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# Arizona Gourds

June updates from the desert southwest...



May3013.pdf

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## Welcome to the June issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

It's hard for me to believe that last month's Arizona Gourds newsletter finished the 7th full year of monthly newsletters! This is the start of the 8th year, and every issue it gets harder and harder to come up with new and exciting material. I appreciate and want to thank all of you that have sent in photos and information for the newsletters.

I am amazed at how many people think I have a staff of employees and writers and order packers.... folks, it is just me, so don't be surprised if I answer the phone when you call. I love sharing my passion for gourds and it really makes me happy when others enjoy the same hobby I love. While this newsletter is a good way to keep my website business fresh in your mind, I also view it as a public service to the gourdng community, as is the Gourd Art Enthusiasts website that I sponsor.

Did you know that you can still see all of the past issues of the newsletters (except for one issue, that I inadvertently deleted sometime back in the beginning stages!) All you have to do is visit the "Newsletter Index" page, where you'll see what the featured article and tip is for each month. Just click on the link to the left to access each issue. You'll find lots of other info in there as well - and while some of the dates and timely references are outdated, the rest of the info is still valuable.

Newsletter Index - article and tip index from all the past newsletters.  
**WARNING: Reading past is**  
[Newsletter Index](#)

**Thank you!** Your purchases made from Arizona Gourds and from our Amazon links enable us to keep these free newsletters and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts site available.  
**We sincerely appreciate your orders. :)**



I thought you might enjoy seeing one of my gourds in progress. This was started as a demo during my recent California classes, and will be the newest gourd in my "Beetle Garden" series. It also shows you that my work area is probably just as messy as most other gourd crafters! :)

**\*Note: Due to my teaching schedule, I will not be shipping from June 5th - 17th.** All orders placed during those dates will be shipped as soon as possible starting on the 18th. Some items may be out of stock after several days of classes, so you may want to order before those dates to ensure the fastest delivery of your items. Thank you for your understanding during this time.

**Printable Stencils Patterns**

[www.myscra...](http://www.myscra...)

Create & Print an Array of Stencils- Download Free Toolbar!



\*ALL Amazon purchases made through site links and the search box help support Arizona Gourds and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts websites, and it costs you nothing extra!

Just type what you are looking for into the search box below.

Search Now:  Search New and Used amazon.com.

### Update: Gourd Classes

No Classes currently scheduled.

Please join the class updates list to receive advance notice of upcoming classes. Get the news first and have the best chance to sign up for popular classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

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



**Update: Rotary Chisels** Due to requests, I have added all 4 shapes of Rotary Chisels back





These **heavy inlay shell earrings** have been flying out the door as beaders have discovered that they make beautiful centers for beaded cabochon pins and pendants. I'm hoping some of the people buying them will send in some photos of their completed projects! On the [Embellishments page](#).

**New on the [Woodburning Systems page](#):**

Woodburning tip cleaner/strop. One side has some fine sandpaper for knocking of large carbon deposits or sharpening an edge. The other side has a piece of leather that is used in conjunction with the included honing compound. Also added to the page recently are the new Circle Burning tips and the Burnmaster Hawk burning system.

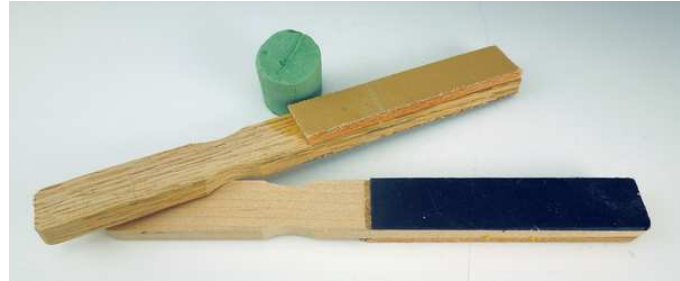


onto the [Carving Burs page](#).

The Cholla cactus project is on the [Project Packets page](#).



The 4 lb size of [Apoxie Sculpt](#) is now back in stock! This size is the best value.



### Feature - Why Join the American Gourd Society?

The American Gourd Society promotes interest in all activities relating to gourds: cultivation, historical uses, gourd show competition, craftwork, and artistic decoration.

