

If you're looking for new ways to add to your bottom line, take a look at the money-making ideas featured here and on the next page.

If you've found or heard about a new income-boosting idea, we'd like to hear about it. Send details to: FARM SHOW Magazine, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 800 834-9665) or email us at: editor@farmshow.com.

No Dye Needed With Colored Cotton

If you want naturally colored cotton, you'll probably have to grow your own. Southern Exposure Seed Exchange (SESE) has the seed. The colors range from shades of green and tan to golden brown.

"Most of our customers for colored cotton are traditional spinners and weavers or people working with schools and historical gardens to educate young people," says Ira Wallace, SESE.

Colored cotton is relatively rare in the U.S., although it is still grown in South America where it originated. One problem with it is the fiber or staple length is shorter than conventional white cotton, making it unsuitable for mechanized spinning.

"Some spinners will mix it with wool for a blend to make spinning easier," says Wallace. "I made a very small dish cloth with some we raised. It took so long that I'm glad I wasn't living when you had to work with it."

One of the heritage cotton seeds offered by SESE is Red Foliated White Cotton. While the mature cotton in the boll is white, the plant stems, leaves and boll are dark red.

"It is our favorite as an ornamental," says Wallace. "It can be grown as a hedge, as it is much fuller than other varieties that are taller and rangier."

SESE also offers Arkansas Green Lint cotton with very dark seeds and short soft light green fibers. It has yellow pink flowers, which Wallace suggests using in floral arrangements.

Erlene's Green cotton is a family heirloom from Texas, named for Erlene Melancon, who spun it for years and recalled her grandmother using it to make quilts. The light olive green fibers can be spun off the seed.

Mississippi Brown originated on a plantation near Natchez, Miss. It is a drought tolerant variety with 5-ft. tall plants and light tan to golden brown fibers.

Sea Island Brown has a longer fiber



Southern Exposure Seed Exchange sells seed to grow naturally colored cotton. Colors range from shades of green and tan to golden brown.

than other browns, grows 5 to 6 ft. tall and has "naked seeds" that separate from the lint easily.

Cotton needs a long hot season. Wallace advises that north of Virginia or Maryland, it needs to be started inside. "Transplant 4 to 6-in. seedlings into soils with good organic matter and moderate nutrients," she says. "You don't want too much nitrogen or you'll get all leaves and no bolls."

Wallace, author of *Vegetable Gardening in the Southeast*, also recommends using plastic or landscape cloth to warm the soil for northern planting.

SESE sells packets of 16 to 20 seeds for \$4.80. Customers are warned that the seed cannot be shipped to Georgia, South Carolina or California due to state restrictions on colored cotton.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, P.O. Box 460, Mineral, Va. 23117 (ph 540-894-9480; gardens@southernexposure.com; www.southernexposure.com).



Texas-based fishing club leases ponds and then rents them to club members by the day or half day. Landowners benefit from lease payments and fishing water management assistance.

He Helps Lease Farm Ponds For Cash

Private Waters Fishing (PWF) matches farm pond owners together with avid bass fishermen. The Texas-based fishing club leases ponds and then rents them to club members by the day or half day. Landowners benefit from lease payments and fishing water management assistance.

"We have found that many ranchers and farmers have extensive knowledge about livestock and even wildlife, but many know very little about the biology of their ponds or lakes and simply need some advice," says Steve Alexander, Private Water Fishing. "The club is strictly catch and release fishing, but sometimes fish harvest is needed. It is really no different than deer or cattle management as you must remove a few for the good of the herd."

Properties indicate if harvesting is needed, usually allowing bass less than 14 in. to be caught and removed. Larger bass or any bass on non-harvesting lakes must be returned to the water, notes Alexander.

Once the lease agreement has been signed, PWF handles all the details. Reservations by club members are made through the PWF offices. Landowners are notified what member is coming and when.

"We provide names and a timetable of their trip to each of our properties," says Alexander. "A landowner will never be surprised. There is nothing they need do, other than granting access to the property."

