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# Arizona Gourds

October updates from the desert southwest...

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

Last month, I enjoyed a trip to teach in Michigan. The approach of fall seemed much more obvious up there, and it was nice to enjoy a change of weather and a change of scene. We had a great time at the **Michigan Festival of Gourds**, where 100% of proceeds from this festival went to the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation! It was nice to get together with new gourd friends. A big thanks to Deb Stallings and her hardworking family and friends for organizing the event and for inviting me to teach classes. Thanks also to all of my great students who made classes fun!

**Interesting festival sighting and related trivia:** I enjoyed visiting with local brewer **Guy Wicker**, who made two different kinds of gourd beers which were available for sampling at the festival dinner. A large gourd was used as the fermenting container, and the natural bitterness of the gourd provided the "gruit", an early precursor to the use of hops for adding the bitter flavoring in beers. The beer mix was poured into a large cleaned gourd, then the gourd was closed up and sealed with beeswax for two weeks to during the fermenting process. The porous nature of the gourd makes for a perfect brewing vessel - somewhat primitive but actually used historically prior to ceramic brewing containers. Carbon dioxide is able to escape out of the gourd shell during the fermentation, thus relieving the buildup of pressure. I couldn't find a lot of information on gourd beer brewing online - but while I did discover that there are modern brewers producing "Gourd Beer", they are most often using pumpkin as a base.

**Happy Halloween and Happy Octoberfest - (the perfect time for gourd beer?)**



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**\*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!**

**Update: Gourd Classes**

Sorry - No classes this fall while I am recuperating from some orthopedic surgery. Thanks for all the good wishes!

*\*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 around October 1st - be sure to sign up for the class notice list if you want to hear about registration details. You'll be pleased to hear that 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)**

**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. See penny for approximate size comparisons.



Limited supply of magnesite **SQUARE** shape dyed cabochons, and **SALE** price on large **TEARDROP** shape this month! Real stone with natural markings. Inexpensive, and look great! Check out our available inventory of cabochons on the [Inlay Supplies page](#).



**New - Budget Priced Replacement Disks** for Microlux and Caning Shop Disk Sanders! On the [Tools page](#).



Back in stock - feathered cabochons from a new supplier. Three colors, **NEW LOWER PRICE!** On the [Special Embellishments page](#).



**Metallic Pitt Pens in Gold, Silver and Copper!** Unlike most metallics, these are filled with metallic india ink, and won't bleed, fade or run when sprayed with solvents.

Sets of 4 tips - black Pitt Pens also back in stock! On the [Kits and Displays page](#).

### Feature - Making Gourd Guts Paper

A special thank you to Cora Raifort for providing her gourd paper tutorial as a basis for this article.

#### General Paper Making Info:

"Gourd Guts" are used to make paper, but the material should be free of seeds and pieces of hard dried membrane. A standard plastic grocery bag holds enough seed free "guts" to make a couple of sheets of paper and will decorate a gourd or two. For strength and binding, you will need to add torn up pieces of old paper to the gourd pulp; scrap paper, tissue paper, paper bags, etc. Paper with a high cotton rag content works the best. You can also add cotton linter (a commercially available paper making product), fibers and other decorative additives. The gourd membranes shrinks as it dries, and also expands when it gets wet. So, expect your sheets of paper to shrink and warp.

Molds for paper making can be purchased as kits from most craft stores, and you can also purchase them online. If you are handy, you can make your own mold and deckle (wooden frames) from a few pieces of wood, nails, glue, and a piece of fine mesh fiberglass window screening. The mold is a frame with screening tightly stapled over the opening that is used to catch the paper pulp. Use stainless steel staples to stretch the screen over your homemade frame. Use a second open frame of the same size as a "deckle". The mold is used on the bottom with the screen facing up, and the deckle is

#### Making the paper:

In addition to the mold, deckle and pulp, you will also need a plastic tub which is large enough to accommodate the mold plus your hands, and large enough to accommodate at least several blenders full of pulp.

1) Fill your blender about ¾ full of water. Add ½ cup each of torn paper and gourd guts, and about ¼ cup of cotton lint, (or use high cotton content paper.) Pulse to break up the larger pieces, then set it on the highest setting. When the contents of the blender look consistently smooth, pour the mixture into the pulp tub. Repeat until the pulp mixture fills the tub.

2) Agitate the pulp with your fingers, and then pick up the assembled mold with your hands on the short side, thumbs on top. Hold the mold **VERTICALLY** over the pulp at the far side of the tub.



3) Keeping the mold vertical, lower it to the tub bottom. Slide the lower edge toward you while lowering the upper edge to get the mold flat on the bottom of the tub.

