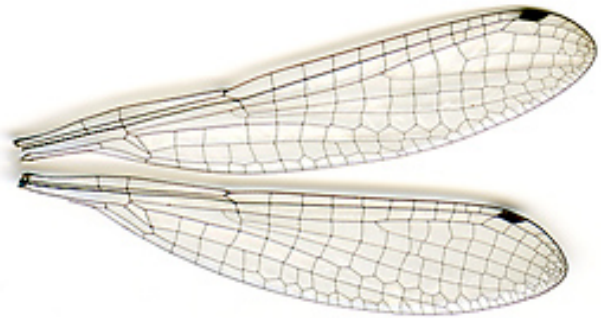
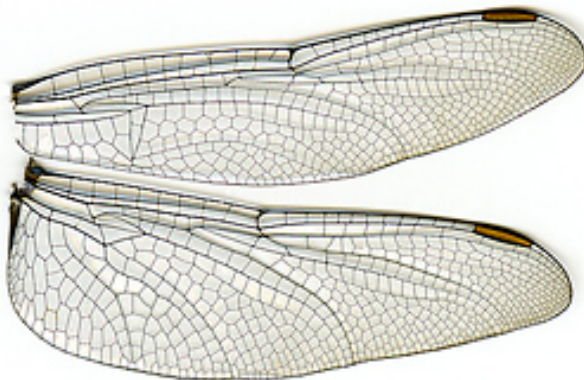


Robin's Damsfly Knot

Dragonfly or damselfly? A lot of people don't seem to know the difference, so for the record here is one of each picked up on Google images ...



Take note in particular of the wing shapes and where the eyes are. Here are some wing close-ups ...



Dragonflies like the one on the left tends to have eyes pointing forward and the front and rear wings are different shapes. Damselflies like the one on the right tend to have eyes on the side of the head and the front and rear wings are very similar. Just so that you know.

This does mean that unless you are working with cord that stays put making dragonflies may involve a pinboard and creative use of a stiffener such as PVA glue to shape the rear set of wings. Damselflies are easier. Here we go ...

* * * * *

Requirements

- A. **CORD**; I use a fairly stiff 3mm braided cord.
Two 50 cm lengths of cord for the body and eyes. Works well if one is dark and the other a bright colour; one 65-70 cm length of white cord for the wings.
You might make do with a little less but better not to run out before the end.

- B. **TOOLS**; if you're good enough strong fingers with good fingernails will do. Useful extras include something to lift open the strands (you can use an expensive stainless steel fid if you like but I use a blunt bamboo skewer — and a blunted 3" nail does just as well). Also something to grip and tighten the cords is handy. I use a pair of rat-toothed tweezers but any small gripping tool will do. A substantial pair of pointed steel tweezers (not eyebrow or philately types) does both jobs. Also a girl's hair clip, some dilute PVA glue and a craft knife.
- C. **KNOT KNOWLEDGE**; you need two knots, one for the body and one for the eyes. This description uses a four strand plait known by several different names for the body [Ashley BOK #3000] and double overhand knots for the eyes [Ashley BOK #516].

Knot Practice for Beginners — *please move on if you know this stuff.*

First, the plait.

If you look along the plait toward the starting point this consists of two strands twisting clockwise around one another interlocking with strands two twisting anti-clockwise. If you look from the side with the bright colour running down the centre the black cord runs from side to side, the left hand cord passing over the right (clockwise as described above) and the yellow cord moves up and down through the loops of the black cord passing up to the right and down to the left.

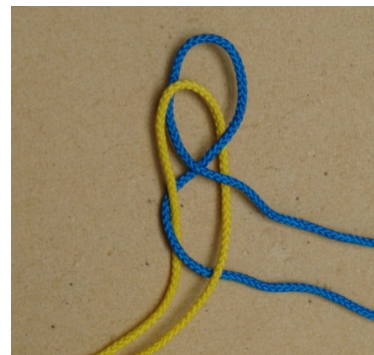


Some people have great difficulty starting the plait. They can do it with four separate cords, but two cords muddled to make four seems to cause confusion. I offer the following solution (but if anyone can do better I'll happily do a re-write): if the side to side (clockwise twist) cord is the dark cord 'B' and the up and down cord (anti-clockwise twist) is the bright cord 'Y', proceed as follows ...

With the B cord make an overhand loop and pass both free ends to the right as shown.



Now pass the Y cord up between the two free ends, down through the overhand loop, back up through the two free ends to the right of itself then lay both free Y ends off to the left in parallel as shown.



After this it's easy. Take the topmost B cord, pass it under two cords, up between the two Y cords and back over the innermost Y cord to its own side. Now Take the topmost Y cord, pass it under two cords, up between the two B cords and back over the innermost B cord to its own side.



Repeat as often as required drawing the cords fairly taut each time. Make sure it doesn't start twisting.



Secondly, the double overhand knot. It's supposed to look like this ...



(both sides shown) but when tied in the standard manner it often ends up like this ...



which is a mess and then has to be put right.

The following method generally works ... start a figure of eight knot, but instead of passing through the end loop to make a figure of eight, pass up* through the innermost loop and down* through the end one and draw tight.

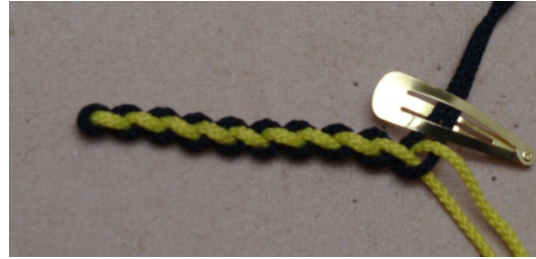
*[*or down and up as the case may be.]*

Now to business ...

Making a damselfly

Middle your cords and make a four strand plait. I use ten black loops.

Note the hairclip stopping free ends unravelling whilst I sneak off for a cup of tea.



Turn the vertical cords back down the plait for two loops to make the insect's thorax.



Turn the horizontal cords once through the end vertical doubled loop. The doubling needs to be a bit loose in order to pass the cord through for the wings.



Form the lower pair of wings through the lower vertical doubled loop.



Pass the two working ends up and through the upper vertical doubled loop



Form the upper pair of wings



You can, of course, do it this way instead; it makes no difference to the end result.

(Sorry about the change in colour!)



Tighten up the slack in the doubled loops and then form the two double overhand knots for the eyes



Work the eyes tight against the head

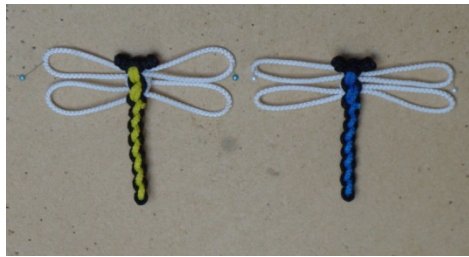


Next, pin to shape and apply dilute PVA glue to act as a stiffener. Allow to dry overnight and use a craft knife to trim away all loose ends (or get someone to do it for you).

There we are — a damselfly.



Here are two I made earlier.



Below is a demonstration board shown on the Surrey Branch stand at Blackmoor recently. There are some different plaits to give a bit of variation. The red & black dragonfly uses alternating double overhand knots, the red damselfly in the corner is based on a hangman's knot, the right hand yellow one uses a solomon bar and the left hand yellow one is straight out of Ashley's Book of Knots. The green & red dragonfly leader uses a plait that doesn't seem to be in Ashley at all. The dragonfly eyes are button knots.



Robin Gray 2011