

Competition Categories, Divisions, and Entry Classes



There are three Categories in the SMGS Competition. The Categories are Growers, Crafted Gourds and Other. The Crafted Gourds Category has five Divisions: Youth, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Masters.

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Category 1: Growers

The Growers Category is for entries of gourds in their natural state.

- Gourds must have been grown by the exhibitor.
- Gourds must have stems, be mature, and true to type.
- Gourds must be clean of outer skin, unfinished, and uncut. Gourds must not have any stain, oil, or wax applied to them.

Judging Points for Growers (except Class 9 and 10, judging details with those Class descriptions)

50% Cultural Perfection: mature, clean, and free of imperfections, such as bug scars, etc.

50% True to Type: represents the ideal shape and size of its type name

Growers Entry Classes

1. Conformation – 3 gourds of any variety that are identical in size and shape.
2. Largest – Circumference; measured at widest diameter.
3. Longest – Long gourd or snake gourd, not a dipper gourd, measured straight from top to bottom.
4. Longest and Straightest – Dipper gourd
5. Luffa – 3 dried, prepared (peeled), and identical in size.
6. Odd or Unusual – Deformity as a result of natural growth; not hand-trained or artificially malformed or constricted.
7. Shortest and Straightest – Dipper gourd

8. Smallest – Height (length) and Circumference combined; Both measurements added together and the circumference to be measured at widest diameter.
9. Hand-trained – One dried, cleaned, hand trained gourd (knotted or twisted during growth); Green cleaned preferred but not required, please note on entry tag. (Any manipulated or molded gourd grown by the entrant since 2009 when the JSA (Jim Story Award) was established is eligible for entry this year, provided it has not won a previous JSA competition. This class will be judged according to the JSA criteria. Winners of this class may be eligible to compete for the Jim Story Award in the American Gourd Society (AGS) competition. Please refer to the AGS website and read the requirements for this award if interested in advancing to the Jim Story level as the requirements are very specific for entry. Please notify the Competition Chair if pursuing the Jim Story Award, as additional information may need to be submitted to the AGS by the grower and the Competition Chair.)
10. Molded – Grown in a commercial or homemade mold. Green cleaned preferred but not required, please note on entry tag. (Any manipulated or molded gourd grown by the entrant since 2009 when the JSA (Jim Story Award) was established is eligible for entry this year, provided it has not won a previous JSA competition. This class will be judged according to the JSA criteria. Winners of this class may be eligible to compete for the Jim Story Award in the American Gourd Society (AGS) competition. Please refer to the AGS website and read the requirements for this award if interested in advancing to the Jim Story level as the requirements are very specific for entry. Please notify the Competition Chair if pursuing the Jim Story Award, as additional information may need to be submitted to the AGS by the grower and the Competition Chair.)

Category 2: Crafted Gourds

The Crafted Gourds Category is for entries that have been altered, or crafted, from the natural state and includes five Divisions: Youth, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Master Craftsmans. A description of each of the Crafted Gourds Divisions and entry Classes follow. It is the responsibility of the individual to make certain that their entries are placed into the correct Division. An individual may enter into only one Division within the Crafted Gourds Category. With the exception of the *Youth* Division, an individual may enter multiple classes within a Division, but only one entry for each class. In the Youth Division, a person may enter up to two entries for their appropriate class (Class #11-15).

Judging Points for ALL Crafted Gourds

- 50% Workmanship: skill, technique and attention to detail
- 40% Creativity: originality and impact of design; use of color and line; enhancement of gourds natural beauty and shape.
- 10% Gourd Quality: gourd variety, size, shape and structure “fit” well with the overall design used.

Crafted Gourds – Youth Division

The Youth Division is divided into Gourd Crafting Competition Classes based on age. This Division is for youth up to 17 years. The goal of this Division is to introduce young people to the "world of gourds" and the wide variety of crafting that is possible using gourds. All types of gourd art may be entered.

A young person who feels they can compete at a higher level is welcome to do so and cannot return to the Youth Division at a later date. They then will need to abide by the requirements for that specific Division. They MUST choose only one Division to enter.

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons as well as “participation” ribbons will be awarded in each age group of the Youth Division.

- The Youth Division is divided into Gourd Crafting Competition Classes based on age. The age groups in the Youth Division are: 5 and under, 6–8 years, 9–11 years, 12–14 years and 15–17 years.
- All work must be done by the child.
- K-12 art teachers, 4-H leaders, Scout troop leaders and parents are encouraged to plan “gourd art projects” for young people that can result in entries in this Gourd Festival.
- Bases/Stands may be made by an adult to help display gourds or to help them stand on the table securely and will not be judged.
- The Youth Division is not restricted to natural embellishments only and are free to use any items on the gourd to complete their project. The gourd must remain predominant.

