

Arizona Gourds



April updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the April issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Hopefully, April showers will soon be bringing you gourd flowers - or at least melting the last of the ice and snow in the northern climates! Here in Tucson, I've just finished a busy month of teaching classes, and now I'm itching to spend the month of April sitting outside and working on some new gourd creations. My busy schedule has kept me from spending as much time as I like on my own work; so I'm making a promise to myself to create something this month.

Maybe it is time for you to make your own "April Resolution" - perhaps you can try a new technique or project, or to take a beginner under your wing and get them excited about gourds! There is something about Spring that makes everyone feel excited and refreshed.

Right: Some Prickly Pear Cactus and Brittlebush flowers. This was taken last week from my driveway. The brittlebush flowers are blanketing the desert where I live, and lots of other wildflowers are blooming this time of year.



Update: Gourd Classes

My next gourd trip will be to attend the Leiser Festival just outside of Sacramento, California. That event will be held May 17-18th. I will be teaching classes at the festival and will not have a regular booth, but I'll also have a table of tools and supplies set up at my class location. Stop by to say hello if you will be at the festival.

Other upcoming events: Classes at the Welburn Gourd Festival are now online and all of my sessions are already full. Because the pre-festival sessions filled so quickly, I am also teaching classes on Saturday and Sunday while the festival is going on. My classes will be held outside of the festival grounds, in the class area located in the oak grove towards the back of the parking lots and fields. My husband Ev will be there as usual manning a table of supplies and tools, so feel free to stop by at any time during the festival to say hello or to pick up supplies.

I'll be teaching at the **Gourd Retreat in Florida** during September, and at the [Texas Gourd Festival](#) in October - watch for details in upcoming newsletters.

*To get notice of classes as soon as they are posted, please add your name to my classes updates email list. People on this list will get the news first and have the best opportunity to select the dates and classes they prefer.



[Join The Class updates List](#)

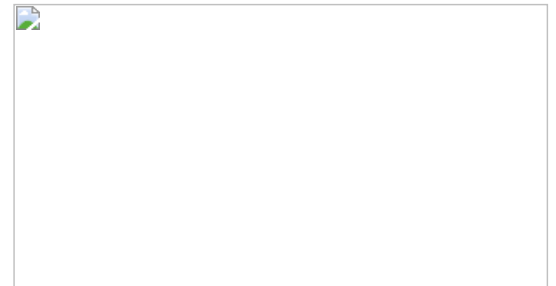
What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](#) website?

I am almost out of stock of the "ORIGINAL Gourd Genie". The original inventor of this innovative gourd cleaning tool has discontinued its production. I have the last few genies in stock, and then they are gone forever.... You can order one on the [Tools page](#).



Gourd Trivia:

Just imagine - a feature length film where the main character is a GOURD!





Sadly, this interesting animated film called "**The Magic Gourd**"

(International Title: The Secret of the Magic Gourd, or *Bao hu lu de mi mi*)

This 2007 film is a combination of live action and computer animation, and is the first-ever Disney-branded movie made outside of Hollywood. It was made in Hong Kong by Centro Digital Pictures and was co-produced with the state-run China Film Group. You can see short movie clips of this picture on the official [Chinese Disney site](#). The movie was filmed in Hangzhou in eastern China.

"The Magic Gourd" was based on a famous character in the children's book written by Zhang Tianyi in 1958. Wang Bao, a young Chinese boy living in Beijing, finds Bao Hulu, (Hulu is the Mandarin word for "Gourd") an animated magical gourd which grants him anything he wants and ultimately teaches him the value of hard work.

(.....Goes to show you we can ALL learn something from a gourd!)

March Feature: Student Photo Gallery

This month I'd like to share with you some photos of work done by some of my students, and a few photos taken at recent classes.



Left: This lovely filigree gourd was done by Laraine Short of Florida. Laraine is best know for her beautiful painting, but as you can see, she is a pretty good carver as well!



Right: This imaginative "River Bed" gourd was done by Pat Dukes of Columbia, South Carolina. Pat combined shells and real coral into her carved gourd design.



Right - Two Photos: Reggie Eakin of Metter, Georgia has really gotten into gourds this past year. You may have seen his beautiful painted Geisha Gourd in the latest issue of the Gourd Magazine, where he took 2nd place in the crafting contest. Reggie created the Angel Fish and Clown Fish gourds after taking several of my classes at the Southern Gourd Retreat.



Left Two Photos: Two views of the gourd Reggie did at my two day seminar in Georgia. He did the carving in class and finished the painting afterwards.



Brenda Reid of Eloy, Arizona shows off the drum she made at the recent Drum Making class.

Want to make your own drum?
Click [HERE](#) for a free tutorial
and [HERE](#) to purchase goatskin
rawhide drum covers.



Some of the students at my Mask making class show off their creations!



Three of the students in the Drum class had **A LOT** more fun than everyone else!



