



Arizona Gourds

November updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the November issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

I want to thank all of you that wrote so many nice notes after my little "glitch" in mailing out the newsletter last month. It really warmed my heart when I received comments such as "I LOVE your newsletter and look forward to it every month! You can send it to me as many times as you want as long as I receive it at least once!" I've now fixed my email settings so future notices should only reach you once each month instead of several times. Thank you so much for your continued support, feedback and orders. I do appreciate your business but most of all I enjoy hearing from so many of my great gourding friends.

Note: This newsletter is going out a bit early this month, as **I will be traveling and will not be shipping orders between October 30th to November 12th.** I wanted to let everyone know ahead of time, so if you are in need of supplies there will be a few days to ship out orders before I leave. Later orders will be shipped out promptly just as soon as I return, and all shipments will be sent in the order in which they were received. Thanks for your understanding.

October brought cooler weather to the desert and most people have already harvested their gourd crops by this time. I've seen some pictures of some giant gourds grown at the Wuertz Gourd Farm and they look like beauties! I had another busy month including a trip to the Texas Gourd Festival, where I was treated like a celebrity and made to feel most welcome. I met lots of people with very distinctive accents and warm, friendly personalities - and I did indeed find myself calling everyone "y'all". I really had a lot of fun teaching classes and visiting with everyone, and I also enjoyed their fabulous state chapter competition. Texas has many really fine artists and the show was a treat for everyone that saw it. I'll include some photos below for you t



I go out each morning for a walk in my neighborhood. I always see a lot of rabbits, quail, roadrunners, javelinas and coyotes, but lately I've seen a pair of juvenile bobcats running around. They are fairly brave, but when they decide to leave they sure can move in a hurry! I'm glad my pet cat is an "indoor cat" or she'd be a tasty meal for one of these local predators.

This little gourd turkey was designed by Peggy Ash and was taught as a class at the Florida seminars in September. Peggy helped me create this one with Apoxie sculpt and fall leaves.



Update: Gourd Classes

My upcoming classes are all currently full. I may add some more Tucson classes in December, please send me a note if you have a special request. I am making tentative plans to teach again at the Southern Gourd Retreat in Georgia in late March 2009. I'm also hoping to teach classes in Boise, Idaho in mid April 2009, at the Leiser Gourd Festival in Sacramento, Ca in May 2009, and in the Arlington, TX area in late May.

If you would like to receive advance notice of classes, please add your name to my classes updates email list. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

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

It's not too soon to be thinking about Christmas gift giving. During these tough economic times, there is nothing nicer than a gift you've created yourself. During the month of November (or while my current supply lasts), I'm reducing the prices on all Feathered Cabochons. These cabochons are a great embellishment for fast and easy gourd projects ~ just add one to basic gourd to create a beautiful gift. You'll find these and many other unusual accents on the ["Special Embellishments"](#) page.



Texas Gourd Festival: This is a real up and coming gourd festival and is destined to grow every year in their lovely new location. (They have just settled on a great new venue at the fairgrounds in scenic Fredricksburg, Texas.) The indoor facilities were perfect for the show, and my covered outdoor classroom area was absolutely ideal. Here are just a few photos from the wonderful competition:



Bert Petrie



Don Vyskocil



Bill Decker



Sylvia Gaines



Sylvia Gaines - Best of Show



Barbara Dale



Cheryl Lewis



Ginny Watts



Dusti Lockey



Jane Holbrook



Check out those gourd hats!!! Some Texas members showed off their creations at the state dinner meeting. Ethel Virgin, Pat Duncan, Sylvia Gaines, Betty Kent, Sharon Flewharty, John Flewharty

Reader's Mailbag

Bonnie, I look forward to your newsletter each and every month. There will be problems every once in awhile, but I love the inclusion of the photos with your newsletter. I would hate to have you eliminate anything as your newsletter is so professional and newsworthy. While I am sending compliments, your website is also the best that I have seen. Thanks so much for spending all the time that you do with both your website and newsletter. Your efforts are greatly appreciated from all your devoted readers and class-takers. One of your former students, Sue Minnock, San Diego

WOW! Not only are you a great artist and teacher (we met at the Florida retreat) but also the epitome of good customer service!!! I placed an order with you on Monday, and received it today. (Wed.) The extra goodie at "no charge" is such a nice touch. Thank you for everything.

