

Do you enjoy the newsletter? We appreciate when you share it with your friends!



Arizona Gourds

(Somewhat unpredictable) news from the desert southwest...

Printable PDF File



Welcome to the October issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter

Fall is now officially upon us, and before you know it Halloween will be here! This is the perfect time to get creative with gourds; their naturally organic appearance goes great in fall centerpieces, they make awesome permanent "pumpkins", and plenty of smaller shapes make wonderful ghosts and witches. I hope all of you have a special child that you can share one of your fun creations with. The gourd shown here was made a few years ago for a family member, and it and gets pulled out each year for decor. It lights up great with a battery powered tealight.



Update: Gourd Classes

Most of my fall classes are full, but there are still a couple of spaces in the "War Shirt" class that will be held in Sun Lakes, AZ on Friday, October 24th.

For class descriptions, please check the ["Classes" page](#) on the Arizona Gourds website.

I'm starting to work on my 2015 teaching schedule. Some workshops (Colorado and Missouri) are already scheduled and full. Others such as a possible 3 day workshop in Temecula, CA are in the works. *If your local group is interested in a 2-3 day workshop, please contact me so we can try to make it happen!

*Enter your email address and hit submit to join the class updates notification list. Get the news first and have the best chance for popular classes!



*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!

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

Drilled Magnesite turquoise teardrop beads are on the [Inlay Supplies page](#). Also, a special purchase lot of strands of magnesite turquoise washers are available at a special price while they last.





Lumber is similar to oakwood and cures in 15 minutes with a faster cure time than Apoxie Sculpt is desirable. PC-Universal glue is a white glue that is as strong as epoxy glue, but dries non-yellowing clear and has easy water cleanup. Great for gluing gourd parts or for gluing two dissimilar materials (such as glass to gourd or stone to wood). On the [Tools Page](#).



Yes, this is a GOURD
 Yes, they are for sale
 Your Mom grows them? Nice.
 Yes, there are seeds in them.
 No, I don't make birdhouses.
 Yes, you could copy my gourd -
 but I'd rather you'd buy mine.
 Have a nice day!

Gourd Humor shirts available from the [Cafe Press site](#).

To make pages load faster, we have added a new page to our site: "[Earrings and More](#)". Check it out!



Were you a winner of a top prize at 2014 AGS gourd competition? Please read below.

To reward excellence in artistry, and to promote interest in entering artwork in gourd competitions, Arizona Gourds will offer a special 2014 "Gourd Artistry" award including a cash prize. This is our way of giving back to the gourd community.

This year, any gourd art that wins "Best of Show", "People's Choice" or "Best of Division" awards, OR is entered into a "Grand Master" category at any 2014 AGS gourd show, will be eligible to compete for a \$100 cash award OR a \$150 merchandise credit from Arizona Gourds. In addition, a \$50 donation will be made to the state society that hosted the show where the winner qualified. (If the winning entry won awards at more than one show, the donation will be divided among these state societies.) Other prizes may also be awarded depending on the number of entries received.

How to enter: If your gourd meets one of these criteria, submit up to three photos of your prize winning gourd, and at the end of 2014, the winner will be announced. Because the judges will be basing their decisions on photos and will not be able to see the finished piece, it is very important that clear, high quality photos are submitted! It will be your responsibility to submit photos of your art, but competition chairpersons are strongly encouraged to submit the photo entries for all of the qualifying winners at their shows. Please include information about your photo including at which show the prize was awarded, your full name and contact information, and any special information about the piece you would like to include.

After a show is completed, please send photos and information about each winning piece to: ArizonaGourds@gmail.com or bonnie@ArizonaGourds.com. Please put "Gourd Artistry Award Submission" in the subject line. Entries may also be mailed to Arizona Gourds, 5930 N Camino Arizpe Tucson, AZ 85718-4612

*** Entries to date: 3**

Hey Folks, there are a lot more eligible entries out there.... send in your photos! Show Chairmen: You can also submit your winners. This award will be discontinued if nobody bothers to enter this year!!!

Feature - Wood dyes

I know that many of you use leather dyes, ink dyes, and alcohol dyes (the latter two are small bottle refills made for ink stamp pads) to color your gourds because you are looking for a transparent finish. The ink and alcohol dyes are fairly light fast, but leather dyes are a poor choice if your art will have any kind of sun or natural light exposure, as they will fade easily. Another product used by gourders are alcohol dyes that are made for staining or dyeing wood. There are two brands that I have personally used, so thought I would pass along some information about each one.

