

# Seasonal Lure Selection

By Bonita Staples



Do you really only fish certain lures during each of the four seasons of the year? Sometimes going outside the expected can be a good strategy.

Although for anglers there are only four seasons, for bass each season needs to be broken down into fish activity to understand the lure selection, size and colors.

Winter is probably the most limiting in lure selection of the seasonal [patterns](#). Water temperatures drop down to freezing and the bass' metabolism slows as well. Because of this, bass won't move far or expend much effort to feed. Slow-moving baits and slow [presentations](#) work best. The standard lure selection for this time of year would be a jig with either a pork or plastic trailer. The new soft plastics will work in cold water. Texas-rigged worms and jigging spoons would be my second choice. Traditional colors for jigs are black/blue, black/chartreuse and brown, for worms, black/blue, green pumpkin or watermelon.

Spring needs to be broken down into four segments. Pre-spawn, spawn, post-spawn and late spring. During pre-spawn the bass are staging in the eight- to fifteen-foot area waiting for the shallows to warm. Crankbaits, Texas rigs, jigs, and Carolina rigs work well at this depth. During the spawn, while bass are on the beds, jerkbaits, floating lizards and worms rigged without weights, spinnerbaits, shallow crankbaits and lipless crankbaits are all good choices. In post-spawn periods bass move back to the same depth and areas as they were during pre-spawn and the same lures will work. In late spring bass are moving into shore early and back to the first structure change later in the morning. It's about the same as an early summer pattern. Spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, and lipless crankbaits are a good choice this time of year along with the other spring baits. Springtime colors should be shad shad and crawfish-related whites, white/chartreuse, reds and browns.

Summertime means hot days and higher water temperatures. Bass will move near shore early to feed and then return to open water around creek channels or deeper structure. They use these as highways to move from shore to points, humps or sunken islands. They will school together and chase the shad to feed on them. Summer is one of the best times for topwater schooling action. Traditionally this is the best time of the year for plastic worms, grubs, lizards and tube baits either Texas- or Carolina-rigged. Topwater baits are good early, spinnerbaits work well and Tailhummers and jigging spoons are great for schooling bass. Lipless crankbaits are a good choice also. Worms in black/blue, green pumpkin, watermelon, pumpkin/pepper, junebug. Chartreuse/pepper, chrome/blue, white/blue or shad colors for the topwaters, Tailhummers and jigging spoons, and white, white/chartreuse, and fire tiger for the spinnerbaits.

Fall means the air and water temperatures begin to cool and bass will spend more time shallower, feeding up for winter. Fishing in the fall can be more erratic than other times of the year because bass are undergoing a rapid transition from warm to cold weather. This means that some days you can't get a bite no matter what you throw and others you could drop a bare hook in the water and have bass fighting to get there first.

During the fall bass will go on a feeding frenzy. This usually starts around the first really cool night (frost). Spinnerbaits slow-rolled deep and medium- and deep-diving crankbaits are good along timber lines, stump beds, drop-offs and main lake points. Jigs, as well as plastic worms, lizards and lipless crankbaits all are good choices. Colors for crankbaits should be shad, white, chartreuse, white/chartreuse for spinnerbaits and red shad, watermelon, pumpkin, junebug, and chartreuse/pepper for worms and lizards.

Now let's talk about being different. You can't change the way bass change their locations from season to season, but you can change the way you fish, the lures you use and the color patterns of those lures. Just think, the standard for years was a black and blue jig with a pork trailer. How many do you see now with a white jig with white plastic craw trailer? There are three baits that you can use at just about all depths, fished fast or slow and come in many different color patterns. You can use these baits all year long, they have caught all sizes of bass. The spinnerbait, Rat- L-Trap and plastic worm come in a large variety of colors, can be fished shallow or deep and are easy to use. You still need to use shad-, perch-, and crawfish-colors, but you can add something different to give you an edge. Try using a couple of red strands in a white spinnerbait skirt or blue strands in a chartreuse skirt. Use a hot pink or chartreuse marker on the tail of a worm. A worm or grub trailer on your spinnerbait or Rat-L-Trap in a contrasting color might make the difference. You need to put something in front of the bass that they haven't seen before to give you the edge. Try to think outside the lines of tradition and be different. Be yourself. Use the lures you trust and have confidence in, no matter what the season.