Youth Entry Classes

11. Five-years old and under – crafted gourd; any theme; any technique.
12. Six–Eight years old – crafted gourd; any theme; any technique.
13. Nine–Eleven years old – crafted gourd; any theme; any technique.
14. Twelve–fourteen years old – crafted gourd; any theme; any technique.
15. Fifteen–Seventeen years old – crafted gourd; any theme; any technique.

Crafted Gourds – Novice Division

The Novice Division is for gourd crafters/artists that are relatively new to gourd crafting and have not won a blue ribbon in the Novice Division. They may have not sold gourds and have not taught a gourd class for a fee. Once you win five blue ribbons you MUST move up to the Intermediate Division. It is not necessary to enter the Novice Division if you feel you are working at a higher level. If you win Best of Show they MUST move up to the Master Craftsman Division. You MUST choose only one Division to enter in the Crafted Gourds Category.

Novice Entry Classes Based on Techniques

16. Clay – Clay design must predominate. Any type of air-dry clay, oven baked clay or epoxy clay may be used.
17. Combination of Techniques – Any theme; at least 3 different techniques must be used; MUST submit a list of the techniques used, to be displayed with your entry.
18. Painted – Painting must predominate; may use acrylic, enamel, oils, watercolor, etc.
19. Pyrography with or without color – Woodburned design must predominate; cut or whole gourd; cut edges may be laced; color may be added (i.e. stain, ink or dye also allowed).
20. Weaving – Weaving design must predominate. It can include Tenerife, but must not include coiling, kumihimo or braiding. Reference AGS Judging Guidelines by Category (2013).

Novice Entry Classes Based on Themes

21. Bowl or Vase – Any combination of techniques and embellishments allowed. Can be functional or decorative.
22. Fantasy Plant or Creature – Any technique allowed. The entries can depict a magical or supernatural theme. It can overlap with science fiction and include steampunk, dragons, wizards, fairies, etc..
23. Miniature – Any technique. Gourd (including stem and embellishments) must be three inches or less in height, length and width. Jewelry and holiday items are not allowed.
24. Mixed Media – Utilize a range or combination of different media or materials. Examples of possible materials are paints, papers, fabrics, found objects, photos, fibers, natural items, inks, pastels, pencils, etc. Materials may be natural or man-made. At least 5 different **materials** must be used; **MUST** submit a list of the media/materials used, to be displayed with your entry.
25. My Way! – Your unique gourd crafting that fits no other competition class. This Class will be judged on: the unique character/design of the crafted gourd; use of new/unusual techniques or combination of techniques and accessories or embellishments; artistic impact; and skilled workmanship.
26. Seasonal – Any season; any combination of techniques.
27. 2019 Theme “Creatures of Land and Sea” – Gourd that focuses on the festival theme for the year. Any combination of techniques and any embellishments allowed.
28. Wearable – Jewelry, hats, purses, etc. Any combination of techniques. Sets (such as jewelry) **MUST** be displayed in a box, case, on a board or stand, but the method of display will not be judged. Masks are not included in this category as they are categorized with wall hangings.

Crafted Gourds – Intermediate Division

This Division is for crafters/artists that understand and use basic techniques. They may have sold gourds but have not taught a gourd class for a fee. If they have won 10 blue ribbons at the Intermediate Division, they **MUST** move up to the Advanced Division. If they have won Best of Show they **MUST** move up to the Masters Division. You may enter a higher Division if you feel you are working at the next level. You **MUST** choose only one Division to enter in the Crafted Gourds Category.

Intermediate Entry Classes Based on Technique

29. Clay - Clay design must predominate. Any type of air-dry clay, oven baked clay or epoxy clay may be used.
30. Coiled - Coiling design must predominate. MUST not include weaving. Reference - AGS Judging Guidelines by Category (2013).
31. Combination of Techniques – Any theme; at least 3 different techniques must be used; MUST submit a list of the techniques used, to be displayed with your entry.
32. Covered Container – Lid may be part of the gourd or constructed from materials; any combination of techniques.
33. Painted – Painting must predominate; may use acrylic, enamel, oils, watercolor, etc.
34. Pyrography with or without color – Woodburned design must predominate; cut edges may be laced; color may be added (i.e. stain, ink or dye also allowed).
35. Sculpture or Assemblage – The joining or combining of one or more gourds (in whole or pieces) to make a three-dimensional sculpture, or entry. The entry should be designed and assembled to be seen from different sides. The design should be with the gourd predominating. Clay or wood filler may be used in sculpting and on the gourd surface and should cover no more than 30% of the gourd surface. Additional techniques may be used to complete the design and limited embellishments may be added.
36. Weaving – Weaving design must predominate. It can include Tenerife, but must not include coiling, kumihimo or braiding. Reference - AGS Judging Guidelines by Category (2013).