The first woodworking dye is **Transtint**. Judy Richie of Texas was the first person I know of that used these dyes on her gourds, and after testing, she found that they were much more light fast than leather dyes, and easier to manipulate for special effects than ink dyes. Transtint dyes come packaged in a concentrated form. A 2 oz bottle of transtint will make 2 quarts of properly diluted product, making it very cost effective. This product is usually only found at wood working specialty stores or from online sources. You can buy bottles of the concentrated dyes from suppliers on [Amazon](#). The average price is about \$20 per bottle, but each bottle will make a lot of dye depending on how much you dilute it. It can be mixed with water for an economical, nonflammable stain or with alcohol for a fast drying, non-grain raising stain. For use as a toner or shader, dyes can be added directly to water-based finishes and solvents. It can even be added to: shellac, catalyzed lacquer and varnish, water-based lacquer and polyurethane finishes.

Want more technical info?
 Here is a pdf with all the technical details from Homestead Finishing



Color chart: My own personal favorites. Colors will show on gourd. Remember that you are applying dye over a yellowish gourd. The color shown on the chart, which was printed on white paper, will be more green due to the underlying gourd color.

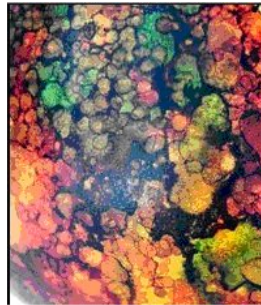
Products, the makers of TransTint dyes.

[TransTint DS-7-2013.pdf](#)



I have always used [denatur](#) yes. (This is different from isopropyl rubbing alcohol) However, if you diluting or the expense of buying several colors of concentrated dyes, **Judy Ricnie** sells pre-mixed bottles of properly diluted dyes for a very reasonable price. You can contact Judy at judyrichie@yahoo.com if you want to purchase these pre-mixed bottles (they MUST be sent by UPS or FedEx due to shipping regulations), or you can buy them from her if you see her at a gourd festival - she will be at the Wuertz festival in Arizona next February. Judy also sells a nice tutorial on their usage. She is a master at manipulating them by combining colors or adding alcohol by daubing or spraying. (See photos of her work below left.)

Note: if you choose to dilute the dye with water, you will have a little longer working time. However, it may raise the gourd fibers if you use it over a carved area. I would recommend spraying the gourd with a thin coat of lacquer sanding sealer prior to using ANY dye on carved areas. Otherwise, the more porous carved areas will absorb more dye and become darker.



I like Deft lacquer sanding sealer. If you can't find it locally, here is a link where you can buy it from [Amazon](#).

Lacquer sanding sealer seals the top surface and allows dyes to take evenly on all surfaces. It also helps to keep dyes from weeping through final finishes. It dries extremely fast, and additional applications of lacquer or other finishes may be applied over the sealer. You can paint over top of sanding sealer.

Another dye which I have just with good results is a fairly new addition to the market called Artisan Dyes, which are made by Craft Supplies USA. They are very similar to TransTint but with a few noticeable differences. The first is that these dyes come already premixed with an alcohol base, so if you want to avoid the mess of mixing it is already done for you. The colors are still pretty intense, and can be toned down if desired by adding a bit of denatured alcohol. The second difference is the addition of a small amount of shellac to the dye, which binds the dye and allows for a buildup of more intense color with each additional layer. Dye can be applied by spraying or with soft cloth, daubers, sponges or brushes. An 8oz bottle of premixed dye is about \$8. I have used this on gourds with good results, although in most cases I was looking for a more solid finish and not a manipulated one. You can use denatured alcohol to move the dye, but it will not flow as readily as the TransTint due to the shellac in the dye mixture. However, you may find the colors to be more vibrant due to the layering/build up effect you can achieve. These dyes are lightfast and hold color with little fading.



Available in 11 colors. Remember, because you are applying dye over a yellowish gourd surface, your colors will vary from the color charts. Blues will appear more greenish. All colors can be mixed to create additional colors. As of now, the only source for this dye is from [CraftSupplies USA](#).

The photo to the right shows an application of Aqua Blue Artisan Dye to a very mottled gourd surface (Dye was not manipulated with alcohol. The color changes are due to the underlying gourd surface markings.) Look for a photo of the completed gourd at the bottom of the newsletter.

The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have about 4100 members, with gourd art and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature if you want to share [our GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)



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

[Share our Newsletter on your Facebook page!](#)



***Have you "Liked" Arizona Gourds on Facebook in the past but now you are not seeing our daily art updates?**

FB has throttled all business posts severely and asking users to pay to have you see them. To continue seeing posts, you must visit our page, and put your cursor over "Liked" and look for the pop up box. Select "Get Notifications" (see the red arrow) and then you should see my posts in the future. I promise to keep posting things of interest with very little advertising.

A bit of gourd humor - the woes of using dyes

Somehow this seems perfect for this month's newsletter. See the tips section below for other ideas on using dyes.