Pam Sensky of Chandler, Arizona did some creative filigree carving!



Tonsie Johansen (she's the one in the pink shirt in the photo above) attended the Inlace inlay class, and afterwards went home and did this fantastic gourd with Inlace inlay and woodburning. She used three different colors of Inlace and a variety of colored nuggets to get these interesting multi-hued inlays.

Your Input is Requested!

What would you like to read about in future newsletters? It takes a lot of time, effort and ideas to create this newsletter each month and your input will make that task much easier. Do you have specific gourding questions or ideas to share? Next month I will add a "Reader's Mailbag" feature. Please email me if you have a gourding question, suggestion or stories to share.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your support of this website. Your business is greatly appreciated.

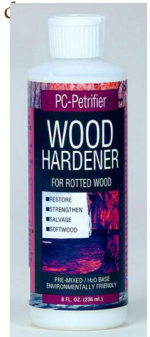
The newsletter mailing list continues to grow each month, thanks for spreading the word!

Tip of the Month: Strengthening weak gourds

Sometimes you'll get a really nice shaped gourd that has a thin shell. If you really want to use the gourd, it's a good idea to strengthen the shell before you spend a lot of time working on it. It's a horrible sensation to be almost finished with a project and have the gourd break!

One way to strengthen the gourd is to line the inside of the gourd with decoupage. Use torn brown paper grocery bags or even some pretty fiber paper. Coat the inside of the gourd with a layer of either Mod Podge medium or with thinned white glue. If you are using white glue, mix it with water to about half strength. Tear small pieces of paper (leave those nice ragged, torn edges, they blend and cover better than sharp cut edges) and either dip them into your glue mixture or brush the mixture over the paper after it is stuck in place inside the gourd. Cover the entire interior surface of the gourd, you can even build up more than one layer if desired. Smooth down all the paper edges to get a nice, smooth coat. Once the entire inside surface is covered with the glue and paper layer, set it aside to dry.

Another product I use myself is wood hardener. This product is a liquid epoxy resin, and was originally developed to salvage rotted wood. There are at least two brands of wood hardener, one made by Minwax and another by PC products. The Minwax hardener is solvent based and has a very strong odor. This brand should only be used outdoors in a well ventilated area. I prefer the water based PC product, which does not have a strong smell. This product should be used inside the gourd, not on the outer skin. Clean the inside of the gourd as thoroughly as possible, and make sure any cracks are repaired before adding the hardener, as any type of liquid can cause cracks to spread. Pour in a bunch of the hardener, and swish the gourd around until the entire inside is thoroughly soaked with the liquid and won't absorb and more. Then pour the excess back into the bottle and save until the next time; even if it looks dirty it is still fine to use again. The liquid will harden in the gourd and make it a lot stronger - let it sit for several hours or overnight. You can paint over top of it if you want to color the inside of the gourd.



This is available at the bottom of the ["Tools"](#) page

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

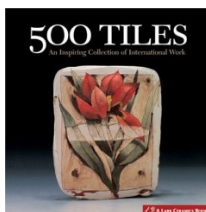
Featured Gourd of the Month:

Mask Vase Gourd

This gourd was commissioned by someone that wanted turquoise and persimmon colored feathers, so this gourd is a bit brighter than many of my creations.

Want to make your own? The "Mask Vase" pattern packet is one of the most popular instruction packets that I've written. You can view all the pattern packets [here](#).

Featured Books of the Month:



[500 Tiles](#)



[500 Handmade Dolls:
Modern Explorations of the
Human Form](#)



[Making Gourd
Headpieces](#)

500 Tiles and **500 Handmade Dolls** are a couple of great new titles from the Lark 500 series. Even though they don't deal specifically with gourds, just seeing what different artists have done in creating these diverse pieces of art is really an eye opener. When I need a creative jump start I enjoy perusing one of the books from this terrific series.

Making Gourd Headpieces is by Angela Mohr. This title is a new release and I've not seen a copy. I have to admit this particular subject isn't one that really appeals to me personally, but as is obvious from the class photos above, there are at least a few people out there that really get a kick out of wearing gourds on their heads!

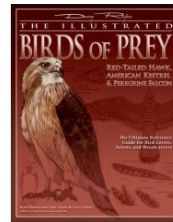
Designing the Doll (below) isn't about gourds, but if you are interested in getting some ideas for creating dolls and tips on construction and techniques, this book has plenty of good information and photos.

The Illustrated Birds of Prey is a wonderful reference book for the artist. Other books in this series include illustrated guides to eagles and owls.

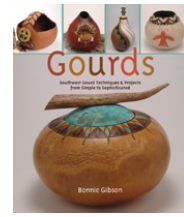
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[Designing the Doll: From Concept to Construction](#)



[The Illustrated Birds of Prey](#)



[Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated](#) by Bonnie Gibson

Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends. <http://www.arizonagourds.com/April08.html>

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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.


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