Jan Kirchoff



Cindy Jeffcoat sent in this fun gourd cat photo!



Hi Bonnie,
In my excitement, I wanted to share with you my second effort with filigree carving. The first one that I started in your class this past June turned out ok but I am really pleased with the way the second one came out. Your ginkgo gourd inspired me to try my hand at one for myself. Thank you very much for sharing your knowledge and talents and I look forward to the next time I can take one of your classes.

Jonna Anderson, San Diego



Hi Bonnie, Thought I would send you this pic of my latest filigree gourd. It was taken at the monthly indoor Maitland Hunter Valley Markets NSW, two weeks ago. It was only on the stand for about an hour before it sold!!!!

I do wish I could come up and take some of your lessons, but with the info you send me and on your website, are great for us 'out of towners':)

Thanks for all this.

Bronii Williams, New South Wales, Australia

November Feature: Part Two - Waterproofing Gourds for Floral Vases

Karey Karam of Tucson, Arizona is an avid floral arranger, creating contemporary Japanese "Ikebana" arrangements in her own hand crafted gourd vases. This month, Karey shares her second method for waterproofing gourds. (Look for Part Two and a second method next month.)

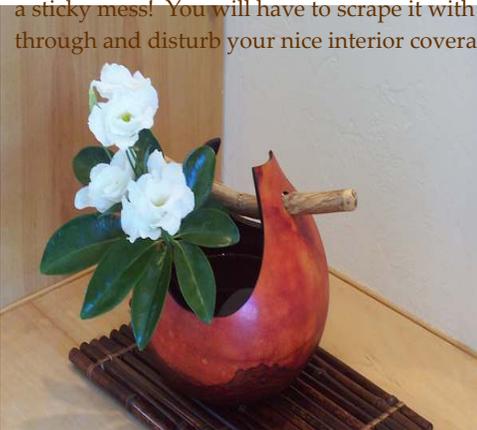
Note: See last month's newsletter for complete instructions on the general preparation of gourds before waterproofing.

Part Two: Beeswax (not paraffin) Method: Read all instructions before starting!

Potential hazards: burning your skin, spilling the wax on unintended surfaces, general flammability of wax. (But, it smells good!)

1. Set up your work area. Several layers of newspaper placed over a large cardboard box lid with a rim will do well as your portable work area. Have several paper towels separated and handy. A disposable paintbrush will help to move the wax to the topmost edge of your gourd without risking a devastating spill, and to waterproof the exterior if that is your plan.
2. Preheat your conventional type oven to 180 degrees, moving shelves to accommodate the size of your gourd. Don't put it in there just yet.
3. Melt the wax. Use more than you think will be absorbed. (I used about 1 cup of wax to waterproof a gourd with a 3-quart capacity, and it was just right. I treated the exterior as well. You want to have leftovers or the wax will cool too much before it can absorb into the warm gourd wall.) For ease, time, and flammability issues, I use the microwave oven and a wax-dedicated ceramic or Pyrex container placed on two paper towels to catch any drips. I heat in several time increments of 1-2 minutes, checking the progress each time until the wax is completely melted. Don't overdo it! Leave it in the microwave.