The bad news is that I just spilled half a bottle of black dye in my lap.

The good news is:

10. Only one bad word escaped my mouth
 9. Fortunately I had a plastic mat on the floor
 8. The bottle was only half full
 7. I will be able to get rid of a very old pair of jeans
 6. Or I could keep the jeans to wear every time I use dye
 5. I had put the gourd the black was to go on out of the way to test several colors on a piece of scrap
 4. The test scrap looks very good
 3. It gave me an excuse to go upstairs and make my husband laugh
 2. My legs are fat enough so my chair didn't get hit
- Drumroll.....
1. It isn't summer so don't have to wear shorts for a while

Thanks to Susan Sawatsky for sending this in back in 2006.



Featured product from Amazon - a [bench top smoke absorber](#). This was designed for absorbing smoke from soldering irons, but some people use them to absorb woodburning smoke. Listed at a low price (under \$35) with free shipping when you purchase \$35 of merchandise or books.

Tip of the Month: Staying neat when working with dyes

Nothing is harder to explain than having blue legs and fingers when you go out to an important event! Some simple tips will keep you and your work area clean.

- 1) Wear old clothes. This should go without saying. If you wear nice clothes because "I only need to touch up one little spot", you can guarantee that you will end up with dye on your clothes.
- 2) Wear latex gloves - or better yet, wear two pairs of latex gloves at once. The less expensive and thinner the material your gloves are made from, the more likely dye will find a microscopic hole and leak through onto your fingers. Take a hint from the medical profession and double glove when staying clean is critical.
- 3) Don't let your bottles tip over. Sounds simple, right? However, if you open the bottle for that "one little spot", you will accidentally brush it with your elbow and knock the bottle over, spilling dye everywhere! To make sure your bottles don't tip, they need to be in a very stable container. One of the best tips I ever got was to take heavy old coffee mugs and use them to hold bottles of dye. It takes a lot more force to knock over that heavy old mug than it does to knock over a lightweight plastic bottle. Some

people build fancy racks with cutouts to hold dyes, but the simple coffee mug trick has served me very well over the years. (And frankly, I was really glad to get some of them out of my kitchen cupboard for good!)

- 4) Work on a large surface with room to spare. The more cluttered the work area, the more likely the dye will inadvertently get in the wrong place.
- 5) Protect your work area. If you are messy, having a plastic sheet, newspapers or other protection will save your lovely desk top from taking on a whole new appearance. Are you splattering/spraying with dyes? Rest assured that those splatters will go everywhere and will be impossible to clean up.
- 6) If you are spraying dyes, make yourself a spray booth from a large old cardboard box. Set the gourd fully inside the box opening and keep all of the spray mist inside of the box (and not on your floor or walls!)
- 7) If you do spill dye on your skin, you can remove some of it with soap, water, elbow grease, a pumice stone, etc. Be prepared to lose the top layer of skin along the way, and add an extra 3-5 days for the rest to fade/wear away. An ounce of prevention goes a long way...

Do you have any helpful tips? We'd love to share them with our readers, and we'll be sure to give you proper credit. Please send them to: bonnie@arizonagourds.com.

Featured Gourd of the Month:

"Can of Worms"

Colored with Aqua Blue Artisan dye, inset cabochons for dragonfly wings. Lots of sanding on the gourd project! This piece is available.



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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/October2014.html>

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Featured Books of the Month:



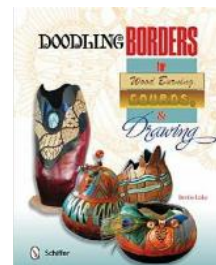
[Wood Finishing 101](#)



[Great Wood Finishes](#)



[Glues and Adhesives](#)



[Doodling Borders for Woodburning, Gourds and Drawing](#)

The first 2 books will give you information on various types of wood finishes, everything from coloring to final finishes. Not sure whether to use polyurethane, lacquer or enamel? These books will explore all of them so you can make the right decision for your project. The Great Wood Finishes book is written by the manufacturer of Transtint dyes.

Doodling for Wood, Gourds and Drawing is a new take on Zentangle/Doodle patterns from gourd artist, Bettie Lake. It is due out in December but is available for preorder from Amazon.

You might enjoy visiting my "Listmania" list on Amazon where I note some of my other top choices for gourd related books. I hope to update it soon as several gourd titles have been released since I first created the list.

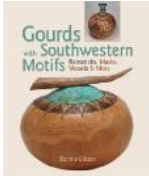
*Want to see my listing of top gourd books? Here is my ["Listmania" listing](#)

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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.

(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

**Please visit the book page links shown at right to view collections of related titles. Each topic includes a variety of suggested books about each subject.*

- Gourds - General
- Patterns and Designs
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