

Ants in the river make mighty fine fish food. They end up in the water in one of two ways. Wingless ants tend to appear randomly when they fall onto the water. This is generally a sporadic occurrence, but at times you may find them in high numbers when they get blown off streamside vegetation on warm, windy, spring, summer, and fall days. Watch for fish feeding regularly underneath trees, bushes, and grasses overhanging the water, they may be feeding on ants. Wingless ants are usually very small, size 18 to 22, and are usually black or cinnamon in color. Wingless ants are frequently found on the water surface close to and along the shore.

More often we find a lot of ants on the water when a swarm of winged ants have been blown onto the water or their wings have fallen off as intended by nature. Winged ants typically range in size from 14 to 16 and are usually black or brown in color. Winged ants will typically be found on the water from shore to shore.

Your terrestrial fly box need not be packed full of ant patterns. You can limit your ant imitations to just a few patterns. Carry two or three pattern styles for both winged and wingless ants. Carry each style in just one or two colors and in a narrow range of sizes.

## Tying Instructions



### **Black or Cinnamon Fur Ant:**

Secure a size 18 or smaller dry fly hook in the vise and lay down a thread base of the appropriate color 8/0 thread from the hook eye to a point directly over the hook barb. Using the appropriate color dry fly dubbing, dub a relatively large abdomen on the rear one-third of the hook. Take the thread forward to the front one-third of the hook and dub a relatively small head. Take the thread back to the middle one-third of the hook. Select and prepare the appropriate color and size rooster saddle hackle and tie it in by the butt onto the middle third of the hook between the dubbed abdomen and head. Take three or four turns of hackle around the middle third of the hook for the ants legs. Tie off and cut away the excess hackle. Tie off and cut away the thread. If necessary, pick out the dubbing to give the ant a “buggy” appearance and to help it float well.



### **Knot Sense Ant:**

Secure a size 18 or smaller dry fly hook in the vise and lay down a thread base of 8/0 black thread from the hook eye to a point directly over the hook barb. Over the rear one-third of the hook build up a relatively large underbody thread bump abdomen. Take the thread forward to the front one-third of the hook and build up a relatively small underbody thread bump head. Whip finish or half hitch and cut away the thread. Using a bodkin, apply a relatively large amount of “Loon UV Knot Sense” to the rear underbody thread bump. You can control the application of the Knot Sense with your bodkin and by rotating the fly in the vise. When you have acquired the proper abdomen shape, shine the Loon UV light onto the Knot Sense for about 20 seconds to cure it. *Caution: Be sure the tube of UV Knot Sense is closed before turning on the UV light. If the UV light is allowed to shine on the open tube of Knot Sense the Knot Sense in the neck of the tube will cure.* Apply a relatively small amount of Knot Sense to the head thread bump in the same manner as for the abdomen. *Note: A second application of Knot Sense may be applied to the abdomen and head if required.* Tie the thread back onto the middle one-third of the ant between the abdomen and the head. Select and prepare a black appropriate size rooster saddle hackle. Tie the feather onto the middle of the hook by its butt. Make three or four turns of hackle around the middle of the hook to represent the ant’s legs. Tie off the hackle and cut away the excess. Tie off and cut away the thread. This ant imitation floats well and especially so when dressed with fly floatant. *Note: Loon UV Knot Sense and the Loon UV light can be obtained through most fly tying materials catalogs.*



## Ants.... Tom Regina (continued)



### Winged Foam Ant:

Secure a size 14 or 16 dry fly hook in the vise and lay down a thread base of 6/0 black thread from the hook eye to a point directly over the hook barb. Over the rear half of the hook shank, tie a 3/16 x 1 inch strip of black 2mm foam by it's tip to the top of the hook so the long end extends over the back of the hook. Take the thread to the middle of the hook shank and fold the foam strip forward to create a relatively large humped abdomen on top of the hook. Tie the foam strip down over about the middle one-third of the hook shank to form a segmented area between the abdomen and where the head will be formed. Take the thread forward under the foam that will now be extending over the hook eye. Pull the foam forward and parallel to the top of the hook shank and tie it down close to the hook eye to form a relatively small humped head on top of the hook. Cut away the excess foam close to the tie down thread wraps and cover the foam tag end with a few thread wraps. Take the thread under the hook shank and back to the segment between the abdomen and the head. Select and prepare an appropriate size black rooster hackle. Tie the hackle feather in by it's butt over the segment area of the ant. Make three or four turns of hackle around the segment section. Tie off and cut away the excess feather. Prepare a set or pair of wings from very thin white foam of the type used for packaging electronic equipment, or other suitable fly wing material. The finished wing length should be about equal to the length of the hook shank and each wing of the pair should be about as wide as the wide end of a flat



toothpick and about the same shape. Tie the wings on top of the hook between the back of the head and the hackle. The wings should flare out to the sides slightly. Tie off the wings and cut away the tag ends. Tie off the thread and cut it away. If the wings stand too erect cut some hackle out from under them.

### High-Viz Ant:

Secure a size 14 or 16 dry fly hook in the vise and lay down a 6/0 black thread base from the hook eye to a point directly over the hook barb. Return the thread forward to a point back from the hook eye that is equal to one-third the hook shank length. At this thread hang point tie on a High-Viz foam ant body to the top of the hook. Tie the body on so it overhangs the back of the hook and the white tip is above the hook eye. Make enough thread wraps over the body to create a distinct segment between the abdomen and the head. Select and prepare a proper size black rooster saddle hackle. Tie the hackle feather in by it's butt over the segment section. Make three or four wraps of hackle over the segment area to represent the ant's legs. Tie off and cut away the excess hackle. Take the thread under the hook shank and under the white tipped head. Half hitch or whip finish and cut away the thread. Apply a small amount of head cement to the tie off thread wraps. Trim the back of the body so it is even with the very back of the hook. *Note: Rainy's High-Viz Ant Bodies can be obtained through most fly tying materials catalogs.*



## Spring Clinic Photos

