



Arizona Gourds

July updates from the desert southwest...



Welcome to the July issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

I know many of you are enjoying the warm weather and seeing your gourd plants grow. Here in Tucson, the glass dichroic cabochon heat may keep some people indoors, but I enjoy the opportunity to work on some new things. I don't let the heat keep me away from my gourds - it's busy enough the rest of the year that I really enjoy this slower time.

Special Notice: I will be taking a week off to visit family, and will be **away from July 8-15th**. Orders placed during that time will be held and sent out just as soon as I return.

[Printable PDF File](#)

My son took this photo during the filming of last month's [Rotary Chisel video](#). We used a roll of white paper as a backdrop, and reflector lights with diffusers. My son's old bedroom has now become our "Photo Studio" and "Shipping Department". However, one wall still has the Star Wars mural I painted for him when he was 6. (He is 30 now - maybe it's time to repaint?)

Want some tips on photographing your gourds? My husband Ev took all the photos for my book, and he gave me great ideas for how anyone could improve the quality of their gourd photos. If you haven't seen it already, you may enjoy reading our [photography tutorial](#).



Update: Gourd Classes

The [September Florida Gourd Retreat classes](#) are now posted. You can see them and register through the Florida Gourd Society class information pages. This gourd retreat will be held at the Deerhaven Retreat Center in Paisley, FL - [click here](#) for general information about the retreat.

Classes are now posted for the 2009 Lone Star Gourd Festival, which will be in Fredericksburg, Texas from October 16-18, 2009. Check the [Texas Gourd Society Events page](#) for class descriptions and registration information. (Look for the PDF links towards the bottom of the page.)



*Join my class updates list if you want to receive advance notice of classes. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

*Left: One of the new class offerings - taught for the first time at the Texas Gourd Festival.
"Water & Wind" - Patterns inspired by Southwestern Pueblos*

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



New items on the website this month!

Decorative metal studs with an embossed flower design and 3 sizes of decorative conchos. These have a post on the back; simply drill the appropriate sized hole, add a bit of glue, and press the stud into place. These are on the [Embellishments page](#).

New Carbide Football burs - this shape is one of my new favorites. The round end works like a ball bur, while the elongated side is good for flattening areas. Because it is a carbide bur, it will stay sharp and last for a long time. These are on the [Carving Burs page](#).



File Cards - This very inexpensive hand tool is made specifically for cleaning rifflers and files. The short, super stiff teeth will clean all the residue out embedded in the file grooves. You'll find them on the [Tools page](#).

Make your own replacement saw blades for the Microlux mini jig and cross saws at just a fraction of the price! You'll get a dozen high quality Olson saw blades, and each blade will make 3 or 4 mini blades for your saw. Use heavy wire cutters or a metal cutting disc accessory in your rotary tool to cut these to the appropriate length. You'll find them (plus complete instructions on how to cut them to size) on the [Mini Tools page](#).

Over stock SALE: This month only, and while supplies last, the **LARGE OVAL** feathered cabochons are on sale. (Other sizes are at regular price). These are on the [Special Embellishments page](#). Also on sale, **LARGE Turquoise Freeforms**. You'll find these on the [Inlay Supplies page](#).



NEW ~ Arizona Gourds is going "social"! For those of you that just can't wait until the next month's newsletter, I've opened up new pages on **Twitter** and **Facebook**. I will post there when there are new things to report - classes, new merchandise, new gourds, or other things of interest. If you are a member of one of these social networking sites, all you have to do is "Become a Fan" (Facebook) or "Follow" (Twitter). Click on the icons to be taken to the Arizona Gourds pages, or use these links:

www.twitter.com/ArizonaGourds

www.facebook.com/pages/Arizona-Gourds/91905791901



I've had some requests for shirts with my artwork, so I've opened up a new **Cafe Press store**. You can buy all kinds of t-shirts and apparel printed with the image of one of my most popular gourds, "**Desert Fliers**". You may also vote below for which gourd should be the next addition to the Arizona Gourds Cafe Press store. I'll add the gourd that gets the most votes, and you'll be able to wear it on a shirt! <http://www.cafepress.com/ArizonaGourds>

July Feature - Making Luffa (Loofah/Luffah) Gourd Soap

This article was originally intended as the main July feature, but on further consideration, I decided the material was of enough interest to make it into a permanent tutorial page. I hope you'll enjoy this fun and easy craft!



When you are finished reading the newsletter, Please visit the **NEW** [**Luffa Gourd soapmaking tutorial!**](#)



Arlington, Texas Gourd Patch Classes

Last month I taught 3 days of classes that were sponsored by the Arlington gourd patch. They opened the registrations to non-members, and there were people from neighboring states in attendance. The weather was unusually cooperative and the location was wonderful! Here are some photos of our classes under the shady red oak trees, and a few photos of local scenery. Many thanks to the

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Classes were held under shady Red Oak trees.

