

DIG ART!

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY
IN THE GARDEN



Gourd Crafting: Painting

Overview Gourd painting is an easy way to beautify a gourd project that students have already started such as a gourd birdhouse, potted plant holder, or drum. It doesn't take much preparation and can work either as an activity on its own or to enhance a gourd project that was just completed.

Objectives Students will:

- explore painting as a technique to decorate gourds

Time 1-2 hours

Materials

- dried gourds ready for painting
- acrylic paint
- acrylic varnish
- paintbrushes
- paper
- pencils or fine tipped markers
- graphite transfer paper



Instructions

1. Students begin by sketching a design for their gourd on a piece of paper.
2. Next, they transfer the design onto their gourd, either directly by drawing freehand on the gourd with a pen or pencil, or indirectly for intricate drawings and designs, using graphite paper. To do this, students lay their sketch on the table and cover it with clear plastic cling wrap (a piece large enough to go around their gourd). Then, using a fine tipped felt marker, trace the major portions of the pattern onto the cling wrap. Place the cling wrap around the gourd and slide a piece of graphite paper under the wrap. Use a pencil to trace over the pattern, pressing firmly to ensure that the design will be transferred through the graphite paper onto the gourd.
3. Once the design is transferred onto the gourd, guide your students in first painting the outline of their design with a fine brush. They should allow enough time for it to dry before moving on to the next step.

4. When the outline painting is dry, students fill in the design with a variety of color choices. Again, allow enough time for it to dry before proceeding to the next step.
5. As the final step, to protect their design, students can apply either a spray or paint-on varnish all over their gourd and put it aside to dry undisturbed for one week. Follow the safety precautions and other instructions as outlined on the product's container. Both varnishes should be used with adult supervision and in a well-ventilated area, preferably outdoors. If using a paint-on varnish, paint a thin coat over the gourd. Wash each paintbrush well to ensure that it is thoroughly cleaned of varnish.

Taking it Further

In addition to painting and decorating a gourd project that students already created, they could also paint plain gourds using different themes such as animals or vegetables. For example, they could paint a whole series of mini bottle gourds to represent the diversity of vegetables from their garden.