

Tutorial: Make a Water Drum & “Notes” Gourds



Tutorial and photos by Bonnie Adams, cabinmade17 @frontiernet.net

Materials:

- Very large gourd (mine is 17” diameter and it’s finished height is about 9” tall)
- Several smaller gourds (different sizes/shapes to obtain different “Notes”)
- Letter Templates
- FlexSeal® (black shown, but also available in clear and white) spray or brush-on
- Ink or leather dye; paint or paint pens



- Spray sealer, clear
- ¼” dowel 20-24” long or 2 chop sticks
- Small rubber balls (x2), such as super balls
- Glue
- Goat’s skin
- Craft wire, brass colored

Tools:

- Gourd Saw, Sander
- Wood burner and pen with a line tip
- Gourd scraping tools
- Drill, ¼” drill bit & Sanding star
- Plastic bag, masking tape to mask when spraying

Directions:

- Mark a level line around the top of the very large gourd; cut and clean the inside
- Sand the inside smooth (the sanding star works great for this step)
- Seal the inside, the rim and about 1” around the top of the outside of the gourd with FlexSeal.
 - Using a plastic bag and masking tape, mask the outside by taping the bag 1” below the rim
 - I also masked the gourd and sealed the outside bottom of the gourd with FlexSeal. This is just part of the design and not necessary for the drum itself, but may add another layer of protection to the outside of the drum.
- Apply Ink or leather dye of your choice (heat set if required by your ink)
- Transfer the lettering “the Water Drum” (see below for suggestion on using fonts from your computer to create the words)



- Woodburn the outline of the letters
- Paint the inside of the letters
- Apply several light coats of a clear spray sealer

Make the Notes Gourds:

- Select several small to medium gourds, various shapes and sizes. Using several different sizes and volumes of gourds will produce varying note sounds
- Cut off the bottom of each of the small “Notes” gourds; thoroughly clean and sand the inside
- Place your cleaned gourd in a large bowl of water with the open bottom toward the water.
- Pull the 'Note' straight up, out of the water. Mark the waterline on the outside of each 'Note' gourd with a pencil line.
- Mask each 'Note' gourd at the pencil line with tape and plastic as you did for the Water Drum gourd. Apply FlexSeal to each 'Note' (i.e., inside as well as the cut rim and outside waterline area of each small gourd).

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Water Drum continued

• Decorate each gourd with the theme of your choice. My 'Notes' depict all the elements of water lilies in a pond: lily pads, lily flowers and lily seed pods; the Water Drum is the pond

• Seal with several light coats of clear, spray sealer

Make Two Drumsticks:

- Two ¼ " dowels (or pair of chop sticks) approx. 10-12"
- Two small rubber balls about the size of a ping pong ball (eg, super balls)
- Two circles of goatskin with an approx. diameter of 4 times the diameter of the rubber ball.
- Brass colored craft wire

1. Drill a 1/4" hole to the center of the rubber ball.

2. Using a good glue (I use Aleene's Jewelry and Metal glue) place a few drops of glue into the drilled hole in the rubber ball.

3. Insert one end of the dowel rod into the drilled hole in the rubber ball. The glue should set up within 10 minutes.



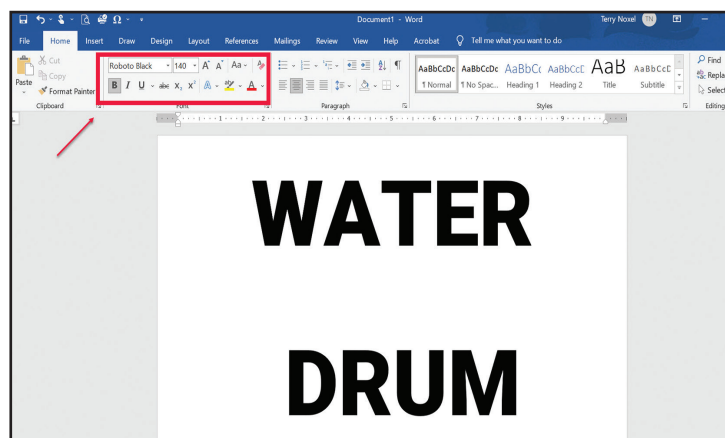
4. Drape the circle of leather over the rubber ball on the dowel rod and gather the leather around the dowel rod at the base of the rubber ball.

5. Wrap the gathered leather with the craft wire several times, approx. 10 times or whatever looks good. Secure the wire by tucking the ends into the wrapped wire. Clip off excess wire when secured.

How to Play a Water Drum

1. Make a Sign when the Water Drum is used at festivals for the public to play the drum
2. Fill the drum with water to approx. within 2" of the gourd rim
3. Place several of the smaller 'Notes' gourds into the drum with their open side toward the water
4. Using the drumsticks, play the 'Notes' by tapping them gently 🥁

Using Your Computer to Create Lettering Patterns



1. Open the Word program and a "Blank" document.
2. Set Layout to Landscape, and then choose Center for placement of letters

3. Type Water Drum
4. Try several different fonts until you find the "right" one
5. Make font Bold
6. Change the size of your font to as large as is "right" for your project (it may print across more than one piece of paper)
7. Save your pattern
8. Print on sturdy paper
9. Cut out letters (razor blade on a glass or plexiglass surface)
10. Tape pattern in place, trace letters with pencil, paint as desired (paint pens work great) and highlight or outline to make it easy to read from a distance 🥁