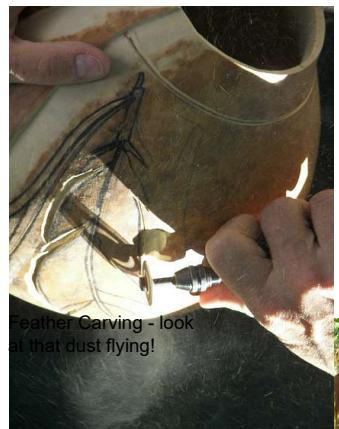


Scenery just down the road from the class location.



My husband Ev ran the "store" and enjoyed visiting with everyone.





*Special thanks to Cindi Cresswell for organizing the classes and for providing photos, and to Jean Greenwell for hosting the event!



After Midnight Art Ranch Gourd Retreat - Sonoita, Arizona

I taught 4 days of classes at the After Midnight Art Ranch in Sonoita, Arizona. If you've ever seen old Westerns, you'd recognize the beautiful rolling hills and grasslands of southern Arizona. The elevation is higher, so temperatures are cooler! We had a great time and everyone was exhausted/inspired/invigorated/excited and sad to go home at the end. We had people attend from Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, California, Oregon and Washington, and they were all great friends by the end of the retreat. Many thanks to Linda and Tom Hanson for sponsoring this event and for their wonderful hospitality.



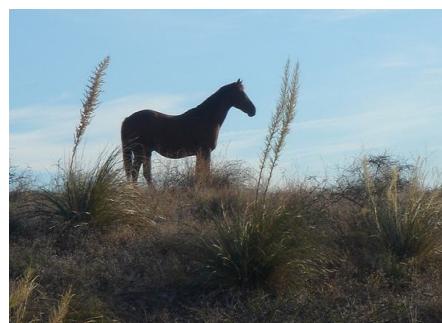
Coyote gourds and thistles growing along the road.



Beautiful Countryside!



"Horsing around" during an evening stroll!





Reader's Mailbag

Sue Harkness Williams wrote to ask: *How did you attach the elk teeth on the examples that you show on your web site? I am trying to create my own needle that will work on a taller gourd but so far unsuccessful..How is it done?*

My answer: Yes, it can be tricky to get the elk teeth or any beads tied on unless you plan ahead for an opening large enough to put your hand into. Even then it may be hard. Get a pair of long needle nosed pliers and that'll help a bit. In a pinch, you can cheat by gluing on the teeth, then drilling holes and just shoving some lacing through the holes without tying it on the inside.

Sue's reply: Thanks SO much for your response. I found a way to attach the elk teeth and it seemed to work pretty well. Here is what I did to solve the "HEY! I can't put my hand inside this darned gourd!!!!"

Drill one hole. Use a large beadalon Big Eye beading needle (these have the hole in the middle and two sharp ends.) String about 18" of artificial sinew into the needle; pull the thread so that it is centered evenly on both sides of the needle. Push the needle through and pick it up on the inside with long slant edge beading tweezers. Pull the thread through leaving about 4-5 inches of the artificial sinew on the outside of the gourd. Cut the thread on the inside of the gourd so that there are two ends. Thread on a small black button that will act as a washer, and tie a good solid knot.

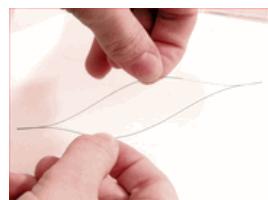
Next, pull the thread from the outside of the gourd tight. Thread the two loose ends through the holes on the elk tooth, and tie the elk tooth on.

Sue notes: Son Phillip used to call me MommyGyver (during the MacGyver TV series tenure). I am sure someone much smarter than I am wouldn't have started with a gourd too small to put your hand inside of to



Fortunately, both of these gourds that I created had large enough openings that I was able to put my hand inside the gourd as I tied on the elk teeth. It's always a good idea to plan ahead for possible problems - but Sue did a great job figuring out a workable solution!

Imitation Elk teeth are available on the [Embellishments page](#). Artificial Sinew is available on the [Special Embellishments page](#).



begin with.... But I solved the problem. If there is a better way I'd love to hear it. Whew. Once done the subsequent elk teeth are not too hard at all.
Sue's website: <http://www.enewosun.com/index.html>



Reader's Mailbag

Jo Cowan of Tucson sent me these photos of a finished gourd she had worked on in my classes.

The gourd is decorated "in the round" and had different designs on all sides. It has inlace inlay, [patina paints](#), carving and woodburning.

