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# Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...



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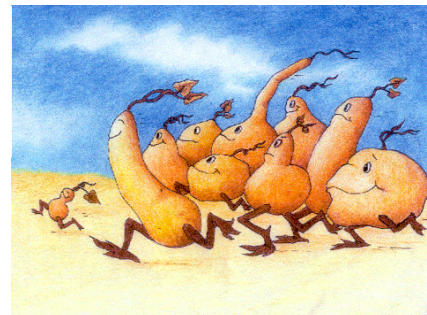


## Welcome to the February issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

**The Wuertz festival is almost here** ...and it is hard for me to believe this will be the 13th year we have had a booth at the festival. Also hard to believe it will be our last year to have a booth!

No, we aren't going out of business, it's just that doing a show with a large double booth and tons of heavy merchandise is becoming very difficult physically. My husband has been pleading with me for years to give it up and I have finally agreed that next year it would be smarter to just teach classes.

Please stop by the booth - I will also have some of my gourds there and there will be special pricing on some of the pieces as I try to reduce inventory.



**PLEASE NOTE: Orders placed on the website from February 10th -February 15th will be delayed. In addition, some items may be out of stock due to sales at the festival. To avoid additional delays during restocking, please place your web orders before these dates!**

**Wuertz Farm's 13th Annual "Running of the Gourds" Gourd Festival and Arizona Gourd Society Competition February 12-14, 2016 at the Pinal Fairgrounds - Casa Grande, Arizona FRIDAY & SATURDAY 9:00am-5:00pm Mini Gourd Car races Saturday afternoon. SUNDAY 10:00am-3:00pm Admission: \$8 (Kids FREE) Rain or Shine, Most Activities Indoors**

### Class updates

Friday- Sunday, **April 29th - May 1st** - I will be teaching a new 3 day "Flower Fantasy" workshop at the Rancho de Vinedos in **Temecula, CA**. You will have the opportunity to stay onsite at the Rancho if you wish. This class will include multiple techniques and you will completely finish a larger piece. The class is now listed on the classes page. If you are interested, please contact me and I will give you further details. [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com)

**Tucson classes** - I will be presenting a new "Flower Fantasy" class in two different 2 day sessions, either **March 3-4 or 5-6**. Please contact me to sign up and indicate which session is your first and second choice. The class description is on the classes page.

Enter your email address and hit the submit button to join the **class updates notification list**.

Submit

**\*Please consider doing some of your online shopping through our Amazon link. 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. \*Can't see the search box? Please disable your ad blocker for the Arizona Gourds domain.**

Search Now:    
**Search New and Used amazon.com.**

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

New item on the website - **Flat Ammonites**. These are fossils that are left in the surrounding rock, and are cut into cabochon style pieces so that they have a flat back and are easier for inlay. They range in size from about 1" to 1 1/2", and about 1/8" to 1/4" thick. Each one is different. In addition, **regular ammonites** are back in stock, plus we have added tiny **jewelry sized ammonites** as well (about 1/4" to 1/2" per side). Flat ammonites are sold singly, regular and jewelry ammonites are sold in matching pairs. **LIMITED SUPPLY** - on the [Inlay Supplies page](#).



We have a bunch of new **African porcupine quills** in stock in varying sizes. Bundles of 25 or 50 will give you the best prices. Look for these

at the festival if you will be there. White horsehair is now available as well.

Both of these items are available on the [Special Embellishments page](#).



Light Cord sets with an in line on/off switch for gourd lamps and "Mouse House" projects - now on the [Kits and Displays page](#).



**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 business.**

Website Special for February:

Buy any size drumskin, and get a free jewelry size drumskin with each skin you purchase - no limit! On the [Musical Supplies Page](#)



New project packet now available - "Carving Burs - Selection & Uses".

People have been asking for something like this for years. This packet will show you the differences between bur materials, sizes, shapes and what they are best used for. Now available on the [Project Packets page](#).



### Repeat Feature: Pointers to help you enjoy a gourd show!

I usually post this every year right before the Wuertz festival - some of these tips will save your feet, your pocketbook, and your enjoyment of the festival!

