



California's Secret Blonde Gourds!!!

By Leigh Adams

Have you ever tired of scrubbing and scraping your gourds? Well, try this proven method for delightful results....and yes, it does give a slightly blonde finish! Hydrogen peroxide is used in mild (1 and 2%) solutions for antiseptic purposes. At higher percentages, it is used to clean organic messes such as fouled stock cars, zoo bedding areas and stables or kennels. At even higher percentages, it is used to clean clogged plumbing lines and becomes a Hazmat material. We have found, through extensive experimentation, that hydrogen peroxide cleans the outside and inside of gourds very easily and with a minimum of trouble if you have a good set up. The gourds benefit from the least amount of exposure that will still give you results. The first time you successfully clean 25 Nigerian hard-shell minis in 15 minutes or a 12" bottle gourd, inside and out, in under 10 minutes, you'll be hooked! Please read and follow directions CAREFULLY! Let us know how you like the process and your experiences. And a special THANK YOU to all the people who tested this for us!

Tools: Large canning or tamale pot, stove or gas burner (if you want to work outdoors), tongs (barbeque tools are great), colander or draining device, gloves and eye protection.

Materials: 2 gallons of hydrogen peroxide (eight quarts), a dirty gourd or two, a gourd with the opening cut into it.

Empty the peroxide into the large pot and put on the stove to reduce. Use your kitchen ventilator fan or have good ventilation. As the liquid reduces, be aware that it becomes more caustic and can irritate skin. Use gloves or long handled tools. When the peroxide has reduced from two gallons to two quarts, it is four times stronger than the original concentration. While the liquid is simmering, lower the gourd carefully into the peroxide solution. Hold it down (with a tool) to achieve maximum immersion for at least two minutes, longer if the gourd is heavily moldy or a specialty like a warty or a maranka. All surfaces of the gourd need to be in the liquid. Carefully scrape the surface of the gourd. If the mold releases with NO resistance, remove the gourd, let it drain and rinse it clean. If the surface still clings tenaciously, cook it some more. Do NOT over cook! But, experimentation will bring you excellent results. Perhaps you'll need more fluid and a stronger solution, perhaps more time will do it. Each gourd is different and each gourd artist is different. Let us know what works for you!

Do experiment with cutting open a gourd and shaking out the seeds, putting it into the solution and cleaning the inside at the same time as the outside is cleaned. Be sure to pour the excess liquid back into the pot. It can be strained and used over and over again. When the gourd has cooled, perhaps under the faucet as you wash the loosened mold away, use a large spoon to scrape the interior clean. Mind you, this won't be scraping as you've done it before! The innards of the gourd (if it has simmered long enough) will come out easier than applesauce from a jar.

Protect your eyes

Protect your hands

Avoid breathing the fumes

Experiment

Let us know how it works for you and what you think of the process!

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