Intermediate Entry Classes Based on Theme

37. Abstract Design – An entry that does *NOT* depict a person, place or thing. Whole, cut or sculpture (assemblage) of a gourd(s) into one entry that incorporates color, shape, form, line and/or texture. Either a single or combination of techniques may be used. NOTE: entries that distort or exaggerate recognizable images are not abstract.
38. Bowl or Vase – Any combination of techniques and embellishments allowed. Can be functional or decorative.
39. Fantasy Plant or Creature – Any technique allowed. The entries can depict a magical or supernatural theme. It can overlap with science fiction and include steampunk, dragons, wizards, fairies, etc.

40. Luminary – Cut gourd with light source insert; any combination of techniques. A photo may be included with the entry showing the lighted luminary in a darkened room. Quality of illumination will impact judge's decision.
41. Miniature – Any technique. Gourd (including stem and embellishments) must be three inches or less in height, length and width. Jewelry and holiday items are not allowed.
42. Mixed Media – Utilize a range or combination of different media or materials. Examples of possible materials are paints, papers, fabrics, found objects, photos, fibers, natural items, inks, pastels, pencils, etc. Materials may be natural or man-made. At least 5 different **materials** must be used; **MUST** submit a list of the media/materials used, to be displayed with your entry.
43. My Way! – Your unique gourd crafting that fits no other competition class. This Class will be judged on: the unique character/design of the crafted gourd; use of new/unusual techniques or combination of techniques and accessories or embellishments; artistic impact; and skilled workmanship.
44. Native American Design – Designs that incorporate cultural, tribal, historical or ceremonial motifs of Native American origin or use; any combination of techniques allowed.
45. Seasonal – Any season; any combination of techniques.
46. Table, Desk or Other Lamp – Functional with electrical insert; base, column and/or shade may be made from a gourd. Some components of the lamp may be from wood or may be purchased; any combination of techniques. The gourd must be predominate.
47. 2019 Theme “Creatures of Land and Sea” – Gourd that focuses on the festival theme for the year. Any combination of techniques and any embellishments allowed.
48. Wearable – Jewelry, hats, purses, etc. Any combination of techniques. Sets (such as jewelry) **MUST** be displayed in a box, case, on a board or stand, but the method of display will not be judged. Masks are not included in this category as they are categorized with wall hangings.

Crafted Gourds – Advanced Division

The Advanced Division is for artists who have progressed to a more complicated level of work. The artist **MUST** be good at multiple techniques and finishing skills. All work **MUST** be the artist's original design. They may have taught a gourd class for a fee but are not showing their work in fine art galleries and have not won Best of Show. If they have won Best of Show they **MUST** move up to the Masters Division. You **MUST** choose only one Division to enter in the Crafted Gourds Category.

Advanced Entry Classes Based on Technique

49. Beaded – Beading design must predominate; see “Gourd Crafting Terms & Definitions” for details on various types of beading; this is a class in which plastic or acrylic beads may be used.
50. Carved – Relief-carved; surface-carved to create texture; chipped, chiseled or power-carved; does not penetrate or cut entirely through the gourd shell; may embellish with color.
51. Carved and Cut Combination – Design combines carved surface texture as well as penetrating “cut-through-the-shell” fret-work/filigree/lattice-work; any combination of color, finish and embellishment may be added.
52. Clay - Clay design must predominate. Any type of air-dry clay, oven baked clay or epoxy clay may be used.
53. Coiled - Coiling design must predominate. Must not include weaving. Reference - AGS Judging Guidelines by Category (2013).
54. Colored Pencil – Colored pencil must predominate; may use limited woodburning.
55. Combination of Techniques – Any theme; at least 3 different techniques demonstrating advanced skills must be used; MUST submit a list of the techniques used, to be displayed with your entry.
56. Covered Container – Lid may be part of the gourd or constructed from materials; any combination of techniques.
57. Cut/Filigree or Fret-work – Design that cuts entirely through the gourd shell; color may be added.
58. Inlay – Any natural material, e.g., stone, bone, or shell beads, may be fitted into the carved gourd surface. ”Inlace” type materials are acceptable in this category.
59. Painted – Painting must predominate; may use acrylic, enamel, oils, watercolor, etc.
60. Pyrography with or without color – Woodburned design must predominate; cut or whole gourd; cut edges may be laced; color may be added (i.e. stain, ink or dye also allowed).
61. Sculpture or Assemblage – The joining or combining of one or more gourds (in whole or pieces) to make a three-dimensional sculpture, or entry. The entry should be designed and assembled to be seen from different sides. The design should be with the gourd predominating. Clay or wood filler may be used in sculpting and on the gourd surface and should cover no more than 30% of the gourd surface. Additional techniques may be used to complete the design and limited embellishments may be added.
62. Weaving – Weaving design must predominate. It can include Tenerife, but must not include coiling, kumihimo or braiding. Reference - AGS Judging Guidelines by Category (2013).