- 1) Make a list of what raw gourds and supplies you REALLY need. Make a list, and write down everything you can think of. Then, prioritize which items you must purchase and the ones that you can live without. If you need any tools or books, add them to the list too. Write down specific questions you want to ask vendors about tool use, glues, materials, etc. Set a budget and plan to stick to it.
- 2) Be prepared to walk a lot, and take a fold up shopping bag and drinking water with you. You may also want to pack a light healthy snack to avoid the temptation to buy expensive, fattening goodies. Walk around the show area first, just checking it out and asking prices, and making mental notes of where you saw things of interest. Then do a second round and buy the things on the top of your list first. (However, if you see something truly exceptional and one of a kind, you may have to make a snap decision or risk losing out!)
- 3) When choosing what to wear to the show, add a gourd name tag or other gourd jewelry. These items are eye-catchers, which will lead to compliments and comments, and is a great way to make new friends. You may even want to wear your State Society T-Shirt or Gourd Art Enthusiast apparel to connect with others. Dress in layers as it may be cold in the morning and heat up later in the day. Wear comfortable shoes, as many show venues are on hard concrete or uneven gravel.
- 4) Be prepared with cash and checks as well as credit cards, as smaller vendors very often do not accept credit cards. If you use a credit card, please be aware that venue may not be accessible to good cell signals and it may be difficult for the vendor to complete a transaction. Always carry some cash or checks as alternate methods of payment just in case. (Note - this is definitely true at the Wuertz festival - cell access is poor and a lot of the vendors do not take credit cards.)
- 5) When you ask prices on finished gourd art, make sure you take into account factors such as quality of the work, originality, and your own gut feeling. Remember that many new artists often make the mistake of pricing their work too low. Their first show may be your only opportunity to purchase a particular artists' piece at a low price.
- 6) Allow yourself some splurge money, but determine how much before arriving at the show. After you have done all your priority shopping, then you can just buy what you like, but only up to your preset max. If you can, take a break halfway through the show and evaluate your current purchases. Have you ever realized halfway through the show that you bought certain items twice, at different vendors?
- 7) Shows are the best place to actually try out tools to see which woodburner, saw or other tool really works well for you. Don't just take the word of the vendor that their tool is "the best". Whenever possible, try it yourself. Does the tool meet your needs, is it within your budget?

Ask other gourders you meet at classes or at the show for their opinion. People that actually use these tools day to day will give you a more honest assesment than you may get from an inexperienced but eager sales person.

8) When purchasing, ask the name of the vendor for their card or write the cost of the item and the name of the supplier on the package, business card or receipt. This helps you to remember the cost of certain items, where to buy more of a specific or hard to find item from a supplier in the future; and to write accurate descriptions of the materials used in your gourd creations. Remember, most of the vendors are people who love gourds just like you do, and they can become good friends. Later on, you can contact them and buy needed items direct.

9) Always ask first before taking photographs at a show. Some vendors will have a sign posted if they do not want you to take pictures. Never assume that it is ok; it only takes a few seconds to ask, and the vendor will appreciate the courtesy.

10) Finally, wash your hands after leaving the show. Handling raw gourds and even supplies all day can leave you feeling grubby. When leaving, ask for a "return pass" at the exit if you intend to return, most shows allow re-entry later that day.

**Most of all, remember to have fun... !!!**

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

**\*NEW GROUP on Facebook - "Gourding Destash". This is the place to sell your used gourd tools and excess supplies. No fees to sell your surplus supplies and raw gourds.\***



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) has about 4825 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.

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

#### Arizona Gourds Newsletter Index

See all our old newsletters from the past 9 years!

Articles and Tips are indexed.

[Newsletter Index](#)

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Like You, Sue Beatrice and 6,897 others like this.

### Special Feature - Woodcarving Videos

I recently tested a downloaded video for a woodcarver who wanted to add another method of selling her instructional videos in addition to having them on DVD's which have to be mailed. Donna Menke has been teaching hand carving for many years. While hand carving isn't the easiest thing to do on gourds, many woodcarvers don't use power tools at all, and instead rely on hand knives and gouges.

I do some hand carving, but the impatient side of me relishes the speed of power tools! That being said, the videos I reviewed were well done and informative. This is good for a carver who is new to woodcarving because it takes you from the basics of cutting a "blank" from basswood to painting the finished carving. To cut your own blanks requires the use of a bandsaw, but Donna also sells precut kits.



