



Arizona Gourds

January updates from the desert southwest...

Welcome to the January issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter, and to another exciting year of GOURDS!

Special Notices!

I am looking forward to my first visit to the Savannah, Georgia area, where I will be teaching classes at the Southern Gourd Retreat. All orders placed from January 12-22 will be held and shipped on January 23rd. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

The next issue of the newsletter will be delayed until after the Wuertz Gourd Festival in Casa Grande. I hope to have pictures from the festival to share with you! I will be attending the festival from January 31st to February 3rd. Orders placed during that time will be delayed and shipped after my return.

Update: Gourd Classes

March classes that will be held at my home in Tucson are now posted! Please visit the "[Classes](#)" page for more information about each class. If you wish to sign up, please send me an email. Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. You must pay for your class as soon as possible in order to hold your space. Once the class lists are full, unpaid registrations will not be held.

*If you would like to get notice of classes as soon as they are posted, then please add your name to my classes updates email list. People on this list will get the news first and have the best opportunity to select the dates and classes they prefer.



[Join The Class
updates List](#)

What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](#) website?

In addition to the soft deerskin lacing and artificial sinew that we already carry, we are now stocking black round goatskin leather lacing. The lacing is 2mm thick, a nice size for necklaces or gourd work. The even roundness would even make it suitable for inlaying into the gourd surface as well as for normal lacing uses. The lacing will be sold by the yard and not cut until you order it, so you can get just the length you'll need for your projects. You will find the leather cord towards the bottom of the "[Special Embellishments](#)" page.



January Feature: Webrings, Forums, and Surfing the Web for Gourds

Are you interested in using the internet to expand your knowledge of gourds? Want to see lots of pictures of finished gourds? Do you want to communicate with other gourd enthusiasts and perhaps ask questions about gourd related techniques? Want to find out what others are doing with gourds?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, there are plenty of places on the internet for you to visit. I always recommend that people start with our national organization, the [American Gourd Society](#). (There is also a [Canadian Gourd Society](#), other countries may also have their own organization.) However, there are lots of other internet resources you may not be aware of.

When visiting the home page of Arizona Gourds, you may have noticed a box at the bottom of the page that is titled "Webring". Arizona Gourds is part of the Golden Gourd webring, and it is joined by over 70 other gourd websites. The Golden Gourd webring is the largest and oldest gourd related webring, and is limited to sites devoted primarily to gourds. The webring provides you with hours of gourd related entertainment; you can search the sites randomly or spend a few hours and systematically visit all of them. This is a fantastic way to see what other gourd artists are doing and enjoy all the photos, information and ideas that each site has to offer.

If you have a website of your own, you may want to consider joining a webring. Membership is free and the ring brings in new traffic in to visit your site on a daily basis. Often, new gourd sites languish unnoticed by anyone except for a few friends and family. Joining a webring makes it easy for new visitors to discover your site.

Another way to view lots of gourd sites is by visiting a "Top Sites" link. These lists function in a similar manner to webrings, except the individual entries are ranked by the amount of people that vote for them by clicking on a special link within their site. Once you click on their link, you will be taken to a page that shows you all the other sites that are connected through the top sites program, and a ranking of how many times they have been accessed. You have the flexibility to visit those that sound most interesting to you. Here is a link to the Arizona Gourds sponsored top sites list:

(Please note that the advertising on the top sites page is placed there by the company that provides the top sites software - I have no control over the ads that are displayed.)

Looking for a way to chat with other people about your common interest in gourds? Yahoo and other groups such as MSN and AOL sponsor online groups that allow you to correspond with other people that share the same interests. There are several gourd related online communities; the sites that I am most familiar with are hosted by Yahoo. I participate to some extent with several of these groups. You can be as involved as you wish - some people call themselves "lurkers" and never post any messages, they just enjoy reading messages that hold some interest for them. Others are heavily involved and spend a lot of time sending messages back and forth with their online gourd friends. Some lists have membership restrictions; for example you may have to be a member of a state society to participate in their online group. Many others are open to all. Some allow only gourd related messages, while others allow birthday greetings and other non-gourd related topics.

