

Gourds & Garlic Festival

BY CAROL KEEFER
Staff Reporter

Gourds are common to Southwest gardens and when dried, these hollow, cylinder fruits can be an interesting canvas for creative minds.



Staff photo by Carol Keefer

ALEX Hinojoza burns and paints designs onto gourds grown at his Clarkdale home and art studio, like this stunning "Deer Dancer" canteen.

Judy Sullins, president of the Yavapai Gourd Patch, along with some of the west's most talented gourd artists will provide hundreds of examples at the upcoming Gourd and Garlic Festival in Camp Verde, June 12-13.

An award-winner several times over, Sullins is among those experts also giving free demonstrations on how to get started. Demonstrations include techniques on carving

gourds to beadwork to making gourd drums and masks. Youngsters, of all ages, can enjoy "beginning gourd painting classes" held throughout the weekend inside the Artisans Guild's booth. Vendors, such as, the Mother Nature's Farm and the Caning Shop, will sell raw gourds and wood burners, gourd scrapers, carving tools, drills and how-to books.

Sullins suggests that gourd art, which has now found its way into many U.S. museums, can prove to be as financially rewarding as any art form, as well as an interesting challenge.

"Some artists have received as much as \$20,000 or more for their art work," she explained. "Gourds are a great canvas as there are so many different mediums that can be used on them from painting to wood burning to inlay work to carving."

Talented Clarkdale artist Alex Hinojoza, of Yaqui descent, is another featured artist at the festival debuting this weekend. His artwork displays a strong Native American flare, and is so good, that it was scrutinized and accepted into the Heard Museum gift shop, one of the country's leading Indian art museums located in Phoenix. He said, in particular, his gourd canteens caught the curator's eye.

Staff photo by Carol Keefer

LINDA Reuna loves creating whimsical figures like this Tweedy Bird feeder.

Featured in *Sunset Magazine* and the *Golden Gourd*, Hinojoza's embellished Indian designs are burned and painted onto gourds that he grows at his nearby home and art studio. Many reflect colors and outlines representing the feelings, nature, and gender of the American Indian. His artsy signature line, on every piece, designates his heritage and the proud years he spent in the United States military. His works sell from \$50 to \$400.



"It's an ancient thing," explains Hinojoza. "Many cultures used gourds for storage and water," he said, indicating that few were actually edible.

"They are bitter," he will tell you.

Linda Reuna, a gourd artist from Camp Verde, will showcase a much different art style.

Watch for her fun whimsical gourds, like her Tweedy Bird feeders, cats and witches.

Besides the chance to see some gorgeous artwork and take advantage of free demonstrations, there will be plenty of garlic foods to taste and buy at this dual-themed event. There are garlic sausages, and the festival host, the Camp Verde Chamber of Commerce, will pass out complimentary parsley-garlic finger sandwiches. The Garlic Paradise, located just south of Camp Verde, is bringing along garlic sauces, oils, bread dippers, grilling glazes, pasta sauces, and marinades. Arcosanti, considered one of the largest organic garlic producers in Yavapai County, will have on hand lots of garlic and garlic braids.

The Gourd and Garlic Festival is Saturday, June 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, June 13, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., downtown Camp Verde, at the Community Center on Hollamon Street. No admission fee.

For directions or more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 567-9294.