I reviewed the "Carving the Carolina Wren video. Everyone that teaches has their own individual style. Some instructors go at a slow pace, others assume you know a lot and move quickly. The nice thing with a video is that you can stop and start at your own convenience and look closely at details. Donna has an easy to understand way of speaking that gets her point across with a bit of humor at times.

If you are a more experienced carver, you can take Donna's basic instructions and modify them to use power tools. I carve my own hummingbirds in a very similar manner but I use carving burs instead of knives and gouges. The principle is the same, it is just the tool that is different. I started out as a woodcarver, and those basic skills I learned all those years ago translate well to gourds.

The video includes some woodburning and specific details such as adding glass eyes and precast metal feet to bird carvings. She also addresses painting the finished sculpture so that you can complete the project from start to finish. Donna's website is [www.woodworks-by-donna.com](http://www.woodworks-by-donna.com)

Gourd Sighting - Like many of you, I have my eye out for gourds when I travel or go to events. I recently visited the big gem and mineral show that comes to Tucson every year around the beginning of February. I saw TONS of gemstones, beads, pearls and fossils, but I even saw a few gourds. Unfortunately, I did not get the name of the vendor, as they were very busy setting up the day I was there.

Someday I would like to make my own instructional videos - I just need equipment, time and some editing knowledge to get it done. In the meantime, I created this short video clip on using a carbide mushroom cleaner to quickly clean out the inside of a gourd. It's not a bad video considering that it was done one handed with a phone! Hope you enjoy, and if you want to read more about the cleaning tools they are on the Tools page of the website.



### Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, Thank you for such prompt service on my order! It was just like Christmas with all the freebies! I'm looking forward to trying out the wood burning unit! You'll be hearing from me again soon! **Toni Davis - Oregon** PS - A couple pics of my gourds attached!



### Tip of the Month: So You Want to Sell Your Gourds at a Craft Show?

How do I find craft shows? Check with the local newspaper first. Some advertise under miscellaneous, and some have articles about upcoming shows. There are many good sources online now. Just do a search for your City name and the words "craft show". Many of the cheapest craft shows will be at local church bazaars or schools. Don't forget the state and local gourd society; they usually hold a show each year or can provide contacts. Check other states too. You can also sell at flea markets, but you probably won't do too well with the higher priced gourds. Check out the local galleries, merchants and art centers, etc.

How much will a booth cost? Booth fees can range from \$50 to \$300 and up for a 10 x 10 space depending on how popular the show is and where it is located. Some shows have lower fees but you will be expected to donate an article from your table or they will ask for a percentage of your sales. Most shows do not furnish tables or tents, so you will need to borrow, rent or make an investment in the needed items. Be sure to have the appropriate tax licenses to participate in the shows.

How do I decide which show to be in and how do I decide where I want to be located within the show? Be sure to check out what shows will be competing against each other that weekend and find out what locations are available at the ones you are considering. A booth in the back of a show or near the edges sometimes has a lack of traffic; you may want to select one near the entrance or the center where they are holding special events. Corner tables are also better because you have two different directions for your customers to view your table and you can also set up a better presentation.

Things you should take with you:

- \* Table covers or drapes and items to artfully display your gourds.
- \* Towels or a feather duster to clean your table and gourds.

- \* At outdoor shows, bring small bags filled with gravel or beans that can be thrown inside your gourds to weight them down on windy days.
- \* Extra price tags and a permanent black marker for signing gourds and marking tags.
- \* Bring plenty of change (everyone will have \$20.00 bills!) and a cash box or fanny pack.
- \* Tissue paper and bags will be needed for wrapping and packing sold merchandise.
- \* Bring a comfortable chair – you will be very tired by the end of the day.
- \* Business cards or flyers. Flyers might include your web-site, e-mail address, and phone number, a paragraph about the history and facts about gourds, and perhaps a picture of one of yours. People like these to give to the person they are giving your gourd to when they buy them as gifts, and they also serve as good advertising.

How should I price my gourds and what kind of work sells at craft sales?