4. Place your dry gourd in the warm conventional oven and set your timer for 5-6 minutes only, unless your gourd is especially thick-walled, which will require slightly more time to heat through. Don't lose track of the time or it may crack!
5. Give the wax one more blast in the microwave, for about 45 seconds, meanwhile, with oven mitts on, remove the gourd from the conventional oven and place it upright on your work area.
6. Keeping those mitts on, immediately get the melted wax and pour it all inside the gourd directly, being careful not to splash. The wax container will be hot! Set it aside on a few of those paper towels. Oh so carefully, tip and rotat the gourd to distribute wax no higher than halfway up the interior of the gourd. Take off your mitts when you can, to manage with better dexterity. Carefully manipulate the gourd, tipping it so the melted wax comes as close to the top as you dare, all the way around. Use that disposable paintbrush or sponge on a stick to bring it all the way up to the rim.
7. Once coverage has been reached, place the wax container safely back onto your work area. Pour the excess wax out of the gourd and into the wax container for next time, being careful not to dribble it on the exterior of the gourd, unless....
8. If your plan is to waterproof with wax inside and out (good plan), now is the time to do that. Using your paintbrush and the melted wax, paint the exterior of the gourd. (You'll soon see why painting wax on the interior just wouldn't have worked. The wax cools and becomes thicker very quickly on the brush, and it needs to be hot and melted to fully bind with the gourd walls and floor, thus, the "dump-all-at-once" method.)
9. Using your paintbrush, go over and smooth the cooling wax as best you can, inside and out, removing obvious excess.
10. If waterproofing interior and exterior, invert the gourd and set it out in the sun on your portable work station of newspapers and rimmed box top to catch the excess wax. Using paper towels, wipe off the exterior of the gourd as the hot sunlight remelts it. It will appear shiny. (Don't use newspapers to wipe off the wax as the ink may stain your gourd.) This next part can save you work later: Remove as much excess wax as you can from the exterior. Wipe it as clean as you can. In lieu of hot sunlight, I'm sure the conventional oven would do the job at 180 degrees, but I haven't tried it myself. Just be sure to use precautions to catch spills and drips.
11. If you have treated only the interior, set your gourd upright in the sunlight or oven. You can either let the excess wax pool and subsequently cool in the bottom for extra weight/stability, or, use your paintbrush to mop it up and even it out as it remelts.
12. After everything cools, buff the exterior if it has been waterproofed. If you wiped it really clean earlier, this will be easy. If not, it's a sticky mess! You will have to scrape it with a credit card, or melt with a heat gun, being ever so careful not to heat all the way through and disturb your nice interior coverage.



After reading the last issue of the newsletter, Jan Cleary sent in her tip for waterproofing gourds. Finish the rim, and it's all set to use as a vase!

Today many folks are interested in 'greener' ways to accomplish most anything so I would like to share a very old method used by many indigenous peoples around the world.

The gourd was opened and as much of the inside as possible removed. The gourd was then filled with water and left to sit for a day or two. The remaining material in the inside was then easily removed. Next, the interior of the gourd was scraped and allowed to dry. When the interior had dried thoroughly, the vessel was again filled with water and left to sit for two or three days. The water was thrown out and the gourd refilled with more water. This process was continued until the water in the gourd had no bitter taste remaining. By the time the gourd was cured in this manner it was now completely waterproof and used to store various liquids. Sometimes throughout this process the gourd would 'weep' (little droplets of moisture collecting on the outside of the gourd). When the gourd stopped 'weeping' it was cured and used.

I have three gourds cured in this manner, one of the larger ones took over a month to cure but when I have large gatherings of friends I serve punch in it.

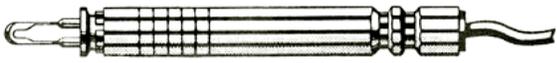
Tip of the Month: Keeping your cool ~ Woodburning Pens

Rosemary Reed wrote to tell me of her solution for woodburning pens that get too hot to hold. Rosemary uses standard Detail Master pens, and when she burns at a hot setting, the metal body of the pen would get quite warm. Her solution was to cut a 1/8 inch piece of suede leather in a 2" x 3" rectangle. She used Tandy's Leather Weld glue to attach it to the pen. Since discovering this she has never experienced even a warm finger. "Works perfect and so much more comfortable than the sponge tube!"