#### Top 10 Reasons to Join the American Gourd Society

- Quarterly magazine, The Gourd**  
Includes free tutorials, how-to's, fact sheets, gourd crafting contests, show information, resources for where to purchase gourds & supplies
- Online Message Board, BigTent**  
Announcements & News in a timely manner (email messages), question & answer forums, calendar of events, sub-groups for AGS judges, chapter presidents, gourd growers, executive board
- AGS web site, [www.americangourdsociety.org](http://www.americangourdsociety.org)**  
Links to State Chapters, Free tutorials & fact sheets, show information, resources for where to purchase gourds & supplies, contact information for AGS Judges
- Certified Judges for Gourd Show Competitions and Judge Training**  
Standards established for uniform gourd show judging
- Education and outreach to attract new people to the hobby**
- Twenty-seven state chapters, and local patches all over the U.S.**
- AGS Member logo to place on your web site**
- Resources list - you can add your contact info if you are a vendor, grower, etc.**
- Networking with gourd artists around the country/world**
- Inspiration from other members**

We have some exciting news about one of our top features, "The Gourd". In recent years, the national magazine came from

we have some exciting news about one of our top features, *The Gourd* . In recent years, the national magazine gone from a black and white newsletter type printed on plain paper, to a full-color, slick paper publication. The magazine has now taken a step further in efforts to provide the most professional looking, well laid out and info filled resource as possible, and research is ongoing in efforts to extend the reach of our publication worldwide. The AGS has selected a new editor to facilitate this process, and volunteers are working hard to obtain fresh new material and to ensure it is presented in the most attractive way possible. *Look for these improvements in the Summer 3013 issue!*

**We want to give you a peek at what you are missing. Here is just one example of the tutorials and articles that you'll find in the AGS magazine. The complete article is available as a pdf, and can be viewed and printed.**



[03Faux\\_Turquoise\\_Tutorial\\_Summer2013w.pdf](#)

*After checking this out, I'm sure many of you will want to join. Please visit the AGS website to sign up - you can use paypal or pay by check:*

[www.americangourdsociety.org/join.html](http://www.americangourdsociety.org/join.html) We need YOU to keep our national organization going strong!



### Feature - Gourding Pioneers

There are some names that veteran gourd crafters hear and recognize immediately - pioneers of the AGS and gourd growing and crafting such as Minnie Black, Jim Story and others. I hope to have future articles on some of these people that have had an impact on our gourding community and who have influenced the new directions taken by gourd artists. *\*Do you have a gourd pioneer we should feature? Please send me your info and photos for possible future articles.*

**Margaret Sparkman of North Carolina was known by many as "The National Gourd Lady"**. This title likely became firmly entrenched once "Sparky" had achieved notoriety by appearing on the Jay Leno show, where she boldly "bopped" Jay on the head with a long handled dipper gourd! While on the show, she showed off many of her creations, including a "Casey the Cardinal" sculpture that was the symbol of the North Carolina state fair for many years, a bust of Jay Leno created from gourds, and a nursing dog complete with gourd pups. I have seen this old TV show segment many times and it never fails to make me laugh. Sparky had an interesting sense of humor and for public appearances, she dressed in a bright gourd print dress and a matching gourd hat.

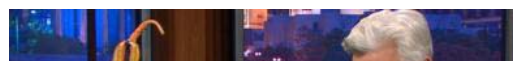
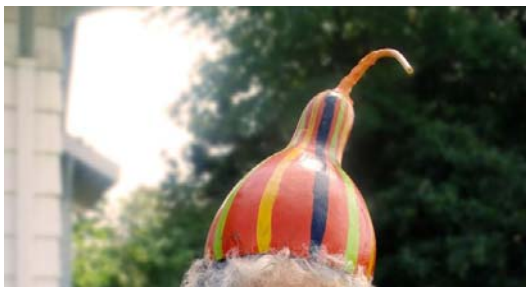
Sparky created gourd donkey and elephant sculptures and presented one of these to at least 8 US Presidents. She taught gourd crafting for many years at the local YMCA and co-authored a book on gourd crafting, "Creativity with Gourds".

Before she became known as the National Gourd Lady, Sparky was also known as the "Flower Lady". She was an active member of the N. C. State Garden Club and of the Out to Grow Garden Club of Claremont, NC for 42 years. She was a nationally accredited flower show judge with a lifetime membership. She and her husband - Clyde - grew an acre of flowers as a hobby. She had her own roadside beautification project of a 1/2 acre of Red President Canna Lilies.

Margaret "Sparky" Sparkman passed away on March 6, 2012 at age 95.

[Memorial Page for Sparky on Facebook](#)

Right: A YouTube video from JABenton of the "Carolina Traveler" TV show. It includes footage from Sparky's interview on the Jay Leno show - unfortunately the full show is no longer available online, but the clips in this video are priceless.







Portrait of Sparky courtesy Liz Kearley. Copyright Liz Kearly - contact her for permission to use this photo. [lzk@carolina.rr.com](mailto:lzk@carolina.rr.com)

Additional photos courtesy Margaret Sparkman's family. Contact Sparky's family at [nationalgourdlady@yahoo.com](mailto:nationalgourdlady@yahoo.com)



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have about 3250 members, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! Membership is free and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature if you need an quick answer to a gourdng question!

