying Specialties, 406 S Lincoln Ave., Loveland, CO 80537, (970) 667-1107.) Julie Ray includes a fly in each issue. She tied the size 18 fly pictured above, and gave me permission to publish it.

Julie uses it when there is generally nothing else going on in her streams, and she fishes it dead drift on a floating line. As Julie says "Dead drift is important, and those little black midges are out almost all winter."

In warmer stream waters hang it under a grasshopper or other floating pattern, and give fish two opportunities for a meal. Just make sure that using two flies is legal in your area. Watch the floating pattern, and strike gently if it does anything strange like sink,

stop, jerk sideways or race upstream.

It also works for stillwater fishing. Use a floating line. If you see fish chain feeding, try to guess where a fish will rise next and place the fly there. If you guessed right, hang on. This is almost as much fun as sight fishing. If you didn't guess right try again.

Often when there is no surface activity the fish are feeding just under the surface. Lay out your floating line, let the fly sink an inch or so and start a slow hand twist retrieve. Blind casting is fun also because you never know when you will feel that tug.

Materials:

Hook: Tiemco TMC 2457 size 18 & TMC 2487 size 20*; Dai-Riki 135, Mustad 80200BR, 80250BR, 37160; Daiichi 1130, 1150, J220 and other scud hooks

Bead: Clear glass, midge size #20 & small #18

Thread: Rusty Dun 8/0

Rib: Fine gold wire

Body: Black dubbing

Hackle: Dark grizzly hen

Head: Black dubbing

* Julie commented that she doesn't know why she does it this way, she just does. I take it from that comment the hook model really isn't set in concrete. I tried several ways of threading beads on a small hooks. One worked great on size 18 and 20 hooks. Place a few beads on table. Pick up a hook in one hand or needle nose pliers, press first finger of other hand down on a bead, it should stick to your finger, turn finger over so bead is on top and thread bead on hook. I didn't jab my finger even though I used super sharp hooks. If the bead doesn't stick to your finger use a little dubbing wax, Sticky Fingers you can get from stationary stores or saliva.

1. FFF encourages catch and release fishing, and I feel barbless hooks make releasing fish easier. Smash down the barb with smooth jaw pliers or the vise before you spend time tying the fly
2. Thread bead on hook, and place hook in vise.
3. Wrap thread on hook and secure wire to hook a little behind the barb, see picture above.
4. Begin dubbed body at the same place, and wrap it forward to about mid shank.
5. Spiral gold wire forward, secure and trim excess.
6. Slide bead back to mid shank and bring thread forward over the bead and put a few thread wraps in front of bead. Some tiers don't like this method because a nasty old fish might cut the exposed thread. However, Julie said that she hasn't had a problem with it, and it is quicker than tying off, cutting thread and reattaching thread. (I haven't had a problem either.)
7. Pick a small grizzly hen hackle with fibers about 1-1/2 to 2 gap widths long. Tie on hook in front of bead, wrap several times around shank, secure and trim excess.
8. Put a tiny amount of fine black dubbing on thread and wrap head. Whip finish and

add a tiny drop of cement for extra security.

[Julie also ties a variation of this pattern that looks good and catches fish. Attach a FEW strands of gray polypropylene on each side of bead before securing the hackle. Have strands flow back to about one-quarter shank length beyond end of the hook. It is just a wisp to add a little sparkle.] It is easy to tie a few of these Glass Bead Emergers, and get ready for some frosty-finger fly-flinging.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
You can direct any questions or comments to flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org