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Arizona Gourds

August updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the August issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

I had an interesting and busy July - I enjoyed visiting family in the midwest, and I appreciate your patience waiting for your orders during this time. It's always good to do something to recharge your batteries, and it was fun spending time in a slightly cooler climate as well. I imagine many of you have had busy summers as well. I came home to plenty of things to keep me busy, filling orders, working on the newsletter, and taking care of work provided by Mother Nature!

Last February's unusual and extended freeze damaged two old saguaros in our yard, and one of them fell over onto our driveway - I'm hoping the second one stays upright and eventually becomes an interesting skeleton. Saguaros are extremely heavy as they are great water storers. They expand and contract with the changing amounts of moisture. This fellow was probably well over 100 years old, about 20 feet tall, and had many arms. We were sorry to see him go.



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Three anonymous artists have collaborated to create this lovely gourd themed quilt, which is a 36 inch by 36 inch wallhanging made of 100% cotton. The quilt has been donated as a fundraiser for the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation. A raffle is being held, and the winning ticket will be drawn at the Michigan Gourd Festival, August 26-28th. More information about the festival can be found at <http://michiganfestivalofgourds.com>. The hospital web site is <http://www.childrensdmc.org>. Congratulations to all of the artists for a job beautifully done, and let's hope that lots of funds are raised for this very worthy cause.



Update: Gourd Classes

*Join the class updates list to receive advance notice of upcoming classes. Get the news first and have the best chance for popular classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

Last chance - I will be teaching at a **gourd workshop/retreat in Kentucky August 4-7**. Classes are held indoors so no worries about the heat and humidity. Please note that I plan limit my travels next year - this may be the last chance to take my classes at this location. The class information and registration is available on the [Kentucky Gourd Society page](#).

NEW TUCSON CLASS - "Rock Art and Gourd Pottery" (Photo to the right) Check out the [classes page](#) for more photos and details!

Classes in Boise, Idaho September 23-25 - 5 different classes, information available on my [classes page](#) - contact [Sue Kosta](#) for registration, travel and lodging information.

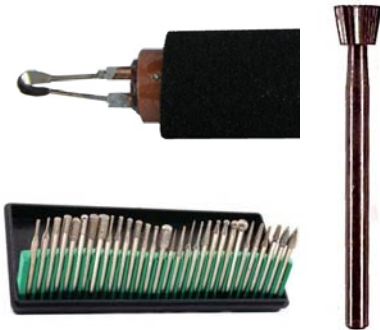
I will be teaching 4 days of classes at the **Texas Gourd Festival**, October 13-16. Classes and registration information are posted on the [Texas Gourd Society page](#).



***Notice: I will be not be shipping from August 2nd - August 9th and also August 24th - 31st. All orders placed during these times will be held and shipped out just as soon as I return.**

All orders placed during these times will be held and shipped out just as soon as I return. Orders will be filled in the order in which they were received. This is a one person business, and I appreciate your patience while I am away from the shop.

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



New! Spoon tipped woodburning pen. The tip of this pen is cupped like a spoon, and is angled slightly for comfort during shading. Burn soft, shaded areas with no hard edges! On the [woodburner](#) page.

TOOL SPECIALS: 5 mm inverted cones are HALF PRICE and 30 pc. diamond bur sets are on sale on the ["Carving Burs"](#) page.

Web Poll

The supplier for feathered cabochons and beaded pins has raised their prices considerably. Items that now cost \$6 would cost at least \$8. I don't know if there would be enough interest at that price to carry them. What do you think?

- No - too expensive
- Yes, still a good value
- Possibly, but only a few

[Submit Vote](#) [View Results](#)

Feature of the month - Resist Techniques

Resist is a term for methods that are used to "resist" or prevent paints or dye from reaching all of a surface, thereby creating a pattern. The most common forms use wax, glue, paint on masking fluid, or other mediums that are insoluble and protect the underlying surface when coloring agents are applied. The most well-known resist techniques include tie-dye and batik, Ukrainian eggs, and masking fluids in watercolor art.

