

Decouping Gourds

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An interesting medium for crafting gourds is decouping. It is as good for beginners as it is for advanced crafters. It is very versatile, in that you can use a variety of materials. It is a very forgiving medium, in that you can totally start over without foregoing your original gourd, if you should happen to mess up your first attempt, or your second or third!

Supplies you will need:

- A cleaned gourd.
- A decoupage glue, such as Modge Podge, etc. (I use Golden Gel Medium, which comes in four consistencies - soft, regular, heavy and extra heavy, and can be purchased at Michael's).
- A material or choice of materials to decoupage. Some possibilities are: pressed flowers/foilage, papers of all kinds (thinner papers do best), cloth, pictures.
- Waxed paper, newspapers.

Procedure:

- (1) Put newspapers down on your working surface.
- (2) Look at your gourd and decide what decouped material would best suit this gourd. You may have something specific you would like to try for... OR, you might just like to start out and see what happens ! You might be pleasantly surprised.
- (3) If you are using pressed flowers/leaves that are so brittle they might break easily, you might want to soak them in water for a bit (15-20 minutes, depending on how dry and brittle they are).
- (4) Work on waxed paper. Apply material in small amounts by brushing on the glue or get medium onto the back side of the material. Pieces can usually be moved and rearranged for a minute or two after being placed on the gourd. And, of course, you may cover any "mistakes" any time by gluing another piece over the existing piece.
- (5) After gluing each piece, go back over it with another coating of glue, being sure to seal the edges.
- (6) After you have completed gluing all the pieces into their proper places, let the project dry thoroughly, then feel to see if you have any loose edges. They will feel rough to your touch. If so, give the piece another layer of glue. Repeat until the gourd feels smooth all over.
- (7) Then dry thoroughly and add a coat of acrylic spray, if you like.

Add interest:

After you have got "the hang" of decoupage, try adding some other techniques with the decoupage technique. For example, you can paint or leather dye the gourd before you add the decoupage material. Try adding colored pencil or ink (don't forget the spray!). I like to woodburn a design, color it with oil pencils, then add some decoupage pieces. In fact, you can combine decoupage with just about any other technique. Experiment! And enjoy!