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# Arizona Gourds

November updates from the desert southwest...



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

I'm happy to report that I now have a brand new bionic hip joint, and I'm up and walking around again! Thanks to all of you that sent your good wishes via cards, email, and on facebook and GAE. (We are all well connected in the gourd world!) I can't tell you how much your good wishes and thoughts cheered me up during a rough couple of weeks. The good news is that I should be at full strength and raring to go in 2013. I hope to start teaching a full slate of classes, starting with classes at the Wuertz Festival, and then at other locations including at my home and at various retreats and festivals.

I've really enjoyed the opportunity to teach the last few years at workshops in areas that are less well served by gourd festivals. Are you or your local gourd club interested in having a 2-3 day workshop in your area? Please feel free to contact me to find out how we can make it happen. I'm just now starting to think about dates for next year - so please get in touch if you are interested. You can reach me at [bonnie@ArizonaGourds.com](mailto:bonnie@ArizonaGourds.com)

This month, the feature below is about using a wax resist technique similar to that used to decorate Ukranian style eggs. You can use the basic technique to create simple resist patterns, or spend some time and make multicolored, elaborate designs.

*I want to extend a special thank you to Cora Raifort, Claudia Hill, and Terry Noxel for providing me with some great tutorial material to share with you in the current and previous newsletters while I was recuperating.*



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### Update: Gourd Classes

**Two new classes** offered at my home in Tucson on December 8th - *Fancy Filigree, and Cholla Cactus Carving*. See the classes page for details. (These two classes will also be offered in April at the After Midnight Art Retreat.)

*\*Sign up for the class updates list to the left if you want to get advance notice of all future classes.*

**Wuertz Gourd Festival classes will be posted on November 15th - be sure to sign up for the class notice list if you want to get a reminder when registration approaches. Registration will be handled online this year! I will be teaching two classes; one on Thursday pre-festival and one on Sunday.**

## What's new on the [Arizona Gourds website?](http://www.arizonagourds.com)

Finally back in stock after a long absence, nice **African Porcupine Quills!** Available in three sizes and different quantity options on the [Special Embellishments page](#).

Also back in stock: **Nightlight Kits**, and now you can buy 2 kits at a discounted price! Look for them on the [Kits and Displays page](#).

In last month's [newsletter](#), I shared a tip about using diamond burs to cut stones. I now have some **10mm thin diamond cutting wheels** on the [carving burs page](#). This size will cut most cabochons and stones.

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



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Have you ever been carving up a storm, only to accidentally

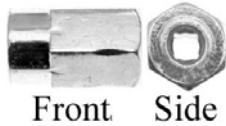


Have you ever been carving up a storm, only to accidentally catch your bur in your work apron? All of a sudden, your flexshaft no longer works because the inner shaft has broken. Or - have you gone to a class and realized you had left the drive nut that connects your flexshaft to the Dremel tool? I've seen those two things happen so frequently, that now in addition to selling the Dremel Flexshaft (probably THE most important accessory you should add to your basic tool), I'm also carrying the replacement drive nuts and inner shafts. Instead of having to buy a whole new flexshaft, now you can repair it at a fraction of the price. Look for these items on the [Rotary Tool Accessories page](#).

**Keep some spares on hand!**



**New! Silver Feathers in three sizes on the [Metals page](#).** These feathers look like silver but are actually a high quality jewelry grade pewter. Each has a hanging loop, and would be great for accents on rims, masks, and more. All three designs are dimensional on both sides.



Front Side

**New - Set of 3 different clay tools - limited supply at only \$1 per set!**  
On the [Apoxie Sculpt Page](#).



### Feature - Pysanky Technique

A special thank you to **Claudia Hill & Terry Noxel** for providing this article!

**Pysanky is a wax-resist process** to create the colorful and often detailed designs that are geometric and use symbols. You start with the white egg (or gesso-painted gourd) or natural gourd. Everything that you want to remain white, you cover with wax, using the kistka (stylus). Then, you dye the egg, usually yellow. Wherever there is wax, the yellow dye will not be able to penetrate. This preserves the white part of the design under the wax. On your now yellow egg, you draw with wax all the parts of the design that you want to remain yellow. Then dye it in the next dye bath, in progressively darker colors, draw with more wax, and so on. In the end, you will have an egg with possibly several colors and a great deal of wax on it. If black is your finishing color, you will end up with a virtually black egg. Then you melt away the wax, revealing all of the colors that were protected underneath the wax.

