



Arizona Gourds

March updates from the desert southwest...



[March09.pdf](#)

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Welcome to the March issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Special Notice: I will be attending the Southern Gourd Retreat from March 25-30th. Orders placed during this time will be held and filled just as soon as I return. *All orders will be filled in the order they are received.*



Thought you might enjoy seeing these photos of a Harris Hawk that I took recently. The Tucson desert is a really amazing place. This is on one of our cloudy spring days. (The old joke is that Arizonans consider it to be a personal insult when the sun doesn't shine!)



Update: Gourd Classes

**Are you going to be close to Tucson in early March? I still have a few spaces left in my classes on March 2nd, 6th and 7th. See my [classes page](#) for more details.*

Almost time for the Southern Gourd Retreat in Georgia! (March 26-29th) Visit www.webgourds.com/southern for more information about the retreat in general and about the classes offered. **There may still be openings in many classes, so come and have a good time.**

I will be teaching classes at the Woodcraft of Boise, Idaho. Classes will be held on **Friday, April 24th through Sunday, April 26th.** You can e-mail the Woodcraft store at: boise-retail@woodcraft.com or call them at (208) 338-1190 to learn how to register. [Classes offered](#) include Basic Gourd Power Carving, 3-D Feather Carving, Filigree Carving, Inlace Inlay, and Advanced 3-D Relief Power Carving. ***Because these are taught at a Woodcraft store, I will not be bringing any tools or supplies to these classes. Carving burs and tools may be preordered from my site, or you may purchase items from the Woodcraft store.**

My classes at the [Leiser Gourd Festival](#) just outside of Sacramento, California are sold out. I will NOT have a booth at the festival, but will have supplies available at all of my classes. *(These are my only California class offerings this year, I will NOT be teaching at the Welburn Festival this summer.)*

Also, I am also teaching for the first time at the [After Midnight Art Ranch](#), located in Sonoita, Arizona, from June 12-15th. Our host, Linda Hanson, is the owner of After Midnight Art Stamps, and her ranch is a wonderful scenic area located in the cooler rolling hills of southern Arizona. You can sign up for these classes on the After Midnight website. *(The stay-on-site retreat is full, but you may sign up for any of the classes individually. If you need lodging nearby, Linda will help you find a place.)* *Please note that a glitch in the software originally added shipping charges when registering on the After Midnight site; this has been fixed.

*If you would like to receive advance notice of classes, please add your name to my classes updates email list. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)



Photo taken at a festival class by Dynva Todd.

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

I enjoyed seeing a lot of you at the recent Wuerzt Gourd Festival! Some of you were disappointed when I ran out of some items at the show; these items have now been restocked and are available on the website. I now have [diamond files](#), [feathered cabochons](#) and [wood hardener](#) back in stock. I also have some great new



turquoise cabochons, nice large [ammonite fossils](#), [wooden stands](#), and [patina paints](#) back in stock. NEW ITEM - [leather lacing strips](#) in turquoise color, and [bundles of 50 African quills](#) at a discounted price.



Have you had a chance to try one of the [carbide gourd cleaning tools](#)? Unlike the grit covered golf ball tools, this tough carbide cleaner will last forever without dulling, peeling, chipping or cracking, and it won't break if you drop it. **This month, buy one and I'll include a free cleaning brush.**

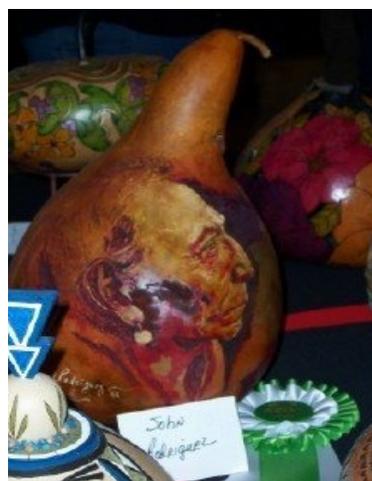
Left: Sea Beans are large, hollow beans that float from rainforests to the ocean and are often washed up on far away beaches. Their shell is similar to hardwood and can be carved, etched, polished to a high shine, or drilled. They also make beautiful jewelry. Limited supply on the "[Embellishments](#)" page.

March Feature - Wuertz Festival

The Wuertz Festival was wonderful! Despite the tough economy, thousands came out to enjoy the vendor booths, classes, competition and tons of other activities that went on continuously. The Wuertz family really knows how to put on a good show and there were smiling faces everywhere. The Arizona weather ranged from a balmy 75 degrees for Thursday classes to a cold, windy and rainy Sunday. Most activities were indoors so the weather wasn't a big factor. Good thing the hula dancers and gourd musicians did most of their performances on Friday and Saturday while the weather was nice! The gourd car and boat races were fun activities; one day I'm going to sneak out of my booth and actually find a few minutes to watch. And of course, the gourd art competition was as fantastic as ever. There were around 350 entries and they included some truly impressive pieces!



The Wuertz's were hand raising two lambs that were less than a week old. They followed the family around like puppies! *No, they aren't goats. They are a meat producing breed of sheep that has hair instead of typical wool.*



THANK YOU to Suzi Nonn and Darlene Propp for sharing some of their photos!



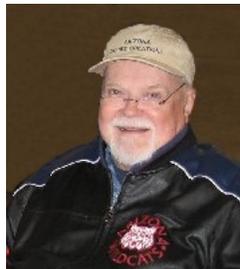
Suzi Nonn started this gourd in the filigree class.



An entrant in the gourd car races!



Here I am in my booth.



My husband Ev (he's the best!)



Right: Carl Edmondson, (my Shofu tool distributor) shared my booth this year.