[Check out our two GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)



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"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourdng updates. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourdng friends.)

**\*\*\*Coming next issue: Creative Gourd Stands.** I had planned to run this topic in the current issue, but have not gotten a lot of responses. Have you made a gourd with a creative or unusual stand or display method? If so, we'd love to share your photo in the newsletter. Please send photos and descriptions to [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com). Note: jpg images are preferred, please send as attachments and not embedded inside of another document, as they do not reproduce well. Thanks in advance to those of you who participate. :)

### Feature - Book Reviews

Schiffer books has released a couple of new gourd titles in the last month, with more to follow soon.

#### Cut Out Gourd Techniques - Simple Projects for the Mini-Jigsaw - by Suzi Nonn

This book addresses techniques that are really fun but intimidating to some beginning crafters. This is a well done book with some great ideas. It is written for beginning to intermediate level gourd crafters, and the heavy use of well presented color photographs is a plus.

I really liked that the author took the time to address basics such as safety and tools. The whole book is written in a comfortable, easy to read style that makes you feel like you are visiting with a gourd crafting friend. Helpful tips are sprinkled throughout the book, and she emphasizes that she is telling you things that have worked well for her; not merely suggesting that there is only one way or one tool that must be used. None of the projects are terribly difficult, but they are put together in a pleasing and attractive manner, and there are plenty of examples to look at for inspiration.

The author has also made a point of offering credit to other artists that have inspired her and to those that allowed her to use their ideas or designs. The publisher allows the author to use brand names and to provide resources (something many publishers won't permit.) This book would be a nice addition for someone who is not yet comfortable when using a mini saw or other power tools. There is nothing too intimidating and the friendly writing style makes you want to read the whole way through, and then to run outside and try a few projects!

Schiffer Publishing 96 pages - \$19.99 cover price

#### Painting Gourds with the Fairy Gourdmother - by Sammie Crawford

Sammie Crawford has written several books on painting and gourd projects. Similarly to her other books, the main focus is on the decorative painting aspect of each project. There is one page at the front with a minimal amount of gourd preparation information. and the projects have only limited assembly instructions. Most of the



[Cut Out Gourd Techniques](#)



projects are fairly simple, so someone with a basic knowledge of using a saw should be able to construct them. Materials needed are simple as well. Most only require glue, spackle, plywood for bases and paints.

The painting instructions are the strength of this book and they are very complete, including everything from the brand name and color of each paint used, the brand and model number of each brush, and lots of well done step by step color photographs of the painting in progress. There are many pages of patterns so you can complete each gourd exactly as shown. Projects included are Baby Chimp, Baker Snowman, 3 Magi projects, 2 Witch projects, Christmas Oil Lamp, and two Southwest Wall Pockets. There is also a gallery section at the end of the book with some of the other projects the author has painted (no instructions included).

It was disappointing and a bit misleading that the most interesting looking project was not even included in the book. The frog shown on the front cover is pictured in the gallery section but there are no instructions. Schiffer Publishing 80 pages - \$16.99 cover price



[Painting Gourds with the Fairy Gourdmother](#)



Last month, I went on a field trip to visit Mrs. Heims 4th grade class at Miller Elementary school in Tucson! We covered lots of gourd topics, I shared some finished art (the ocean drum was a real hit) and left behind enough coyote gourds for the class to make ornaments for Mother's Day. It was a lot of fun, and I have lots of respect for all teachers. Those 4th graders had a lot of energy!

At the end I had a lengthy Q & A session and the questions they asked were pretty interesting. I could tell that some of them had put a lot of thought into their questions, but one boy just wanted to know "what do you do with your free time?" (I just told him I did gourds in my free time!)



*Recent classes* - April and May were busy with classes at the After Midnight Gourd Retreat in Sonoita, AZ as well as classes in the Visalia and San Diego, California areas. Thanks to everyone that hosted and attended the classes!







*Above and right:* After Midnight Gourd Retreat in Sonoita, AZ

**Below:** Our art lesson on relief carving in Visalia started out seriously but quickly became very entertaining!  
Thanks to Cecile Garrison for the two class photos, and to Irene Gonzalez for her "Carving with Cutouts" project photo.



