

GOURD NOTES

By Jim Story:

- 1) For the best results, plant gourds in full sun.
- 2) Gourds can be green cleaned (skin scraped off with a knife before the curing process discolors skin) from harvest thru December and perhaps beyond. Some ornamental gourds retain their color for six plus months. Select fully mature gourds for green cleaning. Immature gourds will shrivel and crack after the skin has been removed. I store fresh lagenaria gourds in an unheated garage and they keep their green color until late December. When cleaning gourds, green or dry, clean and groom stems. Stems have a skin, when removed, improves the appearance of the gourd. Soaking in water softens stem skins. Scrape stems with a knife and then use a scouring pad and small wire brush to remove skin particles left after the knife scraping. Blossom scars (Is scars the correct term?) are large on some gourds and small on others. I pay as much attention to cleaning blossom scars as I do the stems. A knife is often needed to remove skin from a blossom scar. Some Kentucky Gourd Society members leave tendrils and part of the vine on gourd stems. Reason: They like them that way.
- 3) Costa Rican gourds, when fully mature, dry with dark shells.
- 4) If you want a large bottle gourd with a flat bottom and interesting shape, try the Mexican Bottle gourd, sometimes called Mexican Water Jug.
- 5) Last year I purchased a yogurt maker (electrically heated) at a garage sale for the purpose of germinating gourd seeds. I replaced the yogurt plastic cups (six of them) with 3" peat pots and planted two seeds in each pot. It worked. Germination was good. The peat pots were removed from the yogurt maker just as soon as the plant broke thru the soil.
- 6) My best gourd plants are started in a cold frame in four inch plastic pots. -The cold frame started plants don't get leggy and are already hardened off when large enough to plant where they are to grow. Seeds are put in the cold frame about April 15th.
- 7) Be a recruiter of IGS members. Give free seeds and gourds for crafting to prospective members. Extend special invitations to attend the Indiana Gourd Show and IGS meetings.
- 8) If the month of May in Indiana is warm and sunny, with the optimal amount of rain, it will likely be a good gourd year.

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