Left: Travis Wuertz rides in his gourd powered buggy. There is a running gourd man on the front of this contraption!

Phyllis Sickles, my gourd carving buddy, was in a booth next to me.



Left: Gourd car race entrants parade through the festival just prior to the races.



Right: One of the entrants in the gourd car derby carries his creation. Leah Wuertz follows behind.

David Beede Luthier



Hula Percussion Instrument



Here are some more You Tube videos to enjoy. These feature gourds as musical instruments. In the first one (at about 2 minutes into the video) the instrument maker shows how he crafts a canteen gourd to create the body for a gourd banjo. In the other, a Hawaiian musician shows how the Ipu Heke is played to accompany the hula.

Tip of the Month: Exterior Finishes

*What is the best type of paint to use for gourds which will be used outside? I have tried acrylic and it washes off. Do I seal it with a particular sealer? What is the best stain to use on gourds?
Thanks, Diane L.*

Paints **that are not sealed well** will chip or flake off of gourds that are used outdoors. Gourd skin is usually very slick; it is not always a good surface for paint adhesion. You can lightly sand the gourd to provide better "tooth", or consider using gesso or a spray primer when you are not worried about keeping the natural gourd color. I have not found a stain that works well or holds up well on gourd skin. The gourd surface is not porous, so the stain just sits on the surface instead of sinking into the gourd.

The best thing is to make sure that any paint is well sealed afterwards, and that the sealant is refreshed periodically. Spar varnish works well but will yellow over time. Polyurethane is also a good choice. If the varnish appears dry or cracked after several months, add another coat.

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

Reader's Mailbag - Alternative Respirator uses?

I received a surprise package from Dr. Joel Axelrod with some of the respirators he uses in his medical practice. I mentioned to him that the cup shaped respirators he uses often do not fit ladies smaller faces well. I enjoyed the note I got back from him - he has a great sense of humor!

*Welllll.....if the ladies can't wear them...perhaps they can be filled with jelly beans and peepers for Easter and used as "baskets".....and if Dr Gibson (*my husband is a retired physician) ever decides to*



Reader's Mailbag

*Still having trouble working with patina paints (VERY cold right now) but you might want to add caution in your instructions about contaminating the base paint by dipping back into it. Keep heading all the good stuff our way.
Kathie C - Blue Diamond Gourds*

Kathie is correct! When using [patina paints](#), you should avoid cross contaminating the paint and patina solutions. Use a clean brush and rinse it well if you have inadvertently mixed the two on the brush. For the same reason, use an inexpensive paint brush with a plastic ferrule for the patina solution, as

reenter his practice...he can cut down on the overhead and use these. PS Many of my partner-doctors at my clinic are "fat heads" and so these are actually too small for their porculent faces.

the solution may be contaminated by the metal ferrule of most brushes.

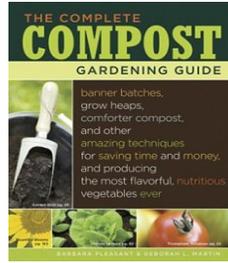
Featured Gourd of the Month: Ogre Wall Mask

This mask was a great way to use a gourd that had one damaged side. I added antlers, saguaro ribs, raffia and some wood and turquoise accents. The top part of the mask is covered with a textured finish.

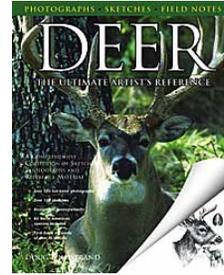


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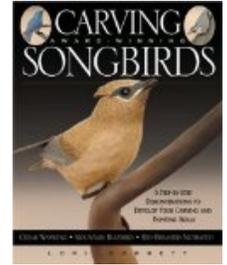
Featured Books of the Month:



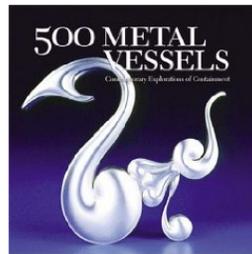
[The Complete Compost Gardening Guide](#)



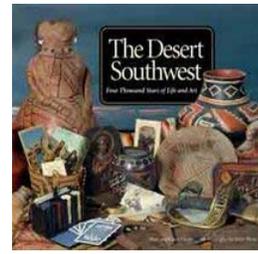
[Deer: The Ultimate Artist's Reference](#)



[Carving Songbirds](#)



[500 Metal Vessels](#)



[The Desert Southwest](#)



[Kindle 2](#)

It's about time to start thinking about growing your gourd crop. I don't grow my own gourds, but **The Complete Compost Gardening Guide** has been recommended by others that do.

I have a copy of **Deer: The Ultimate Artist's Reference**. This is a great reference book if you are interested in portraying deer. The same author has several other books on animal reference and wildlife drawing techniques that are really great artistic reference material.

I carve a lot of wood hummingbirds to add to my gourds. **Carving Songbirds** is a good beginners book if you want to try carving your own.

500 Metal Vessels is another great book in Lark's "500" series. Even though this one deals with metal, it provides wonderful inspiration material for artists in other media as well.

The Desert Southwest is filled with photos and information about the southwest and how it relates to arts of the region.

Just for fun - the **Kindle 2** is an interesting new book reader from Amazon. This cool little gadget only weighs about 10 ounces and is pencil thin. You can load it with books wirelessly and take it anywhere. I'm an avid reader, and this device may be the way we will all read books in the future.

You can use this Amazon search box link to find all kinds of books and other products. I appreciate those of you that do so; Amazon purchases made through the links on this website help to support the site.



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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/March09.html>

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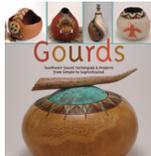
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Note: It is important that you add bonniegibson@qwest.net to your "safe senders" list, as many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.

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.



(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

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

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