

TUTORIAL: GOURD RAINSTICK by Lollie Yancey



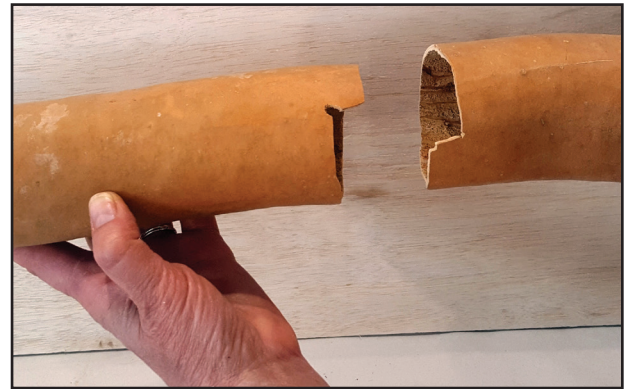
Tools

- Rotary tool with a diamond cutting wheel
- Drill with a bit the same size as the skewers
- Cutting pliers
- Gourd cleaning tools

Construction

Cutting and Cleaning

- Clean exterior of long gourd
- Using the rotary tool, cut horizontally in half or into lengths that allow you to clean interior of gourd (You can cut the gourd length-wise, but reattachment is harder!)



Note: make a notch in the cut line to make it easier to re-align the gourd pieces when gluing it back together.

- Clean the inside of the gourd

Drilling and Gluing

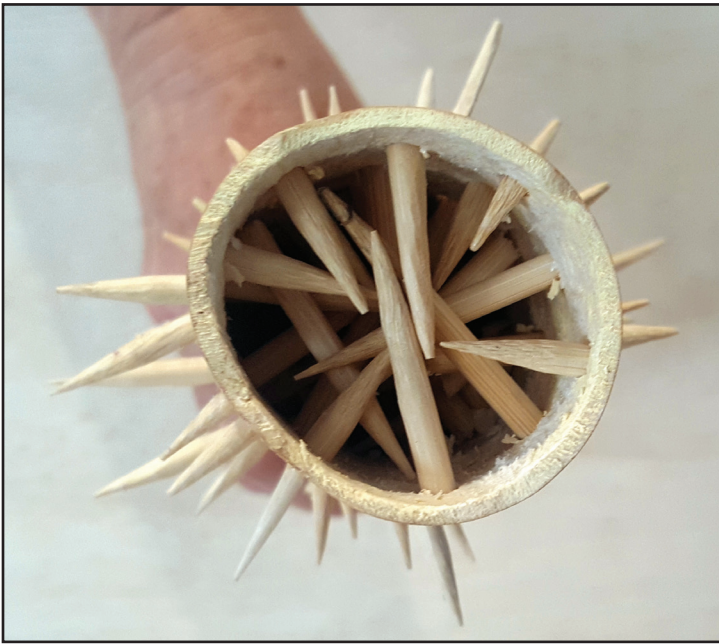
- Using masking tape, temporarily reattach the pieces of the gourd together
- Tie 4 strings together and tape them to one end of the gourd. Spiral them closely down the body of the gourd to the other end, taping in place periodically. Trace the lines with a pencil. Remove the tape and separate the halves of the gourd
- Drill holes along the marked lines, about 1" apart. Use the drill bit that most closely matches the size of skewers you're using.
- Cut skewers into segments that are 1/4" shorter than the diameter of the gourd. Sharpen one end of each segment. Push one skewer segment in until it is 3/4s of the way in, then put a dab of white glue on the last section of the skewer and push it in further. If it makes contact with the other side of the gourd back it up a little bit.

Supplies

- Long, narrow gourd such as a snake gourd or similar
- Bamboo skewers or toothpicks (depends on diameter of your gourd)
- 4 long pieces of string, masking tape, pencil
- White glue, like Elmer's® All Purpose Glue
- Quick-set glue, like Super glue/Cyanoacrylates
- Noise makers: BBs, dry beans, dry rice, small beads or aquarium gravel
- Paints & dyes, plus embellishments if desired

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RAINSTICK CONTINUED



Note: You want them to overlap but not touch each other or the opposite side of the gourd. Tapered ends of the skewers make a nice “pinging” sound when the noise makers hit the end of the skewers.

- Repeat the insertion of the skewers until all the holes have been filled.
- Allow 30 (or more) minutes for the glue to dry (so noise makers don't get glued together or stuck on the skewers)
- Cut excess dowel using either the rotary tool and diamond cutting wheel or the cutting pliers
- Sand the ends of the skewers so the exterior surface is smooth



Joining and Adding Sound Makers

- Using masking tape, temporarily reattach the pieces of the gourd together with noise makers (Rice, BB's, Gravel, Beans, etc), and test for how it sounds. You can add more

or experiment with different combinations or ratios of materials. I like to use a variety for better rain sounds.

- Once you are satisfied with the sound, you can permanently glue the pieces together.
- Using the fast setting glue, glue gourd sections together (I use gel superglue and accelerator; wood glue can work if braced or banded)

Decorate

- Use paints, dyes, clay, pyrography, etc to decorate your rain stick
- Embellish with beads, leather, feathers or whatever strikes your fancy

Variations

- Cut ends off gourd and insert the cut piece inside, or cap the end replace with a circular piece cut from a gourd or wood.
- Consider the sculptural rainstick as Bonnie does in her book (Gibson, Bonnie. Gourds with Southwestern Motifs)
- You could reinforce interior with wood shards glued inside at seams and/or exterior with strips of cloth, plaster wrap or leather
- In lieu of skewers, insert chicken wire rolled into a narrow tube and squished together, then inserted into the gourd. See Bonnie's book
- Make holes in an all-over pattern
- If seams are obvious, create decorative “cuffs” 