#### Ukrainian Egg History:

The meaning of Pysanky is "to write"; decorating Pysanky eggs and or Ukrainian eggs have been handed down through the generations of the Ukrainian and Russian heritage. The eggs were thought to possess powers to keep away evil since spirits feared the rooster and chicken eggs. The early Pysanky Designs strongly depict man's close relationship with the earth through the Ukrainian egg symbols such as wheat and trees. Today, the Pysanky dyes and techniques are used for Halloween, Christmas, and more. The gourd artist can apply the dyes and wax.

#### Pysanky Tutorial for Gourd Eggs

##### Supplies

1. Dyes (not food coloring) For bright colors that resist fading use the dyes found on Pysanky web sites; Alternative dyes include Memories Ink Dyes, Gourd Master Ink Dyes, Adirondack Alcohol Inks
2. Distilled water (if using pysanky dyes)
3. White vinegar, can be added to some powder dyes to make the color stronger (if using pysanky dyes)
4. Kistka (stylus) (original, delrin, or electric), Razor tip kistka pens
5. Hat pin, to clear the tip of the kistka if the wax is not flowing
6. Newspaper, to put excess wax on
7. Paper towels &/or tissues to wipe kistka; and at the end to wipe wax off when the design is finished
8. Beeswax (not candle wax.) Beeswax is more effective at blocking the dyes than other waxes. Black beeswax is easier to see while decorating the gourd.
9. Varnish, clear gloss
10. Drying board; a flat board with finishing nails or cardboard with thumb tacks pushed up from the bottom to lay eggs on to dry
11. Taper candle in a candle stick holder, used to melt the beeswax in the kistka
12. Spoons, to dip the gourd into the dye
13. Pint glass canning jar (1 for each color) with lids to store the mixed dye
14. Pencil (light one)
15. Q-tips can be used to apply dye to select areas; small felt pads for applying the ink dyes
16. Wide rubber bands, to guide your lines
17. Heat gun
18. Optional: Gesso
19. Optional: Egg cap or small eye screw and ribbon or an egg stand
20. Aileen's Thick & Tacky Glue



### Preparations

1. Make your dyes. Follow the directions. Cool down before using.
2. Cover the workspace with newspaper
3. Clean and sand the gourds. If your design calls for white, apply gesso and let dry on the drying board.

### Apply the Design

1. Draw the basic design on the gourd. You can use the rubber band to draw straight lines. Do not use an eraser on it. Pencil lines get lifted by the wax.
2. Heat the head of the kistka in the flame of the candle for 20-30 seconds, and then scoop a little beeswax into the funnel of the kistka. Reheat the kistka in the flame until the wax is melted
3. Test the flow of the wax on the newspaper to get the feel for the flow. Overheating or overfilling of the kistka can lead to blobs of wax being let out. When removing unwanted wax, let it solidify first then gently scrape it off with a sharp knife. Often there is still wax left behind and dye will not go in the places where there is wax. You can try to remove it with a citrus oil cleaner or lighter fluid and a Q-tip.
4. Practice making long straight lines on the paper. Short strokes end up looking jagged.
5. Layering colors
  - a. When working with more than one dye, you should always start with the lightest hue and progress to the darkest. It's a good idea to plan the wax-dye sequence ahead of time, keeping in mind that each section that is not covered with wax will turn the shade of the next color you use.
  - b. Suggested dye sequence is Yellow, Green, Orange, Blue, Red, Black (this color sequence lets the next color cover the previously dyed area, while the wax secures that color where you want it. Let's say you want white scallops, yellow lines and green leaves. Apply the wax to the scalloped lines on your design on the white egg (painted with gesso). Dip into the yellow dye for 5-15 minutes. Let dry. Apply wax to the straight lines of the design, and then dip in green dye. Apply wax to the leaves of your design, then dip in Orange (or next color of your design).
6. Melt all the wax off the shell. Using a heat gun and a small wad of paper towels melt the wax and blot it away as it melts.
7. Apply varnish, with egg on drying board.
8. For a hanging ornament, glue an egg cap or small eye screw to one end. When dry, tie a short ribbon through the loop.

