



# Arizona Gourds

October updates from the desert southwest...



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**Welcome to the October issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!**  
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September was a very busy month for me and October shows no signs of slowing down. However, when you are busy with gourds, being busy is a good thing! I had a fantastic time at the Florida Gourd Retreat (look for some photos below) and I'm looking forward to teaching classes at the Texas Gourd Festival in October.

I really enjoy teaching gourd classes, not only do I get to meet and visit with lots of great gourders, I also love seeing people's faces light up when they learn new things! My philosophy of teaching is that I want you to leave class with new skills and knowledge, not just a gourd project. I want all of my students to go home with the ability to create many, many, more gourd projects using what they have learned. It has been exciting and rewarding to see many more carved gourds at recent gourd shows!

**Do you enjoy receiving this newsletter? The free newsletter is a labor of love, and to keep your prices low, it is my only method of advertising. Your orders and continued support are really appreciated!**

**Note: I will be traveling to teach classes at the Texas Gourd Festival in October.** Because of that trip, **I will not be shipping orders from from October 15th to the 21st.** I promise to ship out any orders promptly just as soon as I return. I will also be away from October 30th to November 13th, so the next issue of the newsletter may be delayed. Thanks for your understanding, and I'll do my best to provide you with fast service upon my return.



Lighted Halloween Gourds  
Photo courtesy of Mike McDonough  
of Talladega, Alabama

This photo was also featured on the cover of the AGS Gourd Magazine - are you a member? Get 4 great full color issues as part of your \$15 yearly dues. It's a bargain! Not a member? Sign up now and you'll receive all of this years' issues. Visit [www.americangourdsociety.org](http://www.americangourdsociety.org) to join.

## Update: Gourd Classes

My classes at the [Texas Gourd Festival](#) (October 17 - 19th) are nearly full. Please visit their site to register.

**Wuertz Festival Classes will be posted no later than 10AM MST on October 1st!**

Please be sure to visit the [Wuertz Festival page](#) on that day and sign up for your class choices as soon as possible, as last year some classes filled in only one or two days.

**New Tucson Classes** (including one brand new offering!) for **October 24th-26th**. Please visit the [classes page](#) for details.

\*To get notice of classes as soon as they are posted, please add your name to my classes updates email list. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



## Gourd Trivia - Gourds are growing in popularity all over the world!

This Abe Lincoln gourd was made by **Devraj Khastagir of Kolkata, India**. Devraj is a 35 year old male artist who is also a member of the AGS. This sculpture won an Honorable Mention award in the "Lincoln" theme category at the 2008 All about Gourds Exhibition sponsored by the Ice House Gallery of Mayfield, Kentucky. It was also a red ribbon winner in the California Gourd Society competition in 2008. It was sculpted with gourd clay (a homemade mixture of gourd shell powder & adhesive). The hat is covered with dried gourd leaves and the bow tie is unbarked gourd stem.



If you'd like to see more of Devraj's sculptures and gourds, you can visit his website at <http://www.freewebs.com/deva581/>. His site has many photos of his more traditional Indian style gourds.

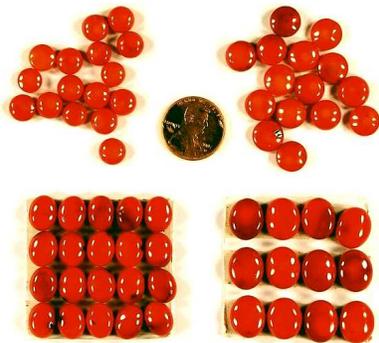
Every now and then I will feature an interesting gourd artist. If you have photos to share, please [email them to me](#) and I will use some of them as space permits.

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

New Coral Cabochons on the [Inlay Supplies](#) page!