Resists are also used on gourds in differing forms, one of the most interesting being the coffee dyeing techniques used by Hawaiian gourd artists.

For this method, a design is scraped onto a green gourd, cutting through the skin, but not into the shell. A hole is opened in the gourd, and some sort of dye is added. This is often strong dark coffee, or natural dyes from tree bark or even water based commercial dyes. The dye will absorb into the gourd except where the gourd has been scraped. After 3 weeks or so, the liquid is poured out and most of the gourd "guts" will pour out with it. The rest of the skin is removed at this point, revealing the design on the inside of the shell.



Diane Calderwood of CA kindly shared these photos and the instructions below on using Masquepens (a liquid resist material that is packaged with fine applicator tips) to do resist techniques.

Using Masquepen as a Resist on Gourds

1. Gourd Selection: Choose a gourd and scrub the surface clean of mold. Cut open and clean out the interior. Paint the interior if desired.
2. Choosing a design: Designs can be found in a variety of places. Fabrics, summer dresses and sarongs, design books, favorite pictures or just a free hand sketch are all great ways of choosing a design. Make color copies of your designs for future projects and to exchange with friends.



3. Drawing the outline: These are the lines you will cover with the Masquepen. Stray or scratchy lines may not come off and will show through in the finished product. Use smooth and light lines. A non-wax base white pencil will show up better on the surface of the gourd. Use moist wipes to remove unwanted pencil lines as an eraser will leave a residue on your gourd. Some of the pencil lines will come up when you remove the masque pen. Other stray lines can be gently remove after the color has been applied and before sealing with acrylic spray.

4. Using the Masquepen: Do not shake the bottle as it will cause air bubbles. Practice with the Masquepen on a scrap of paper to get the feel of the pen's flow. When ready cover all the lines of the design. Use steady even strokes and work one area at a time. If the liquid bubbles or drips gently wipe the excess with a cotton swab and then continue. The liquid will change from light blue to dark blue when it dries. Remember you are working on a three-dimensional object and you must move the gourd or the pen's flow will slow down or stop. Be sure to cap the Masquepen when not in use. A beading needle or piece of 20 gauge wire will help clear a clogged tip. Soak a stubborn clogged tip in "Goo Gone" or another similar product. Dried lines can easily be changed by cutting and removing the dried area and reapplying the Masquepen. Adding the Supernib tip attachment to your bottle will give a finer line. Be sure to run clear water through the Supernib tip after each use.

5. Adding Color: A variety of color applications can be used. Avoid inks that need to be heat set as the Masquepen will bubble up and shrink. If you are using water based markers or paints wear a latex or vinyl glove on the hand that will be holding the gourd to avoid transferring color. A light coat of a fixative spray will set your color prior to removing the Masquepen.

6. Removing the Masquepen: Carefully pull off the dry Masquepen from the gourd. Try not to rub it off as color can smear. Use your fingernail, craft knife or wear a vinyl glove to help lift it off the surface of the gourd. Gently run your palm over the surface to check for stray pieces of the masque.

7. Sealing Your Work: Use two or three light coats of clear acrylic spray in either glossy, satin or matte finish. Let it dry completely between coats.

8. Adding Embellishments: You may want to leave your design as is or you might want to add further embellishments. Wood burning or carving accents can add dimension to the masque design. A beaded or fiber rim can add a colorful finish to the gourd. Beads or stones can be inlaid. 3-D paints can also add highlights or add the look of faux beads. Metallic paint can be lightly sponged on prior to sealing to add a unique look to the color. The possibilities are endless!

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Mary Gehley of California also uses liquid masking fluid for resist techniques using a similar technique as above. She sent these examples below:



Sharon Foster of Iowa has done Ukrainian eggs in the past, and decided to modify Miram Joy's melted crayon technique to do wax resist. Melted crayons are applied, then the gourd is dyed and the wax is removed to reveal the undyed gourd surface below.