Advanced Entry Classes Based on Theme

63. Abstract Design – An entry that does *NOT* depict a person, place or thing. Whole, cut or sculpture (assemblage) of a gourd(s) into one entry that incorporates color, shape, form, line and/or texture. Either a single or combination of techniques may be used. NOTE: entries that distort or exaggerate recognizable images are not abstract.
64. American South-West Design – Designs that incorporate western landscape, flora, fauna ranching or cowboy motifs; any combination of techniques.
65. Bowl or Vase – Any combination of techniques and embellishments allowed. Can be functional or decorative.
66. Fantasy Plant or Creature - Any technique allowed. The entries can depict a magical or supernatural theme. It can overlap with science fiction and include steampunk, dragons, wizards, fairies, etc.
67. Gourd Doll/Spirit Figure – Constructed entirely of gourds; clay or wood filler may be used to seal or smooth joints); any combination of techniques; small amount of accessories allowed.
68. Luminary – Cut gourd with light source insert; any combination of techniques. A photo may be included with the entry showing the lighted luminary in a darkened room. Quality of illumination will impact judge's decision.
69. Miniature – Any technique. Gourd (including stem and embellishments) must be three inches or less in height, length and width. Jewelry and holiday items are not allowed.
70. Mixed Media – Utilize a range or combination of different media or materials. Examples of possible materials are paints, papers, fabrics, found objects, photos, fibers, natural items, inks, pastels, pencils, etc. Materials may be natural or man-made. At least 5 different **materials** must be used; MUST submit a list of the media/materials used, to be displayed with your entry.
71. Musical Instrument – Any combination of techniques; must be playable.
72. My Way! – Your unique gourd crafting that fits no other competition class. This Class will be judged on: the unique character/design of the crafted gourd; use of new/unusual techniques or combination of techniques and natural accessories or embellishments; artistic impact; and skilled workmanship.
73. Native American Design – Designs that incorporate cultural, tribal, historical or ceremonial motifs of Native American origin or use; any combination of techniques allowed.
74. Seasonal - Any season; any combination of techniques.

75. Table, Desk or Other Lamp – Functional with electrical insert; base, column and/or shade may be made from a gourd. Some components of the lamp may be from wood or may be purchased; any combination of techniques. The gourd must be predominate.
76. 2019 Theme “Creatures of Land and Sea” – Gourd that focuses on the festival theme for the year. Any combination of techniques and any embellishments allowed.
77. Wall Hanging/Masks – Any techniques and embellishments allowed. Must be ready to hang on the wall or have a display stand. May be mounted on a board, canvas, or in a frame. Masks without a display stand MUST have a hanger so they can be hung for display at the show.
78. Wearable – Jewelry, hats, purses, etc. Any combination of techniques. Sets (such as jewelry) MUST be displayed in a box, case, on a board or stand, but the method of display will not be judged. Masks are not included in this category as they are categorized with wall hangings.

Crafted Gourds – Masters Division

This Division is for artist’s work that shows excellent use of multiple techniques and finishing skills. All work MUST be the artist’s original design. Their work may have been shown in art galleries, may have won top awards in competition or have reached the level of Fine Art. If you have previously won Best of Show, you MUST enter at the Master Craftsman Division. You MUST choose only one Division to enter in the Crafted Gourds Category. First, second, and third place “Master Craftsman” awards will be assigned in each of the Master Craftsman competition Classes.