I'm pleased to announce that I will be carrying a new line of woodburners. **The Patriot 1000 Everglades Burner** is small (and perfect for taking to classes), but best of all, it is loaded with 65 watts of power and very economically priced at \$99.95. The burner is offered as a custom Arizona gourds package and upcoming units will be equipped with a special spear tipped heavy duty handpiece made to my specifications. I've had the chance to use this model in recent classes, and I was impressed with the amount of power and the fast heat-recovery time in this burner. Each unit is equipped with a heavy duty cord and one fixed-tip handpiece, and will also accept most handpieces including those from Detail Master, Optima, Nibsburner and Colwood. Please visit the [Woodburners](#) page for more details.

demonstrating at the **Grand Reopening of the [Woodcraft store](#)**, located in the shopping center at the SE corner of Orange Grove and Oracle roads. The store has new ownership, and they are interested in serving gourd crafters. I am tentatively planning on teaching at least one class there next spring.



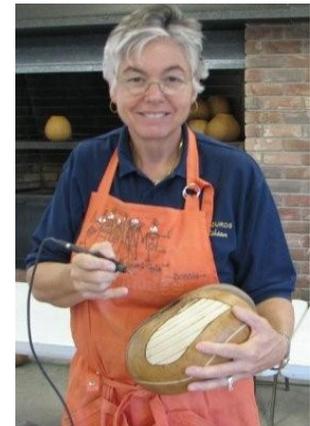
**Florida Gourd Retreat:** I had a fantastic time at the Florida Gourd Retreat last month. It was a wonderful facility, lots of fun gourders having a great time, and everyone did a great job on their gourd projects! Here are a few photos from the event:



Selma Carrow and Tonia Owen  
Tonia tells me I rate right up there with Meatloaf and Led Zeppelin.  
(I think that's a compliment...!).



Demo Gourd carved in class.



Right: Photo by  
Phiny Musgrave.

*Bonnie, Home and unpacked!  
Just wanted to say to you what a wonderful experience this past 4 days were in your classes. I have never had such easy to understand instructions from an instructor, and the one on one that you made sure to check on each person there. you made it very easy to follow, you certainly do*



Day 1 Seminar Class - Look at those carved gourds!!



Day 2 Seminar Class

have a "gift" and your creations are just WONDERFUL. I enjoyed your classes immensely. Thanks again! Jean Clark



An "Ikebana" floral arrangement in a gourd container.

1. Select a gourd that sits or hangs nicely (balanced upright) without any modifications that would perforate the skin. After cleaning the exterior, check carefully to be sure that there are no cracks or rot spots.
2. Mark and cut the opening, being mindful of where the intended water level limit will be. Check for thickness. The gourd will be more durable if the walls and bottom are at least 1/4 inch thick.
3. Thoroughly clean the interior. There must be no dust or other residue on the inside of the gourd. The "soak and scour" method works well as it gives a good clean result without thinning the walls. (Empty out any loose material. Fill the cut gourd with warm water and let it soak for an hour or two, confirming how well it sits upright with the weight of the water in it. Lift out the glop that you can loosen with your fingers, and then scour the interior clean with a metal scouring pad. Rinse and invert to drain.) Check carefully for any spots you might have missed, and allow the clean gourd to dry completely.
4. When planning your decorative elements, consider that any spills onto the exterior will permanently interfere with subsequent applications and absorption of dyes or paints, and can get into wood-burned lines and designs. I usually keep vase decorations to a minimum, so the beauty of the fresh flowers can be shown more effectively. Some rim treatments are best left until after the waterproofing treatment, i.e. adding woven or coiled materials.

### Part One: Plasti-Dip Method

Potential hazards: Wear a mask and gloves, and work in a well-ventilated area.

This product is designed for dipping tool handles to create a rubberlike grip. It is available in a sprayable or paintable "dip" formula, in black, white, red, yellow, and blue. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for thinning the dippable formula if necessary. Inexpensive disposable sponge brushes are the easiest to use and can be thrown away afterwards.

1. Prepare your work surface with several layers of newspapers.
2. Mask the exterior rim of your gourd securely with masking tape.
3. Wearing all protective gear, whether using the sprayable or the paintable product, follow the application instructions on the container.
4. It will take 4-6 coats to result in a container that is reliably waterproof. It's a good idea to also waterproof the rim. This product is removable, to a point. Just peel.