*Ukrainian eggs are decorated by applying melted beeswax, then applying successively darker dye applications over additional layers of wax. A fine tipped "kistka" (tool with a tiny brass funnel to hold melted wax) is used to apply melted wax. After the egg is dyed, it is heated and the warm wax is wiped off, revealing the design underneath. The same process may be done on gourds!



Cindy Kendall of Missouri uses vinyl adhesive material to create a resist. She builds up layers of dyes and resist stencils to create patterns with great depth. She has a great photo slideshow of the whole process on her [website](#) that shows photos from progressive steps. It's very interesting to see the gourd as it progresses through each stage.

Traditional Kistka tool, dye kit and typical Ukrainian egg design. **Click on photos** for more information on books and supplies. (Videos follow this article)

Resist stencil applied before dye is added..



Finished Gourd.



Below: Resist gourd by **Kim Bilek of Ohio**. This piece was done using an electric kistka, beeswax and ink dyes. It was inspired by African mud cloth designs.

Below: Another gourd by **Kim Bilek**. This resist was done using beeswax and trantint wood dyes.



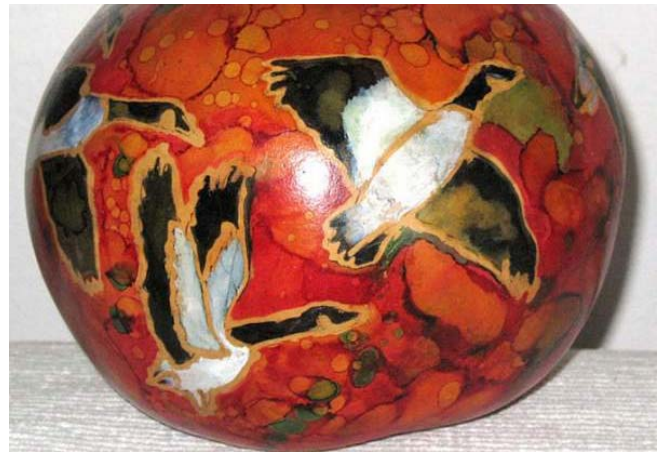
Nora Graf of Arizona used what she calls a modified batik method on this gourd. The birds were outlined with a glue gun, and once the glue had hardened gourd dyes were applied. To remove the glue, a hobby knife is used to pry up as much as



remove the glue, a hobby knife is used to pry up as much as possible, and then a heat gun if necessary to soften any remainder, which is wiped off with paper towels.
**Note: Placing the gourd in the freezer will chill the glue and make it more brittle so it is a bit easier to remove.*

These are only a few of the methods and mediums that may be used for resist techniques. Other materials to use for resist are rubber cement (rub off), vaseline, gel glues such as Elmers school glue, contact paper, or ANYTHING that will block dyes or paints from reaching the gourd surface, and that may be removed after the dyeing or painting is complete.

Below are videos on various resist techniques. I have done many Ukranian eggs using beeswax, and have used masking fluids for resists on both gourds and paper. Even though the videos aren't specific to gourds, the principles are the same.



Above: Both of these videos feature Jill Turndorf, an egg artist. She illustrates doing wax resist on an ostrich egg - not your typical Ukranian egg, but the large size makes it easier to see what she is doing. She uses an electric Kistka to apply dark beeswax. (Darker beeswax makes it easier to see your drawn designs on the surface.) She dips the egg in progressively darker dyes, adding new lines in between each dye bath. The dyes used for this technique are much more intense than regular dyes, but you can substitute other types of dyes if you want to experiment. When she is finished, the wax is removed by heating the egg in a warm oven. The dyed design is labor intensive but beautiful. You can do the same technique on gourds, with the exception that you will not be able to get pure white lines since the gourd shell is already a yellowish color.