**Some notes on our experiments:** We assembled our supplies, dyes, gourds and tools. Some gourds were left natural and others had been first colored with white gesso. We used clear beeswax and either a durin kistka with a candle or an electric kistka (Razortip). Black & white line drawings of possible designs came with the Ukrainian egg decorating kit, while color photos were on the package. Perhaps the most difficult part in the beginning is to think of the design in colored layers. On occasion I found that I had forgotten to complete part of the design with wax and there is no going back after the dye has been applied.

The Steps (for a 3-color design)

1. Lightly draw the pattern on the egg with a pencil
2. Color the egg with yellow dye, allow to dry
3. Apply the wax to the lines that you want to remain yellow
4. Color the egg with green dye, allow to dry (We had
5. Apply the wax to the lines that you want to remain green
6. Color the egg with orange dye, allow to dry
7. Heat the gourd and blot the melting wax with paper towels
8. Apply varnish to protect the surface from scratches

### What We Learned

- The Memories and Gourd Master ink dyes gave similar results as those in the Ukrainian egg kit.
- Heat setting the ink dyes between colors without melting the wax requires patience and luck.
- Fluid masking products (liquid frisket) does not completely block the dyes.
- Test the flow of the wax on the newspaper to get the feel for the flow.
- Overheating or overfilling of the kistka can lead to blobs of wax being let out.
- When removing unwanted wax, let it solidify first then gently scrape it off with a sharp knife. Often there is still wax left behind and dye will not go in the places where there is even the slightest amount of wax. You can try to remove it with a citrus oil cleaner or lighter fluid and a Q-tip.
- Practice making long straight lines on the paper. Short strokes end up looking jagged.
- A wide rubber band can be used to divide the egg into sections. Trace along one edge of the rubber band.
- Start with simple designs and a few colors.



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have over 2850 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 gourd question!  
[Check out our two great new GAE T-Shirt designs !](#)

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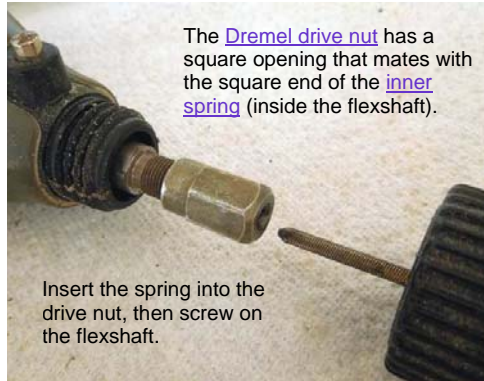
[Facebook page!](#)

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.)

### Flexshaft Assembly and Maintenance

If you don't use your Dremel tool and flexshaft routinely, it's easy to forget the proper way to attach the flexshaft to the tool. Even experienced carvers forget that for good operation, you need to do some basic maintenance to keep it in good operation.

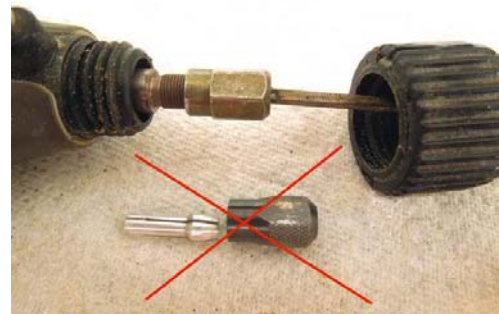


The [Dremel drive nut](#) has a square opening that mates with the square end of the [inner spring](#) (inside the flexshaft).

Insert the spring into the drive nut, then screw on the flexshaft.

**DO NOT** assemble the flexshaft with a collet and collet nut!

This may damage the inner spring, or at best the tool will not operate properly. You **MUST** use a drive nut with the square opening for proper operation.



*\*If you get a bur caught in your shirt, the inner spring is designed to break (it's a safety feature - better to break the spring than to injure yourself or to damage the Dremel tool itself.)*



Replacement Inner Spring

Keep the flexshaft as straight as possible while carving. If you are right handed, mount the tool hanger to your right side (opposite for lefties). Kinking the flexshaft a lot will cause too much friction on the inner spring, and it may break.

**Maintenance:** After using the tool for many hours, you should remove the inner spring and lubricate it with either a heavy grease or Vaseline. Use a very thin layer - it doesn't take a lot. This will extend the life of the inner spring. Do not use lightweight household oil.