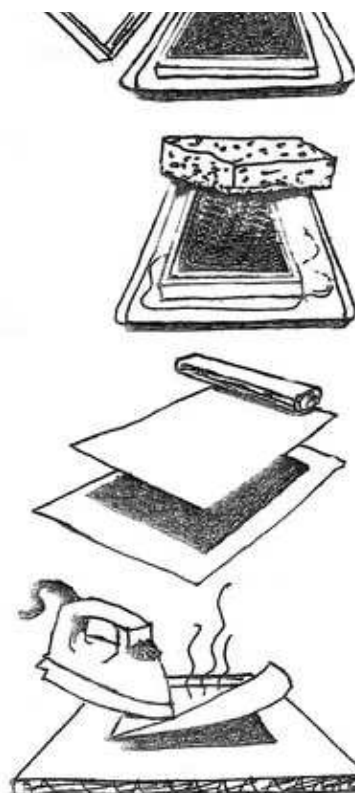
4) After the pulp flows over the mold, lift the mold straight up from the water KEEPING IT LEVEL. Allow it to drain for at least 15-20 seconds.

5) Remove the deckle, add replace it with a blotting sheet. (White blotting paper is available from office supply stores; alternately, use a piece of white felt.) Flip the mold and blotting paper over, and use a large sponge to press on the mold screening and further remove excess water. Carefully remove the mold from the pulp sheet. If the paper doesn't release, sponge the mold a bit more and gently pull the paper away from the screen. Place another blotting sheet on top of the paper. Squeeze out more water by rolling gently over the layers with a rolling pin.

6) When the new paper sheet is well drained, remove the top blotting sheet and lay the paper face down on a cloth covered board. Remove the second blotting sheet and cover with another cloth (old sheets work well). Set your iron on its highest setting, and begin ironing your new paper sheet. Turn the sheet often, continuing to iron over the ironing cloth.

Tip: You can make an "ironing board" by covering a piece of 1/2" plywood with two layers of fabric. Do not use other padding, as extra "give" will cause dips and ridges in the damp paper.

\*Kristy Dial of Gecko Gourds has a great papermaking tutorial that was originally published in the "Expressions" craft magazine. You can see a pdf copy of the article [on her website](#).



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 a quick answer to a gourd question! [Check out our two great new GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)

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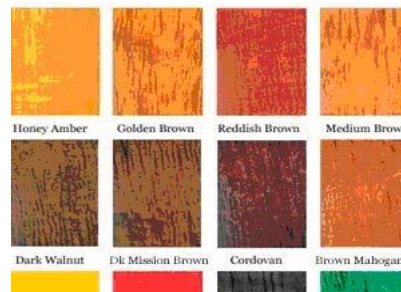
"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourd updates. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourding friends.)

### Special Feature - TransTint Dyes

Reprinted with permission by Reggie Eakin. You can receive Reggie's newsletter by filling out contact info on his [website](#).

TransTint® is the brand name of a Homestead Finishing Product developed for staining interior wood surfaces. The liquid form is a concentrated metallized acid dye pre-dissolved in a glycol ether solvent. The dye comes in a variety of colors. Note: The colors on the chart will not be the result on gourds, because of their golden color. The concentrated dye can be mixed with either water or denatured alcohol as a bare stain on wood - or added directly to finishing materials like shellac and lacquer to make toners or stains. TransTint Dyes can be mixed with almost anything with the exception of paint thinner. The metallized acid dyes are light stable (for the best fade resistant result on gourds mix with denatured alcohol).

TransTint is best used as a transparent stain where you want "tie-dyed", crazing, or random design effects. Most people put on a base coat, and then use Q-tips, sponges, or brushes to dab on more color. The blotchy, spreading effect is what makes this dye attractive. The TransTint dyes go on like leather dyes, but are more lightfast. To color a solid larger area, use a dauber to spread over the gourd and then rub off excess with paper





towel or spray it on in light mists. It dries very quickly and doesn't need to be heat set like ink dyes. TransTint dyes are concentrated and must be diluted before applying to a gourd surface.

Using TransTint dyes on gourds was pioneered by Judy Richie (judyrichie@yahoo.com). She uses a 16 oz plastic bottle in which to mix by adding 1/4 to 1/3 of the 2oz bottle of dye concentrate and then filling the rest of the 16 oz plastic bottle with denatured alcohol (for all the warm colors use the 1/3 ratio). For a stronger color use a little more. As with any chemical make sure you have good ventilation.

Seal with a lacquer spray like Deft. Seal it first with several very light sprays. Heavy spray will cause the dyes to run. You can use a heat gun to speed it up, but isn't required. Don't let water get on your work before you seal it. The water will cause it to spot or run. Judy teaches an alcohol on alcohol technique in her classes and sells the diluted product at those classes. (Judy also sells a tutorial for her Alcohol Dye Technique.)

The TransTint concentrate is sold in 2oz bottles at most wood product retailers for between \$14.00 and \$20.00 per bottle. The dye is also sold in 8oz, 16oz, and 32oz containers. Unmixed liquid concentrates have no shelf life. It is recommended to keep the unmixed product in a cool, dry place and keep the top on tightly and capped. Some colors may change over time once they are mixed so it's always best to mix up what you will be using right away. If you use dye that has been mixed up and stored for over several months, always check the color first before you apply it to your project. Store the mixed dye in a clean plastic or glass container.