Gourds properly treated with this method may be used over and over for many years.



Click on photos for more information about the various types of Plasti-Dip.



The same warty gourd container was used for both of these arrangements.

Karey uses floral "frogs" or wet floral foam to hold the flowers in place.



A wall hanging gourd vase.



Karey Karam gave a gourd waterproofing demo at our Tucson Gourd Patch meeting.



### Interesting Gourd Site!

The [Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestra](#) resides in Richmond, Virginia, where members grow gourds, make instruments and create music. A band of musicians with dirt under their fingernails—they put the "cult" back into culture, and "culture" back into agriculture. In an age prone to technological idolatry and cultural narcissism, where electronic media seems endlessly fascinated with itself, the Gourd Orchestra directly reaffirms their relationship with nature.

0:04

Click on the play button to hear a sample of their music:

Orchestra members learned from the Gourd the importance of spreading seed-ideas globally. They learned that only when these seed-ideas take root locally do they mature and come to fruition; that music, culture, art and spirituality can be the fruits of carefully and patiently attended gardens and communities. You will hear musical ideas from around the world transformed and given life from the soil of Virginia. And you will hear sounds from spirits unique to this place. Instruments include the balafon, bass kalimba, drums, friction drums, frogs, flute, guiro, harp, horn, lute, mbira, musical bow, rain stick, rattles, shakera, and water drums.

Dressed in custom made costumes and headgear, they give gardening tips, delve into gourd lore, brag about their vast, if questionable, ethnomusicological knowledge, and generally try to explain themselves. But mostly they play "gourdeous" music. "We're out standing in our field" says member Arthur Stephens. And that's probably where you'll find them.

Thanks to [Scott Nelson](#) for introducing me to this interesting link!



This gourd kalimba (also known as a mbira) is one type of instrument the group uses.

Want to make your own kalimba?

You may order gourd kalimba kits on the [musical supplies page](#).



### Tip of the Month: Horsehair Insertion

I recently got this question from Sharon Donohue:

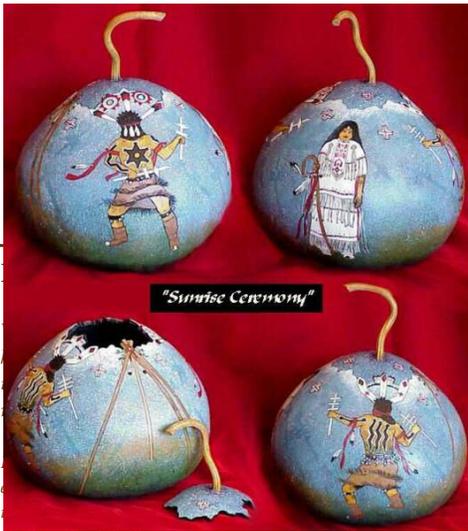
*I bought some decorative [metal cones](#) from you and thought I would use them in a few of my gourd projects, after seeing them used with [horsehair](#) and other fillers on masks and doll figures. But I don't know how to do this. I've tried. Can you tell me how people get them filled and to stay filled so the hairs don't come out and the best way to attach them to the gourd? I'd really appreciate it.*

**Answer:**

Gather a small bundle of horsehair, of whatever size you're going to use in the cones. Put a bit of white glue on the end of the bundle, then wrap the bundle tightly with some thread, adding more white glue as needed to adhere the thread. When it is dry, you can trim the end of the bundle neatly and simply glue it into a cone. (It's a lot easier to handle when it's glued!) I use Tacky or [Weldbond](#) glues for an even more secure bond. If you need shorter bundles of hair, glue and wrap the near the middle of the horsehair bundle, then when it is dry cut straight across to make two neat short bundles. To add the bundles or cones to the gourd, drill holes of a size that will hold the cones snug. Add a bit of glue to the end of the cone, and push it in firmly into the prepared hole. You can add a bit of glue to the hole inside the gourd as well if you want to make the bond even stronger.