Some pens are more prone to becoming hot, but a lot depends on the way you woodburn. If you burn hot and heavy or for long periods of time, you are more likely to experience a hot handpiece. Also, replaceable tip pens are much more prone to this problem than fixed tip pens. I've seen lots of solutions including everything from foam pencil grips, cork, fabric and more. You might also try "Vented" style pens or use burning pens that already have built in foam grips. Heavy duty tips and cords are also a plus if you burn at hot settings.



Rosemary's leather covered burning pen.



Detail Master's vented burning pen.



A burning pen with built in foam grip.

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



And the winner is..... RAY DAVIS of Mississippi.
The raffle drawing for this gourd was held on October 18th at the Orange County ALS Walk. The winning ticket was drawn by Russ Conley, a gourder that is fighting ALS.

Many, many thanks again to LaVonne Hall for so generously donating this gourd, and to all of you who purchased raffle tickets.

Click this link to visit **SmartFlix - Rent Instructional Videos**
Great for those who don't learn as well from books!

***Here's a shameless plug....**
I've entered a woodworking/carving contest sponsored by Smart Flix. If you'd like to vote, please visit the link found on the bottom of my [home page](#). **Thanks! Voting is open until 5pm Eastern time on Monday, 27 October**

Featured Gourd of the Month:

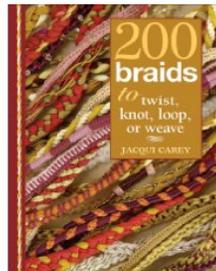
Raku Hummer

This "Faux Raku" style gourd has a piece of inlaid silver wrapped turquoise and an added manzanita branch with a carved hummingbird. I carve all my own hummingbirds. (This piece was sold at the Texas festival.)

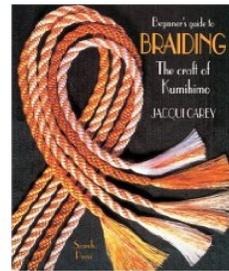


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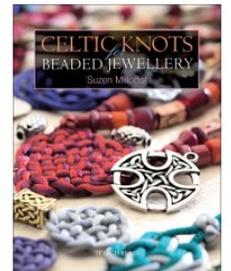
Featured Books of the Month:



[200 Braids to Twist, Knot, Loop or Weave](#)



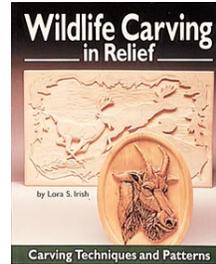
[Beginner's Book of Braiding: The Craft of Kumihimo](#)



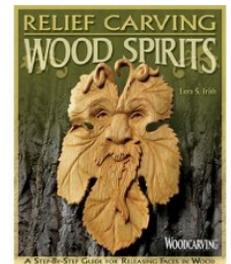
[Celtic Knots for Beaded Jewellery](#)



[Great Book of Dragon Patterns](#)



[Wildlife Carving in Relief](#)



[Relief Carving Wood Spirits](#)

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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Nov08.html>

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Kumihimo Braiding is becoming a crossover art that is enjoyed by many gourd crafters. It's fun to explore trying new techniques in your projects and these books are a good start if you admire braided edges and fancy knots.

The bottom row of books are all by Lora S. Irish. *Wildlife Carving in Relief* is one of the best books I've seen if you want to learn more about dimensional carving techniques. Her pattern books are all well done.

**Be sure to visit all the different book pages shown at right to see some of the many other titles that are available. Click on each topic to see a variety of suggested books about each subject.*

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Note: It is important that you add bonniegibson@qwest.net to your "safe"

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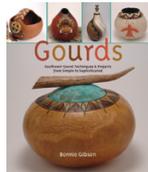
senders" list, as many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.



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Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated
by Bonnie Gibson

(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

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