Below: These videos show how resist techniques are used on different media, such as ceramics and paper, using liquid wax or crayon wax. No matter what medium or products you use, the results are similar when you mask an area to prevent adhesion of successive color layers.

Not to be confused with wax resist, ENCAUSTIC art is made by melting wax and using it as a pigment medium. Colored beeswax is typically used, dunking melted wax



Colored beeswax is typically used, glazing melted wax onto a backing and then manipulating it with tools while the wax is warm, or carving on the cooled wax. The texture of the finished work can also be altered with heat tools. Sound interesting? I'd enjoy seeing your projects if you try either wax resists or encaustic art!

*Note - review of Hot Wax Art Stylus coming next month!



[Hot Wax Art Stylus](#)



[Encaustic Art](#)



[VIDEO: Decorate Beautiful Ukrainian Eggs \(Pysanky\)](#)

Bonus Tutorial: Coiling on Gourd Purses

In the June 2011 Arizona Gourds Newsletter, Barb Rothwell of Wisconsin shared some photos of her gourd purses, including a couple that had coiling on the top. Barb has generously offered to share her technique with you. The tutorial is large and has many photos, so it is included here as a PDF file.



[Gourd_Coiling_for_purses.pdf](#)

You will need Adobe Acrobat to view PDF files. If you need to download this FREE software, click [HERE](#).



Want to see more of Barb's work? You can visit her website at: www.concordvalleygourds.com

Reader's Mailbag:

Hi Bonnie - Just wanted to share this with you - yesterday at work I got a 911 text message from my Mom. It said "Bonnie is going on vacation - do we need to order anything?" I laughed and told her that we were good and to let you rest. :)

I also wanted to share some pics of gourds I have done right after our classes in Visalia in May. One I call my class tribute gourd because I used a lot of what I learned from your classes to complete it. I have been at carving for about 6 months now and I am looking for a huge gourd to do something really crazy with. I don't mean to go on so long, but I am socially starved and haven't been out of my studio in a week. *Lee Badrack - CA*

Lee and his Mom were great students, taking ALL of the class sessions offered at Ceil Garrison's gourd farm last May. I was really tickled to read this note (which I condensed a bit) and to see Lee's photos. I LOVE enthusiastic gourd carvers - and I think he's doing a great job on his gourds!



Hi Bonnie, I think all of your work is beautiful, and I'm amazed at the detail, accuracy of every line and complexity. I am amazed at what can be done, and it's wonderful that you are passing the techniques on. I would really be interested in knowing if you ever put your classes on DVD? *Val R - Idaho*

I've been asked before about making DVDs - but so far have not done so because I don't have the equipment or know how to do them myself, and hiring someone is quite expensive. Anyone out there with knowledge and experience willing to trade classes/supplies for some filming/editing help?



Did you know..... that people that "Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourdng updates? Please consider joining us on Facebook for the latest news and specials. I always post newsletter notices, new items, sales, and other gourd related info onto the Arizona Gourds page routinely. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourding friends.)

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Coming Soon.... Got a Suggestion?

Do you have a technique, product or project you'd like to see addressed in a future issue of

the newsletter? I'm always looking for great ideas to pass along to our readers! If you have ideas, please send your suggestions to: bonnie@arizonagourds.com.

The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We are fast approaching the 2000 member threshold, 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 great new GAE T-Shirt designs !](#)



Tip of the Month: Making Your Gourd Art Sit!

Have you ever struggled with a gourd that just wouldn't sit well, rocking and swaying if you looked at it funny, and then falling over when struck by the breeze from a housefly? Never fear - there are many ways to get that gourd to behave. Here are several methods - even if you don't have the tools or materials for each one, at least one of them should work for you.