Last chance to buy a raffle ticket to win this gourd and aid ALS research! You may purchase tickets through October 7th. The drawing will be held on October 18th at the Orange County ALS Walk. The winning ticket will be drawn by Russ Conley, a gourder that is fighting ALS.

LaVonne Hall has very generously donated this gourd I did for her several years ago. Please show your support and visit the [raffle website](#) to buy your raffle tickets and raise funds for ALS!



"Sunrise Ceremony"

ordinary' public like me, who know nothing. We are on a  
unrelenting tight budget, so to over come this I sent your site and  
my wish list to our family so they can use your site for all of my  
gifts. You are an extraordinary lady, Thank you for sharing your  
gift with others. Tami

This gourd was one of a few that I did to honor some of the tribes from Arizona. This one represents the Apache culture. It depicts portions of the "Sunrise Ceremony", which girls go through to indicate they have reached womanhood.

*"The Apache Sunrise Ceremony, or na'ii'ees, is an arduous communal four-day ceremony that Apache girls of the past and present experience soon after their first menstruation. Through numerous sacred ceremonies, dances, songs, and enactments, the girls become imbued with the physical and spiritual power of White Painted Woman, and embrace their role as women of the sacred Way of Life."*

Medium: Acrylics  
Techniques: Woodburned and Painted  
Retail Value: \$400.00



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Great for those who don't learn as well  
from books!

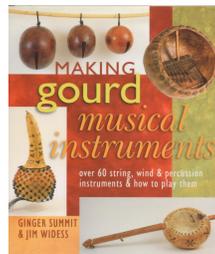
### Featured Gourd of the Month: Feather Flight

This piece began as a demonstration gourd and was used in several classes, including a basic power carving class, Inlaid inlay class, and a filigree carving class!

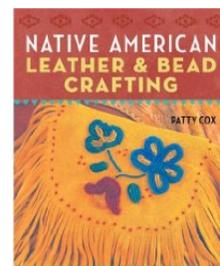


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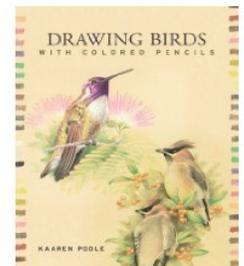
### Featured Books of the Month:



[Making Gourd  
Musical Instruments](#)



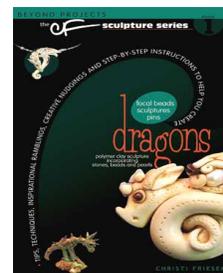
[Native American  
Leather and Bead  
Crafting](#)



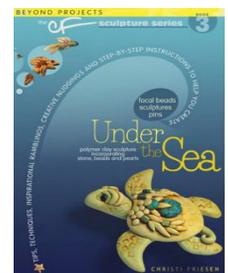
[Drawing Birds with  
Colored Pencils](#)



[Welcome to the Jungle](#)  
Polymer Clay Techniques



[Dragons](#)  
Polymer Clay Techniques



[Under the Sea](#)  
Polymer Clay Techniques

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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Oct08.html>

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Recommend This Site

*Making Gourd Musical Instruments* is one of the classic gourd titles from Jim Widess and Ginger Summit. You'll find tons of information and instructions on how to make a wide variety of gourd folk instruments. Great resource!

*Native American Leather and Bead Crafting* might seem a bit off topic, but it actually contains some gourd and beadwork tutorials from Cindy Lee. Cindy is a wonderful California gourd artist and she writes great tutorials!

*Drawing Birds with Colored Pencils* is a new release. It has some good basic information on colored pencil techniques and how to use them to capture the beauty of birds. Not specifically gourd related, but it is a nice art book and reasonably priced.

*Welcome to the Jungle*, *Dragons*, and *Under the Sea* are by Christi Friesen, a noted polymer clay artist. Even if you don't use polymer clay, the basic

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sculpture techniques shown translate well into air dry clays and other media that people use when sculpting on gourds. The designs are colorful and fun

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

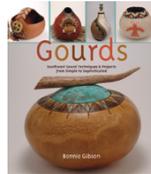
If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.

*\*Be sure to visit all the 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.*

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



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