

Dry Fly Desiccant Re-visited



Last month the discussion on fly floatant was presented by Bob Foster for the Atlanta Fly Fishing School. Bob explained the merits of this floatant and gave away a number of bottles of the material.

This month I would like to give you more information on this floatant and explain why it works so well. First the majority, if not all, of the fly desiccants on the market are made with silica gel or silica and clay. These materials work by attracting and holding on to the moisture present in the fly. The AFFS floatant is combination of calcium sulfate (CaSO_4) and hydrophobic powder. The calcium sulfate reacts with water chemically and the water is eliminated. This process dries the fly on an average of 200 times greater than silica/clay. The numbers look like this:

	<u>Drierite (CaSO_4)</u>	<u>Silica</u>
Residual H_2O after drying	.005 mg/l @ 6.6% capacity	1.0 mg/l 5.2% capacity

The merits of calcium sulfate include that it is non-toxic and has the ability to dry air to moisture levels lower than any other material. It is a little more expensive, but not significantly more. Drierite comes in various mesh sizes and AFFS experimented with various sizes to determine which size did the best job of drying flies.

When a fly is dried with Drierite (CaSO_4) the moisture is eliminated and the hydrophobic powder now sticks to the fly better and the fly floats higher and longer. The extra cost becomes incidental if you are a member of UCCTU.

Mack Martin



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