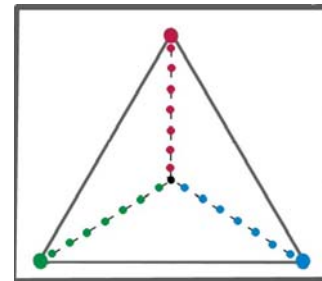
First of all - here is a commonly thought of method you should NOT USE, as it is doomed to failure. DO NOT fill your gourd with plaster of paris. Plaster has two problems, first - it is activated with water. Water will leach out of the curing plaster into the gourd shell, causing it to swell and then contract as it dries. Second - the plaster also expands and contracts as it is curing, and at a different rate than the damp gourd shell. Eventually, the gourd shell is almost sure to crack at some point due to these varying stresses. For the same reason, I'd also avoid products such as spackle, joint compound, and water putty.

OK, now on to some methods that do work. **Method 1: Use a stand.** Stands come in all forms. On the Arizona Gourds [Kits and Displays page](#), you'll find 3 legged folding wooden stands. But, this is only one type - use your imagination and you'll think of lots of other options, including candle stands, napkin rings, plant stands, cut off rings from other gourds, beanbags, small grapevine or straw wreaths and wooden bases. Many of these items are easily found for very little cost at thrift stores, and they can be repurposed for use with gourds.

Method 2: Add feet. Items sit well on 3 legs, while 4 legs often wobble. Here's a handy tool for measuring where to add feet. Use a piece of masonite, plywood, or foam core board (not as durable) that is about a foot square or slightly larger if you are working with large gourds.

Place a dot in the exact center of the board, then draw 3 straight lines outward from the dot that are exactly 60 degrees apart (use a protractor). This will give you a perfect equilateral triangle.

Measuring out from the center on each line, place a dot at every half inch out to the edge of the board. Drill holes on these marks. Get 3 small nails with heads that fit snugly into the drilled holes and are long enough to protrude through the top of the board when inserted. Place the 3 nails so the heads are at the bottom of the board and stick up through the top. (Be sure to put the 3 nails into matching holes on each line, for example - one nail inserted through each line at



the 3rd line at the distance from the center) the line as necessary to get a good stable base. Center the gourd over the nails, then push down slightly to make 3 little marks on the bottom of the gourd. Add feet at these location and the gourd should sit well. For feet, use items such as large upholstery tacks, wooden knobs or dowels, drawer pulls, beads, etc.

Method 3: Sand the base. This is a method I prefer - but you need access to a [large belt sander](#) (4" or 6" belts work best). Hold the gourd firmly in an upright position, then lower the gourd onto the moving belt. Sand off just enough to create a flat spot. This works best on gourds that are thicker, or just have a few bumps that need to be leveled. If you accidentally sand through the gourd, you can salvage the gourd by adding a wooden base. I use pine or sheets of 1/8" thick basswood if the base is to be painted. If it will be left natural, then I choose an attractive hardwood such as oak, cherry or walnut. Sand the wood to match the curvature of the gourd shell. Hobby stores and some larger home improvement stores sell hardwoods in thinner sheets so you don't have to buy a huge, thick board. Craft stores also sell wooden bases that will work well. Those often come with a decorative edge so you can just glue the gourd on and not have to shape it.

Method 4: Add weight to the interior for balance. Sometimes, just adding a bit of weight to the inside will help the gourd to sit in a level position. One simple fix is to use clear drying white glue to add stones, weights, sand, or other heavy items to the base. When the glue dries the items will be visible - so keep that in mind when choosing items to add. Resin is another alternative - two part products (like [Envirotex](#) or epoxy glues) or resins that use catalysts (such as [Castin' Craft](#) or [Inlace](#)) work well and give a neat appearance. Because they are not water based, they will not make the gourd crack like plaster often does, and they can even be colored with dyes if desired. I have added heavy washers, lead weights, or other unsightly heavy items to the base of an unstable gourd, then added resin that has been colored with [black, opaque resin dye](#) to cover these items. (This dye will work with any resin product including Envirotex, Inlace, Castin' Craft and others.) The dyed resin will dry to a smooth, level, glossy finish, and completely hide the objects sunken within. (Be sure to use opaque dyes if you don't want to see through the resin to the imbedded objects.)