Masters Entry Classes Based on Technique

79. Carved – Relief-carved; surface-carved to create texture; chipped, chiseled or power-carved; does not penetrate or cut entirely through the gourd shell; may embellish with color.
80. Carved and Cut Combination – Design combines carved surface texture as well as penetrating “cut-through-the-shell” fret-work/filigree/lattice-work; any combination of color, finish and embellishment may be added..
81. Clay – Clay design must predominate. Any type of air-dry clay, oven baked clay or epoxy clay may be used.
82. Combination of techniques – Any theme; at least 4 different techniques demonstrating advanced skills must be used; MUST submit a list of the techniques used, to be displayed with your gourd.
83. Cut/Filigree or Fret-work – Design that cuts entirely through the gourd shell; color may be added.

- 84. Painted – Painting must predominate; may use acrylic, enamel, oils, watercolor, etc.
- 85. Pyrography with or without color – Woodburned design must predominate; cut edges may be laced; color may be added (i.e. stain, ink or dye also allowed).
- 86. Sculpture or Assemblage – The joining or combining of one or more gourds (in whole or pieces) to make a three-dimensional sculpture, or entry. The entry should be designed and assembled to be seen from different sides. The design should be with the gourd predominating. Clay or wood filler may be used in sculpting and on the gourd surface and should cover no more than 30% of the gourd surface. Additional techniques may be used to complete the design and limited embellishments may be added.

Masters Entry Classes Based on Theme

- 87. Bowl or Vase – Any combination of techniques and embellishments allowed. Can be functional or decorative.
- 88. Fantasy Plant or Creature – Any technique allowed. The entries can depict a magical or supernatural theme. It can overlap with science fiction and include steampunk, dragons, wizards, fairies, etc.
- 89. Gourd Doll/Spirit Figure – Constructed entirely of gourds; clay or wood filler may be used to seal or smooth joints); any combination of techniques; small amount of accessories allowed.
- 90. Luminary – Cut gourd with light source insert; any combination of techniques. A photo may be included with the entry showing the lighted luminary in a darkened room. Quality of illumination will impact judge's decision.
- 91. Miniature – Any technique. Gourd (including stem and embellishments) must be three inches or less in height, length and width. Jewelry and holiday items are not allowed.
- 92. Mixed Media – Utilize a range or combination of different media or materials. Examples of possible materials are paints, papers, fabrics, found objects, photos, fibers, natural items, inks, pastels, pencils, etc. Materials may be natural or man-made. At least 6 different **materials** must be used; **MUST** submit a list of the media/materials used, to be displayed with your entry.
- 93. Musical Instrument – Any technique or combination of techniques; must be playable.
- 94. My Way! – Your unique gourd crafting that fits no other competition class. This Class will be judged on: the unique character/design of the crafted gourd; use of new/unusual techniques or combination of techniques and accessories or embellishments; artistic impact; and skilled workmanship.

95. Table, Desk or Other Lamp – Functional with electrical insert; base, column and/or shade may be made from a gourd. Some components of the lamp may be from wood or may be purchased; any combination of techniques. The gourd must be predominate.
96. 2019 Theme “Creatures of Land and Sea” – Gourd that focuses on the festival theme for the year. Any combination of techniques and any embellishments allowed.
97. Wall Hanging/Masks – Any techniques and embellishments allowed. Must be ready to hang on the wall or have a display stand. May be mounted on a board, canvas, or in a frame. Masks without a display stand MUST have a hanger so they can be hung for display at the show.

Category 3: Other

All may enter these classes even if you have entered in other divisions.

Other Entry Classes

98. “Gourds in other Media” Item – An art/craft item which is not made with gourds but has a gourd subject or theme such as painting, sketch, photograph, writing, beadwork, lathed gourd shapes, quilt, embroidery, stained glass, leather tooling, pottery, etc.
99. Sculpture Challenge – Sculpture design must predominate using techniques allowed in the competition; any color or color combinations. The purpose of this Class is to encourage artists to stretch “out of their comfort zone” and try a technique or theme that is new to them without making them compete at a more difficult level. Please do not enter this challenge if you are already doing this technique and have won any ribbons for it.
100. Collaborative or Group - An entry created by 2 or more artists, any allowable technique(s) or theme may be used. All skill levels are allowed – for example, a group of four artists could have 2 who are Intermediate, 1 Novice and 1 Advanced. Any number of gourds, or parts of gourds may be used to create 1 entry. Names of participants and their contribution MUST be included on the back of the Entry Tag. One ribbon will be awarded for this class and the entry is NOT eligible for Best of Show. An individual is limited to only one collaborative project. (*Please designate only one person to register the entry. All participants should be listed on the registration form.*)