

GOURD CLEANING

There are two methods that I use: (1) Green clean. (2) Clean when dry. I use these methods for both ornamentals and hardshells. Green cleaning is the scraping the skin from green (fresh) gourds prior to the start of the curing process. Dry cleaning is done after gourds dry. I need to add that gourds can be cleaned anytime during the curing (drying) process. There is a stage in the drying process when the skin comes off easily. Observe gourds being cured outside and when the skin is soft and comes off in large pieces it is a good time to clean. Advantages of green cleaning are: You get gourds free of mold spots; Gourds dry fast. I have had green cleaned gourds dry in four weeks.

Green cleaning tips: It is important to select fully mature gourds because immature gourds will shrivel and crack during the drying process. Green cleaned gourds dry rapidly and cause cracking, & shriveling. With experience you will learn to read gourds, enabling you to determine which ones are mature. To remove the skin, scrape with a pocket or paring knife. The stem has a skin too which should be removed by scraping. When the scraping procedure is complete, wash (scrub) the gourd in warm, soap sudsy water with a copper or steel scouring pad to remove fine skin particles missed in the scraping process.

Gourd stem tips: Sometimes it takes me as long to clean a gourd stem as it does the gourd. I save gourd stems as replacements for lost or weak stems. When I judge gourds particular attention is paid to the stems. The appearance of a gourd stem can be enhanced by proper cleaning, sanding and cutting tip at an angle. Look at gourd stems on craft in gourd shows and see which ones are well groomed and those that are not.

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CURRENT TIP: Try this for cleaning moldy gourds: A bucket of warm water, some dish soap, a little fabric softener and a bit of bleach. Weight the gourd for a complete soak. Let soak for two hours. Use a plastic handled stainless scrubber to easily scrub off the mold. Clean the stem area and the “belly button” area with a knife.

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