

He Turns Gourds Into Works Of Art

Tom Gogerty likes to hand craft painted gourds, and he's really good at it. He'd like to develop his hobby into a sideline business but says that based on his experience so far, it won't be easy.

"It takes a long time to paint gourds with as much detail and quality as I put in, and so far I haven't found much profit in it. They can't be mass produced," says the Madrid, Iowa man, who has a full-time job as a letter carrier in nearby Ames, Iowa.

He has sold a few gourds and is now checking with farmers markets and craft shows for potential markets. Farm equipment dealerships, banks, and agricultural groups are other possibilities as well as wedding and birthday anniversaries.

The bowls can contain anything from nuts and candy to artificial flowers.

His first step is to drill a small starter hole in the gourd shoulder and then use a jig saw

to remove the upper portion. He cleans and sands the exterior thoroughly, then sands the interior with a sand ball attachment to his drill.

He stains the interior with 3 coats of dye and covers the interior and exterior with clear polyurethane to cover blemishes. He measures a 1/2 to 1-in strip around the lip of the gourd, then brushes on 3 coats of black or other dark-colored acrylic paint. He paints the rest of the bowl tan. Designs and decorations are mostly done free hand with check marks, circles, and so forth.

He uses a wood burner to make major lines and the outlines of decals. He sometimes stretches a rubber band around the gourd's bowl to keep major lines straight. A variety of logos, figures, and art work is available online, but he free-hands the final art work with a small brush. That might include everything from a baseball team's logo to



Beautifully hand-painted gourds take many hours to produce. Tom Gogerty says it's an excellent year-round hobby.

flowers to a family name or crest.

Gogerty grows many of his own gourds and buys others from commercial gourd farms and suppliers. He says hand-crafting gourds is an excellent year 'round hobby and

requires little equipment. Time and talent are the 2 major inputs.

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Kirstie Burrows of England made this eye-catching "one horsepower" Deere tractor costume for her 4-year-old daughter's pony.

Horse-Powered Tractor Costume

Four-year-old Isla Burrows of Yateley, Hampshire, in England, has an eye-catching "one horsepower" Deere tractor costume that was handmade for her pony by her mom, Kirstie Burrows, and grandma, Jennie Woodhouse.

"We made it from scratch for her. It was hand-stitched because our sewing machine broke," Kirstie explains. "Isla's daddy is a farmer and drives a Deere tractor."

The only part that was not homemade is the black section on the neck and head, which is a commercially-purchased horse blanket accessory that's used for keeping the pony clean. However, the women added the green ear covers themselves.

They got measurements for the large, green body cover by using another commercial horse blanket they had as a pattern, and stitched on the attractively detailed wheels. The frame for the tractor cab is made from cardboard, and they glued carefully-cut cotton material onto it, then adorned it with various details, using glue. The ladies used plastic cups covered in tissue paper to make the lights, and the exhaust pipe is made from Pringles potato chip tubes, covered in grey plastic.

"It probably took just over one week to make this costume, and it cost about \$105 in

materials," says Burrows.

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Decorative horse fence was built out of big metal spools that utility companies use to store underground cable. Spool ends were cut in half and welded together side by side.

Decorative Wheel Fence Built From Cable Spools

Bill Green of Wilburton, Okla., recently sent FARM SHOW photos of a decorative horse fence he built out of big metal spools that utility companies use to store underground cable.

"It didn't cost much to build and it's an attractive addition to our place," says Green.

The fence stands about 5 ft. high and is made from the cable spool ends with 1 1/2-in. wide rims. He used a chopsaw to cut the spool ends in half and welded them together side by side onto a length of 1 1/2-in. sq. tubing, which runs horizontally a few inches above the ground. He filled in the spaces between the wheels by welding in partial spool sections. The center parts of the spools are supported by steel T-posts strapped to the horizontal tubing.

"I built a total of about 120 ft. of fence like this," says Green. "The fence extends from both sides of our barn back to a shed and has



"It didn't cost much to build and was an attractive addition to our place," says Bill Green, who gets metal spools for free.

an opening in it where there's a cattle guard. My only cost was a little bit of welding."

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