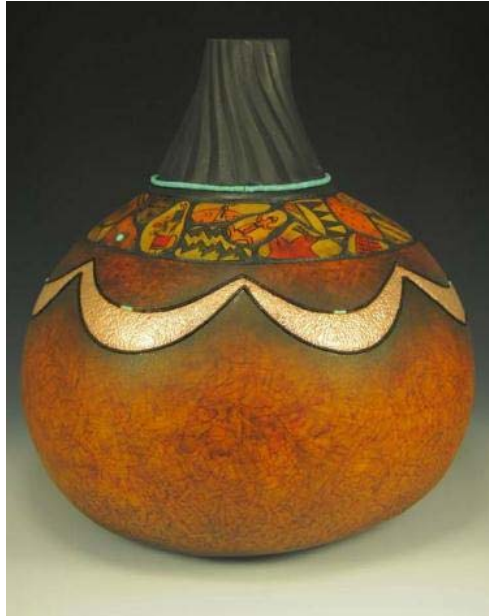
Method 5: Build up the base with clay. Use materials like paper clay or [Apoxie Sculpt](#) to add a decorative base and level the gourd at the same time. [Paper clay](#) may shrink if applied in a thick layer - be prepared to go back and repair cracks as the clay dries. Apoxie Sculpt is much stronger and will not shrink, and does not need glue to attach. Press the clay onto the gourd surface, then texture the surface decoratively or leave it plain. It can be sanded later when cured to blend in with the gourd shell.

Do you have a tip or tutorial we may feature in a future newsletter? Please [CONTACT ME](#).

Featured Gourd of the Month:

"Southwest Vessel"

Inspired by pottery art of the southwest - the neck is similar to Santa Clara pottery, the shard designs below are influenced by ancient pottery and Hopi designs; the copper band and inset heishi stand out dramatically from the wood dyed bowl surface.



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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/August2011.html>

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Note: Please check your spam folder near the end of each month and add our address to your "safe senders" list. 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.

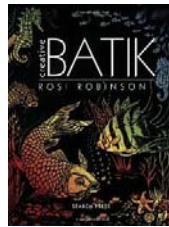

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Gourds Southwest Gourd

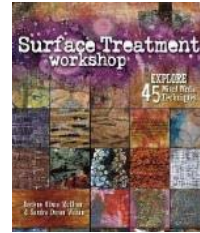
Featured Books of the Month:



[Creative Batik](#)



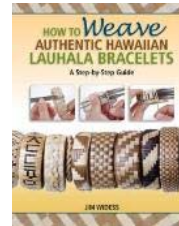
[Create Your Own Hand-Printed Cloth](#)



[Surface Treatment Workshop](#)



[Creating Bottles with Gourds and Fiber](#)



[Weave Authentic Hawaiian Lauhala Bracelets](#)



[Plaited Basketry with Birch Bark](#)

The first three books deal with batik and wax resist techniques. Although they are written for fabric artists, the principles of wax resist are the same no matter what base mediums are used. These have some great design ideas as well as ideas for new techniques. Surface Treatment Workshop has many different types of art techniques, not just wax resist.

The bottom three books are from my good friend, Jim Widess. The first book, **Creating Bottles with Gourds and Fiber** is due out later this fall, and is available from Amazon on a preorder basis. The second book is his most recent offering - and while it doesn't deal with gourds, the weaving techniques should be of interest to all weavers. The third book is co-written with other authors. While I have not seen a copy, Jim's books are usually top rate and in the collection of most gourd artist and weavers.

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



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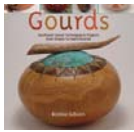
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(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated by Bonnie Gibson

The hardcover edition is now OUT OF PRINT!

I still have some on hand, but supplies are limited. Last chance to get a copy before they are gone!

Each topic includes a variety of suggested books about each subject.

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