**Troubleshooting:** The most common reason for the flexshaft not working is forgetting to screw on the drive nut before attaching the flexshaft.

### Reader's Mailbag

Hi Bonnie, Thank you so much, your book arrived in good order and has already had pages turned and re-turned as I've studied your suggestions and techniques. Between your book, a local teacher, and some free gourds I received, I've developed an even deeper enthusiasm for the craft and an appreciation for the work that goes into it. I've just finished my second gourd, and have attached a picture to share with you. It has juniper seeds (also known as "Ghost Beads") that were from a necklace, and it also has feathers. I'm looking forward to learning pine needle weaving next.

*\*edited for length Sharon Dietrichson- Oregon*

**When Lark Publishing introduced my "Gourds" book in paperback a few years ago, I bought hundreds of copies of the hardcover edition. I've been selling them steadily for the last few years, and now I'm finally down to about my last 20 copies.**

**If you are interested in a hardcover, autographed (and personalized if desired) edition, please act now before they are gone, as there are no more available. You can find them on the [Gourds Book page](#).**

**This would be a great Christmas gift for yourself or a friend. In addition, I'll send a free project packet of my choice with each copy.**



(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

**Gourds:** Southwest Gourd



**Turntable Update:** I contacted the supplier to find out why these have been unavailable. They told me their factory only tools up for them once a year, and they do not anticipate making them or having them available before next April. I was able to obtain a few of the large, 12" size turntables, but when they are gone it will be a while before I am able to get more. This size works well for one large



Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated



gourd, or one average size plus 2 smaller gourds! They are available on the [Kits and Displays page](#) while they last.

### Tip of the Month: Painting Dots

Reader **Gloria Penner of New Mexico** wrote to ask about tools for painting dots. There is actually a special tool called EZ Dotz, which is an inexpensive plastic tool with 4 different size and shaped tips. All you do is dip your tool into a puddle of acrylic paint, and press the tool onto the painting surface. Occasionally, you may need to wipe off paint buildup from the tool to keep the size of dots uniform. This tool comes in two different sizes, one with larger tips, and a mini size for very small dots. These are available online or from some art or craft stores.

Something that works just as well, and may be handier in some cases, is simply using the end of a paintbrush handle. Pick a paintbrush that has the correct size - the fatter the handle, the bigger the dot. Dip the end of the handle into paint, and press onto the painting surface.



*Did you know:* The Aboriginal Australians are well known for their distinctive dot painting techniques. They use colors to represent various forms of nature, and they paint on many surfaces. During early aboriginal times they painted dot pictures on rocks and cave walls, and painted stories and legends as part of their religion. In Australia, to avoid exploitation, only Aboriginals are entitled to do dot paintings. To the right are examples of native didgeridoos decorated with dot painted designs. To the far right is an 8 foot didgeridoo I made from the stalk of a century plant!



*Right:* Closeup of some of the dot paintings I did on my giant didgeridoo.



*\* 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](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com).*

### Featured Gourd of the Month:

#### "Phoenix Rising"

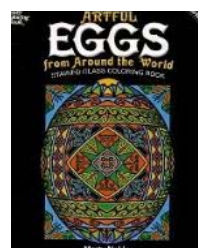
Gourd with carving, inset agate donut, inlaid machined brass skewings, gold leaf and dye.



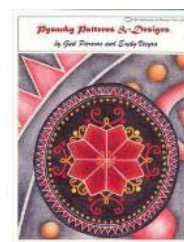
### Featured Books of the Month:



[One Gourd at a Time](#)



[Artful Eggs from Around the World](#)



[Pysanky Patterns & Designs](#)



[Medium Tip Kistka](#)



[Pysanky Dye Kit](#)



[Traditional Complete Pysanky Kit](#)

"One Gourd at a Time: a Beginner's Guide" is a brand new book from New Mexico gourder, Tricia Sutton. Look for a review coming in the next



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New Mexico gourd, Field Gourd. Look for an review coming in the next newsletter.

Here are some good reference books and supplies if you'd like to try your hand at pysanky/wax resist. I've done Ukranian eggs before using these supplies and it's a lot of fun! The same materials may be used on gourds. The books include detailed directions and ideas for materials, suppliers, and more.

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



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