Tip of the Month: Gourd Scrap Projects - Using those cut off tops - Part Two

Donna Hillbush of Pottstown, PA sent in this great idea for a gourd wind chime. She made this for the PA Gourd Society's Gourd Fest wind chime exchange event. It was made using all gourd tops.

Her hint : Next time you try a new finish or color, test it on the gourd top. Finish just like the gourd. Save till you have enough to make a wind chime. Then, just like an old quilt you have a reminder of the gourd you sold.

Sharon Watson of WA and CA uses her scraps to make jewelry of all types including pins, earrings and necklaces. She also makes name tags for her painting group that are in the shape of a palette, plus one shaped like a gourd for her business name tag. She also cuts pieces into bird and butterfly wing shapes, then adds them to the gourds for a 3-D effect.

Gloria Dittrick of Washington send a photo of a birdhouse she made using a scrap top. There's a long neck under the "roof" so it actually acts as a wind chime too. Gloria says she can't stand to throw any gourd pieces away, so she has quite a collection. They make roofs, bases and stands, duck wings, and great paint and dye testers, and samplers.

Her club in Washington had volunteer artists decorate 5x7 pieces that were all gathered up and made into two wall hangings. One had a "Fall" theme, and another was "Summer". You can see the Fall one on the website www.wagourdsociety.org - the group is selling raffle tickets to earn money for the club. Gloria had so much fun making a "tile" for each, that she dug through her "junk box" and made one for herself.

Terri LaBrosse of Tucson, Arizona and her 7 year old great niece, **Claudia** of Wisconsin, use scrap tops and pieces to create gourd villages. Claudia had a lot of fun and with her great imagination she made a mushroom and an apple tree out of some of the scraps. Terri made a gourd family hut while she was doing her village. It's fun to see a future gourd artist in the making! Last year, Terri, Claudia, and several other family members painted jewelry gourds white and made snowman heads out of them. They had 4 generations making them, and their Christmas tree



Gloria's birdhouse/chime



7 year old Claudia tends the new gourd plants at her Grandfather's home.

was decorated with gourds only. Later this year they plan to create a carousel gourd.



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

Web Poll

Which Gourd would you wear on a Cafe Press shirt?



- Photo 1
- Photo 2
- Photo 3
- Photo 4
- Other (suggestions?)
- Not interested at all

[Submit Vote](#)

[View Results](#)

I'd love to hear your suggestions - let me know if you have some ideas!

[E-MAIL ME](#)



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

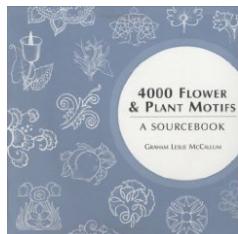


Photo 4

Featured Gourd of the Month:

Hummingbird Perch

Made as a commissioned piece. The gourd has an added manzanita branch with a hand carved basswood Rufous hummingbird. Filigree carving was added in a complementary design.

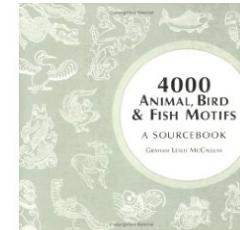


[4000 Flower & Plant Motifs](#)

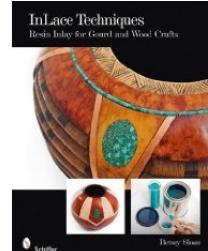


[Holiday Fun - Painting Christmas Gourds](#)

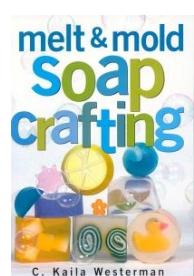
Featured Books of the Month:



[4000 Animal, Bird & Fish Motifs](#)



[Inlace Techniques](#)



[Melt & Mold Soap Crafting](#)



[Making Transparent Soap](#)



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Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/July09.html>

Not receiving the newsletter? You can join the newsletter mailing list by clicking on the envelope icon. If you are receiving duplicate mailings, or want to unsubscribe from the newsletter list, please send me an [email](#).

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.

Here's a couple more "Motif" books for designing ideas. It's nice to have these kinds of source books on hand when you are in need of some fresh ideas.

Inlace Techniques by Betsey Sloan and **Holiday Fun - Painting Christmas Gourds** by Sammie Crawford are two brand new gourd book releases. Both are available June 29th. (I contributed photos and material for the inlace book and I'm looking forward to seeing a copy!) Sammie Crawford (AKA "The Fairy Gourdmother") is well known for her whimsical gourd paintings and if you enjoy this style, here is a brand new offering.

Lastly, I've included a couple of soap making books for those that like the idea of making more than just luffa gourd soaps. There are lots of fun ideas in these.



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