**As a Stain for Bare Wood**

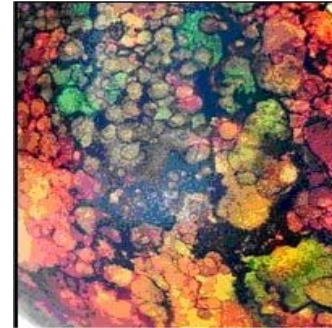
1. Mix with Water: The ratio of 1 ounce dye to 1 quart of water is a starting point, and you can increase or decrease solvent to suit your need.
2. Mix with denatured alcohol: As with water, the ratio of 1 ounce dye to 1 quart of alcohol is a starting point, and you can increase or decrease solvent to suit your need.

**As a Stain for Gourds**

1. Use about one part dye to 3 or 4 parts denatured alcohol.

**Sources:**

- <http://www.lmii.com/carttwo/transtinttechnicaldatasheet.pdf>
- <http://www.homesteadfinishingproducts.com/htdocs/TransTint.htm>
- <http://gourdartenthusiasts.ning.com/forum/topics/index-of-techniques-tools-and>



*\*Ed. Note: This dye is even harder to remove from your hands than leather dyes! Gloves are a must if you want to protect your skin from becoming technicolored for days. I wear double layers of gloves.*



**Reader's Mailbag**

Hi Bonnie. I worked on a 3d carving and unfortunately the gourd was a little thin. I knew that it was going to be iffy, but when I cut the gourd open the thin areas just disintegrated. I glued the pieces that didn't crumble back and used [Apoxie Sculpt](#) to replace the missing areas. The dried Apoxie Sculpt sanded and carved just like the gourd and saved my project. It is an awesome tool in my gourd tool arsenal.

**Pam Donnelly - California**

*\*I love the angle of this photo - looks like the gourd has feet! I have also used Apoxie for repairs - it is a great adhesive as well as a sculpting clay, and makes ultra strong repairs and joins. I even used some to repair a pipe on a pipe.*



**Reader's Mailbag**

Right: Christine Garrison of California entered these gourds in the

Pomona County Fair and won a bunch of ribbons, including a best of class!



### Tip of the Month: Cutting Stone Cabochons

For one of my recent gourds, I wanted to cut a stone donut shape in half, and use the halves on opposite sides of the gourd. (See the featured gourd below.) Cabochons and other stone shapes can be cut with thin diamond wheel burs or diamond discs. The thinner the wheel, the easier it is to cut through the stone, and the less stone material that is wasted. The wheel should be large enough diameter to go through the stone (either completely through on one pass, or halfway through from the top side, and halfway through from the bottom side.)

The biggest trick to cutting stone is to keep both the stone and the bur cool during the cutting process. Use a small, shallow container to hold a small amount of water; the water will provide both cooling and lubrication during the cutting process. Dip the stone and the bur into the water frequently as you cut through the stone. You should not see dry powder flying from the cut, instead, the stone and bur should be kept wet enough to create a damp slurry during the cutting. **DO NOT immerse your tool into the water, and use care not to spray water on your tool. Electricity and water are not a good mix, so use common sense and only get the bur head wet.** Just dip the stone and the tip of the bur frequently as the surface dries out. If necessary, cut edges may be smoothed further with diamond burs (use water during this step) and if desired, may be polished with a small felt bob and jeweler's rouge.



*\*Interested in trying this? Send me an [email](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com) if you want a thin diamond cutting wheel and I will special order some. They are available in many sizes - if there is enough interest, I will stock a 10mm size on the [carving burs](#) page. This size will cut most cabochons and stones. Price would be about \$5.*

*\* 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).*

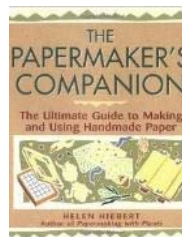
### Featured Gourd of the Month:

#### "Butterfly Chalice"

Carved and embellished gourd. Gourd base and domed lid, hardwood top with inlaid inlay, handturned wooden finial, turquoise heishi inlay, and turquoise stone donut. \*Look for this "Fancy Filigree" offered as a class at the 2013 Wuertz Festival!



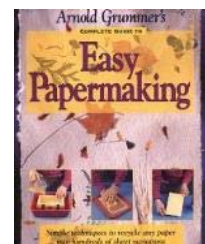
### Featured Books of the Month:



[The Papermaker's Companion](#)



[Papermaking with Garden Plants](#)



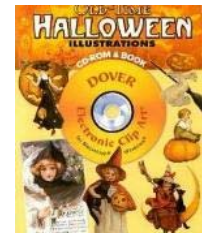
[Easy Papermaking](#)



[Trash to Treasure Papermaking](#)



[Halloween Postcard Book](#)



[Halloween Illustrations](#)

Here are some good reference books if you'd like to try your hand at





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papermaking. There are more detailed directions and ideas for materials, suppliers, and more.

Halloween is soon approaching; here are a couple of great books with lots of fun and beautiful illustrations to give you ideas for your Halloween projects.

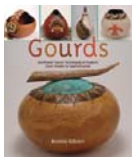
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