

# Fly of the Month: John's Foam Cicada

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**A**ll of you heading off to the Green River have the opportunity to experience an annual event. Of course this event is more prominent in certain years (like every 17) but it happens none the less albeit to a lesser degree. Temperature and other conditions may move this occurrence back a few weeks or so but it happens. The fish love it and so will those who are there at the right time. We're talkin' cicadas.

Now there is no guarantee that you will hit this hatch. If it warms up dramatically over the next month or two then yes, those in the Club's first group, or more likely, the second group could experience one of the more dramatic dry fly experiences you can have. Casting 1½ inch to 2 inch bugs at fish eager to take advantage of a big meal can certainly be exciting.

I have been going up to the Green for ten years straight now and I have never hit the hatch. That's because I either go up too early or too late. "But John, why don't you try to time it correctly?" Because I like going when I go so I can attend a great fly tying event (the East Idaho Fly Tying Expo) and then fish to my heart's delight for a week. However, I do know of a couple of individuals that fish a cicada fly all year 'round because, in their way of thinking, the fish recognize the shape and color and tend not to ignore a yummy offering when presented. These folks catch fish and swear by the method.

Now not all cicadas are the 17-year cycle insects many of us have heard about. There are annual species as well. These live in the ground as nymphs until temperatures prompt their emergence. At that point they ascend grass, a shrub or a tree, anchor themselves and molt into a winged adult. It takes a few days before their wings dry and bodies harden and then it is time to mate. You can easily hear when cicadas are about. They usually mate in the trees and while the males go off to die, the females lay their eggs in the trees (the eggs hatch, the nymphs fall to the ground where they burrow and the cycle repeats).

Fishing these along the bank and under trees is a good idea as the plop of one hitting the water is akin to ringing the dinner bell. You can also use this fly as a dropper with another point fly like a smaller dry or a nymph. In many ways it's like fishing hoppers so tie up a few and give them a try!

## MATERIALS FOR TYING JOHN'S FOAM CICADA

Hook: Tiemco 2312 or 200R; sizes 8–4  
Thread: Veevus Fluorescent Orange; 10/0  
Body: UV Hot Orange Ice Dubbing  
Ribbing: UV Black Ice Dubbing  
Wingcase: 2mm black closed cell foam  
Head: UV Black Ice Dubbing  
Legs: Orange & black rubber legs  
Wing: Sparkle Emerger Yarn; cream



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR TYING JOHN'S FOAM CICADA

- 1 Insert your hook in the vise and hang on. A quick note about hook choice... If you are fishing over larger fish (the Green River qualifies) I suggest the Tiemco 2312 (down eye & 1X wire) or 2302 (straight ey & standard wire). These hooks are 2XL and compared to a similar length 200R (3XL) the shorter length and diameter are better proportioned and more robust. Attach the thread behind the eye of the hook and wind back to a point over the point of the hook. Cut about a hook gap wide by 3" long strip of foam and get ready to tie it in. Lay the foam over the entire shank except the thorax area. Bind the foam down over the hook point and wind forward all the way to the thorax. If you wish to bolster the strength of the fly, brush a small amount of Zap-A-Gap to the underside of the hook and thread wraps letting it dry.
- 2 With your thread at the start of the thorax apply a very healthy amount of the orange dubbing to your thread. Cicadas are, shall we say, chunky. Once the noodle is prepared wind it evenly back to where the foam is extending beyond the bend of the hook. The body of a cicada is a dirty orange with black segmentation so, guess what the next bit is? Yup, apply a very thin amount of black dubbing to your thread and wind it forward as a rib to the start of the thorax.
- 3 Now it's time to start getting this thing to look like a cicada. Grab hold of the foam and pull it all forward and tie it off at the start of the head space. Now bind down the foam at that point and all of the way forward to the eye. **DO NOT** leave room for a head space—you will not need it.
- 4 With the thread at the eye, foam hanging out the front end it is now time to tie in the head/thorax. Apply a healthy amount of black dubbing (yup, the head is chunky too) to your thread and dub the entire thorax and head area.
- 5 Time to wing it! Cut off a 4" length of the wing material. It should be about the diameter of a pencil. Right where the abdomen and thorax meet, tie it down onto the hook shank "spinner wing" style. Tie them in using "X" wraps and about 3 or 4 turns of thread. If you want to add glue to make it more durable don't—it's going to get covered and won't need it. It can also wick down the fibers stiffening them. If you still insist on using glue then, after one 'X' wrap, apply a spare amount of glue to your thread and make two or three more 'X' wraps.
- 6 Pull the foam projecting foreward of the eye straight back. Bind the foam down right where the wing is tied in with the wings pointing slightly rearward. After securing the foam with half a dozen thread wraps trim it away the extra with about 1/8" extending rearwards beyond the wraps.
- 7 Almost home... Cut off two, 2" lengths of rubber legs (I like the round centipede legs for larger flies like this). Tie in one of the lengths on the near side of the hook. I prefer to do the near side first and I just pull the leg material up underneath the thread to where I want it and add an additional wrap of thread. Now tie in the legs on the far side using the same technique. The legs should be tied in where the body and head/thorax meet. Also, they should be below the wings just like they would be naturally. Trim the wings at a slight angle so that they are about 1½ times the width of the wing case. Whip finish and apply a light coat of Zap-A-Gap to the wraps on top to lock them. Trim the rear legs so they are a bit shorter than the wings and the front legs shorter still then you're ready to assault some fish. Good luck!!!