**Below:** Classes in the San Diego Area. Thanks to Elaine Linton for sharing her photos.







**Reader's Mailbox**

Hi Bonnie, I just finished reading your newsletter and thought I'd share with you what I've been working on for our local farmer's market. These are the bottoms of banana gourds and each one has a strawberry plant in them.  
**Kathy Wertz -VA**

**Reader's Mailbox**

Hi Bonnie, Wanted to share this photo with you . The May newsletter was great inspiration . The leaves an Lady Bug are Apoxie Sculpt all the rest is made from gourds. I really enjoyed all of the topics in your newsletter . All your hard work is so appreciated. Thanks for all the inspiration. Smiles, **Christine Garrison - CA**



**Reader's Mailbox**

Here is a photo of the first aourd I did did by mvself

and it has already sold! **Jennifer Hershman - MT**

**Note:** Jennifer was at the After Midnight retreat in April - for a beginner she was doing some amazing projects. (Look for the photo of her being goofy just below.)



### Tip of the Month - Exploding and Cracking Gourds

**Scene one:** You immerse your beautiful but dirty gourds into a tub of water, and after a while, you hear loud popping or cracking noises.

**Scene two:** You pour watered down acrylic paint or wood hardener into a gourd, and the next morning you discover large cracks.

This unexpected cracking or even exploding occurs most frequently in dry, hot climates, but can happen to gourds grown anywhere. Gourds are very similar to wood. Have you ever noticed that a door in your home sticks when the weather is humid and works fine during dry seasons? It's the same thing with gourds. When they are dry and then are suddenly immersed, the gourd expands. This may not be a problem if the gourd is solid and if the climate is mild, but if there is any crack or hole in the gourd, water is absorbed into the inner pulp and the rapid expansion causes the crack to spread and grow.

Gourds grown or stored in a hot, dry climate are also prone to cracking or exploding. As the gourd sits in the sun and heat, pressure builds up inside the shell. When the gourd is placed into water, there is enough change in temperature and humidity that the pressure causes the gourd to break. Nothing is worse than placing gourds into a bucket of water and then finding them cracked open. You can eliminate part of this problem by drilling a small hole in an inconspicuous area to release the pressure before cleaning the gourd. (When I do this, I wrap the gourds in wet towels instead of totally immersing them.) You can also cut the gourd top off before cleaning it.

Another way to reduce the possibility of cracking is to wait until you have a rainy day or a humid day. Gourds are affected by the humidity and naturally adjust somewhat to their current conditions. On a really dry day they are much more likely to swell quickly and break.



If there is any structural weakness in a gourd shell such as a tiny crack or hole, pouring in water based paints, dyes, or wood hardener can cause the crack to expand rapidly and fracture the gourd shell. Inspect the gourd first and if any cracks are present, drill a tiny hole at each end of the crack, and repair the area with super glue before adding any water based products.

\*Spray paint will not cause this to happen, as spray paint is not liquid or water based.

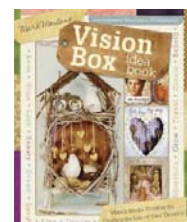
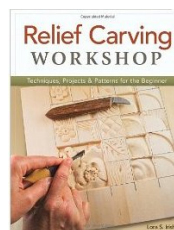
### Featured Gourd of the Month:

#### "Fancy Filigree"

This gourd was made during the course of three different Fancy Filigree classes. I figured my students would enjoy seeing the gourd finished.



### Featured Books of the Month:







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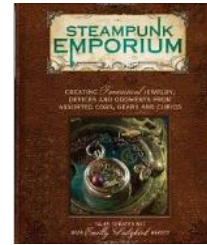
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[Learn to Burn](#)

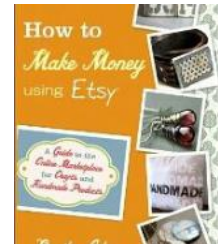
[Vision Box Idea Book](#)



[Made in the Shade: Zentangle Workbook](#)



[Steampunk Emporium](#)



[How to Make Money Using Etsy](#)

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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/June2013.html>

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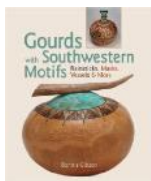
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If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.



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(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

**Gourds with Southwestern Motifs** by Bonnie Gibson

**The hardcover edition is now out of print. This is the paperback version of my "Gourds" book.**

**All copies I sell are autographed.**

[Arizona Gourds HOME](#)

Here's an interesting mixture of mostly newer titles. **Relief Carving Workshop** is by Lora Irish, who has written several good books on carving and patterns. **Learn to Burn** has gotten good reviews from several people on the Arizona Gourds facebook page. **Vision Box** isn't specifically about gourds, but the ideas in this book could be easily applied to gourds to create interesting projects. **Made in the Shade - Zentangle Workbook** is one of the newest releases from a certified zentangle instructor. **How to Make Money Using Etsy** may give you some ideas for selling your completed gourd projects.

\*Want to see my listing of top gourd books? Here is my ["Listmania" listing on Amazon](#)



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