

Create a rose with leftover gourds

By Betty Finch

Seasoned gourd enthusiasts know there is no such thing as “leftover” gourd parts. Cut off tops, seeds, lining and stems can be used to create an unlimited variety of things. Let me share with you how I created a rose from gourd stem ends and lining.

This idea came to me while putting the finishing touches on an Easter bonnet for the Indiana Gourd Festival hat competition. It came out so lifelike, I just had to share it!

First, you must peel off some gourd lining pieces larger than one square inch. This is most easily accomplished when you cut open a gourd that is still slightly damp inside but has not formed mold. The lining should be white and shiny. Peel off sections and lay them out flat to dry where they will dry quickly and not get moldy. As long as they are kept dry, they store well for a long time.

To make a gourd rose you need the stem end of a gourd with a small bit of the gourd attached. Long straight stems are best. Small gourd tops such as penguin gourds work best for roses. Just above the stem, cut the gourd to create points resembling the sepals of the rose. (see figure 1) Paint the entire piece green and let it dry.

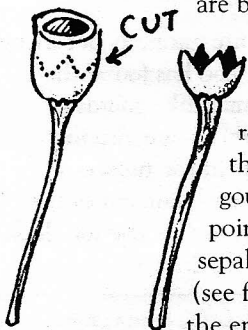


Figure 1

Cut oval shapes from the gourd lining using scissors. Dampen the ovals slightly. Paint them the desired colors. I like the effect made by painting the oval with a light wash of pink water base paint and touching a tiny bit of red to the very edge while the pink is still wet. This gives a very natural look to the edge of the petal where the color bleeds together.

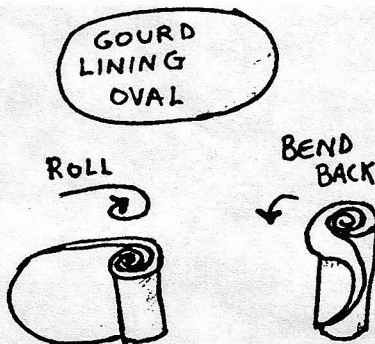


Figure 2

While petals are still slightly damp, start shaping them. If you are getting paint all over your hands and making a mess, you are doing it correctly! Use the largest oval to form the center of the rose by rolling it into a roll and folding back the end just slightly. (see figure 2)

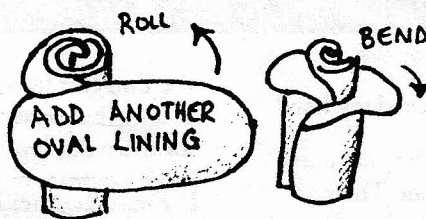


Figure 3



The Gourd Hat by Betty Finch won 2nd Place at The Indiana Gourd Festival. It was purchased by The American Gourd Society to place in their museum.

Roll the next oval around the first and then fold the top edge back. Roll the next oval around the second and on, until it is the size that will just barely fit in the gourd sepals. (see figure 3)

Place this in the sepals and prop it up to dry. The petals should keep the shape fairly well as they dry. (see figure 4)

The rose will shrink slightly as it dries. When it is completely dry, you can remove the rose from the sepals and add a drop of glue to hold it in place.

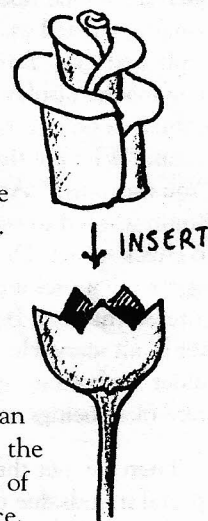


Figure 4