PWF has lease arrangements across Texas, as well as a few in Oklahoma, with plans to expand there.

"There are thousands and thousands of private lakes all throughout Oklahoma,"

explains Alexander. "Many of these lakes are idle resources, and many landowners never knew that a market existed for fishermen."

Alexander says club members show the greatest interest in bodies of water that are at least 10 acres in size and prefer those 20 acres or larger. Some lakes leased to the club are well over 50 acres. About a third of the leases include cabins, homes or lodges for members to stay in at an additional cost. Most landowners provide a boat of some sort.

Members pay a one-time initiation fee of \$200 plus annual fees and day rates ranging from \$35 to \$100 for half a day and \$55 to \$175 for full days. Rates are determined by location, beauty, site amenities and the quality of fishing.

"We offer exclusive use of the lake," says Alexander. "When you make a reservation, it is yours for the half day or day you rented."

Alexander has been operating PWF for the past 17 years. He says it is a proven business model that works for both members and landowners.

"As a landowner, your family and friends are still allowed to fish your ponds and lakes as PWF has a non exclusive agreement with each property," explains Alexander. "We understand you still want to use your lake."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Private Water Fishing, 1701 N. Greenville Ave., Suite 608, Richardson, Texas 75081 (ph 214 871-0044; salexander@privatewaterfishing.com; www.privatewaterfishing.com).

Tool Kit Helps Turn Gourds Into Art

If you grow gourds but don't know what to do with them, you might be interested in this gourd tool kit designed by a man who is known for his gourd art.

Gourd art is hot and it's everywhere, says Jim Widess, owner of The Caning Shop in Berkeley, Calif. He has written books on the subject.

Gourd festivals are held throughout the country, providing artists a place to win prizes and show off the many ways gourds can be transformed. They're made into containers, dolls, instruments and birdhouses; carved, burned and painted on.

Widess realized that regular size tools were awkward. Inspired by a tool made in England that was discontinued, he designed a smaller gourd saw, gourd drill and gourd sander more ideal for the delicate work. The kit, which also includes saw blades, engraving cutters and sanding sponges, sells for \$185 (\$95 for just the saw).

"The mini jigsaw is comfortable for

children and women to use. The mini, high-speed drill stays cool, and the small finishing sander leaves a nice surface," he says.

Thin, rigid saw blades allow for delicate cuts.

He showcased the variety of things that can be done with gourds in his first book, "The Complete Book of Gourd Craft," co-authored with Ginger Summit. It includes historical and ethnic information such as examples of 4,000-year-old African and Peruvian gourds. And he explains how to grow and care for gourds.

"The most important thing about growing gourds is to leave them on the plant until the vine is dead," he says. A big mistake many growers make is throwing away the gourd when it starts to mold after it's harvested.

"That mold loosens the skin. Gourds can take 6 to 9 months to dry. Then let warm water (and a little bleach) permeate the skin and wash it off," Widess says.

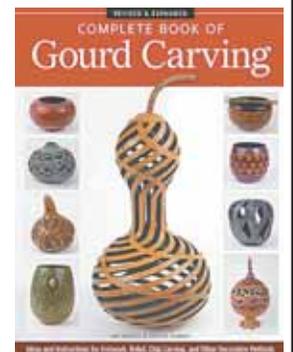
In addition to Gourd Tool Kits, Widess



Gourd tool kit comes with tools specially designed to make artistic designs. Kit includes a gourd saw, drill, sander, saw blades, engraving cutters and sanding sponges.

sells several books on specific types of gourd art from "Gourd Musical Instruments" to "Gourds and Fiber."

He also suggests checking out gourd festivals. The next one might make a great winter escape for northern folks. The Wuerz Farm's "Running of the Gourds" Gourd



Festival is in Casa Grande, Arizona, Feb. 6-8.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Caning Shop, 926 Gilman St., Berkeley, Calif. 94710 (ph 800 544-3373; www.caning.com; jim@caning.com).