Click on the logo below to visit gourd related groups sponsored by Yahoo. You can read a bit about each group and decide which one(s) are of interest to you.



In order see and utilize all of the features of each site, you will have to create a yahoo identity and sign up for those groups that interest you. Once you have joined a group, you'll be able to access all their features including photo galleries, files, tutorials and of course the message board that connects all of the members. You can choose to have messages sent individually, by a daily digest or to simply read the group messages online. The choice is yours. Warning: online groups can be habit forming! You may find yourself spending a lot of time on gourd related activities.

Last but not least, internet search engines are a great way to find information about gourds. The majority of people that visit Arizona Gourds use Google, but other search engines may find different gourd sites. Each search engine uses different software to determine who is listed and where they rank - so you may find sites on one that are not listed by others. Most search engines offer a method of surfing images as well as websites. If you use Google, try entering "Gourd Art" and view all the websites that are listed. Next, look for the link at the top of the Google page and click on the link that says "Images". You'll be amazed at the pages and pages of photos that appear. You can modify your search in many ways by choosing different terms or topics.

Happy Surfing!

Photo Gallery: Photos of gourds that were done by some of my students. Want to see your work pictured here? If you have taken a class from me in the past and are willing to share your work, please send me a photo and I'll select a few to display when space permits.





Russell Dent of New Mexico recently took the Advanced Wildlife Carving class. This is his first carved gourd!!!

Donna Vargus of Arizona has taken several different classes from me. She completed the coiled top after taking the closed coil weaving class.

Tip of the Month: Uses for Compressed Air

Do you use an air driven tool such as a Turbocarver? If so, you may not be getting full use out of a tool you already own - an air compressor. [Most Compressors](#) can be easily rigged with a "quick disconnect" fitting and an air gun. The air gun is really handy for all sorts of clean up jobs including blowing unwanted dust away from your work area. I use my compressor to blow off my work desk top and drawers, then finish by blowing myself off as well! It's a great way to get rid of most of the dust so you won't cart it inside to the clean house and saves you lots of extra work. It is also really handy for blowing out dust from carved surfaces or cleaned gourd interiors prior to painting. Be sure to wear a good dust mask when using compressed air.

Don't have an air compressor? Small cans of compressed air are very handy when kept at your work area. These cans work best when used in short bursts, the cans get amazingly cold when used for longer periods. They are also useful for blowing dust out of small hard to clean areas like computer keyboards. Click on the photos to find out more about the different brands of compressed air.

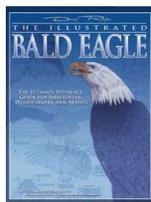


**Do you have a tip or tutorial we can feature here? Please [contact me](#).*

**Featured Gourd of the Month:
Blue Jay Wing**

This is a small gourd, but it was a thick one! The feathers are all carved in high relief. It is unfortunate that the photograph doesn't show the depth in the carving. Just a fun little piece - my version of what a blue jay wing would look like if it was wrapped around a cylindrical gourd.

Featured Books of the Month:



[Illustrated Bald Eagle - Ultimate Reference Book](#)



[Great Book of Fairy Patterns by Lora Irish](#)



[Great Book of Dragon Patterns by Lora Irish](#)

A few more great pattern and reference books. Click on the book covers or titles for more information.

Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated by Bonnie Gibson

**a featured selection of the Crafters Choice Book Club*



Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends. <http://www.arizonagourds.com/jan08.html>

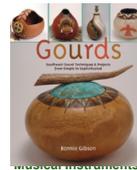
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Note: It is important that you add bonniegibson@qwest.net to your "safe senders" list, as many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.

If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.

Thanks to everyone for making this one of the top selling gourd books!

*Be sure to visit all these different book pages shown at right to see some of the many other titles that are available. Click on each topic to see a variety of suggested books about each subject.



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