This is the hardest part!! Lower prices will help to gain clientele, but don't make items so cheap that it isn't worth your effort. Decide what you think the reasonable person would pay for that item (no matter how it is decorated) and then devise a price range. For example, bowls will cost between \$20 and \$100 or birdhouses will cost between \$15 and \$50. Display clever alternative functional uses for the gourds to make them more appealing to customers. Unless you are an extraordinary artist or have a unique product, you probably shouldn't invest huge amounts of time in each piece or demand high prices until you become better known. The biggest sellers are often ornaments or other small items that can be priced at \$20 or less. While these seem hardly worth the time they take, large quantities can be made quickly for a show. You can make many of them in a short amount of time, and the inexpensive price will draw people to your table. While they are there, they may also find a higher priced item that they will purchase. You can also offer personalization for a low price. This serves a greater purpose in that people will come to your table just to see your work!

Don't try to sell a gourd that you don't have complete confidence in. Flaws such as bug holes may add to the uniqueness of a piece, and sometimes it is possible to repair a crack before painting a gourd. But, if the gourd is so weak that it wants to cave in while you're cleaning it, or if the gourd has a crack along its entire length, then toss it or use it for parts. You will only have return customers the following year if the pieces they own last; quality really matters if you plan on selling gourds to the same people next year. Offer an unconditional money back guarantee – the confidence you show in your work will make people more willing to purchase one of your gourds!

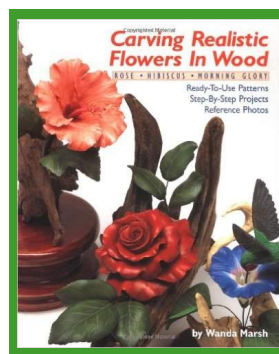
### Featured Gourd of the Month:

#### "Floral Fantasy - Poppies"

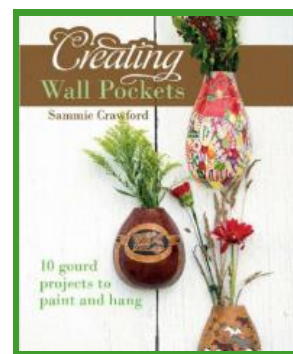


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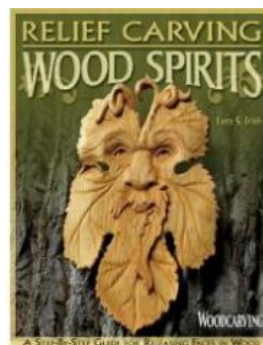
### Featured Books:



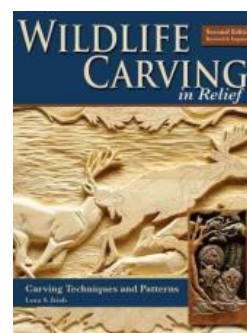
[Carving Realistic Flowers in Wood](#)



[Creating Wall Pockets](#)



[Relief Carving Wood Spirits](#)



[Wildlife Carving in Relief](#)

Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/February16.html>

*Creating Wall Pockets* is a new release by Sammie Crawford. It is available for preorder and will be released in March of 2016.

The other three books are highly rated in customer reviews on

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Amazon. I have no personally reviewed "*Carving Realistic Flowers in Wood*", but it is one of the top rated books in the woodcarving category.

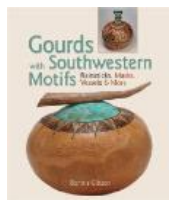
Lora Irish is a well known author of several carving and woodburning books. Both of these have some similar basic carving information but with a different topics. All of her books are very well done and include instructions and patterns.

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

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**Gourds with Southwestern Motifs** by Bonnie Gibson

**Out of Print - some copies still available through Amazon and they are at a reduced price.**

(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.***

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I often get questions about shipping costs that are added to shopping cart sales. To clarify things, I've added a new page to the website, [Shipping Policies](#).

I am using a no-frills shopping cart program that has limitations and little flexibility. By not paying for expensive software, I can offer you lower prices on the website merchandise. **I'm not looking to make a profit on shipping; if you order lightweight items you will likely get a refund or some freebies to make up for it.** Please take a minute to look at the shipping policies page for clarification and explanation of how things work. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to email me directly. I value your business!

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