

# Golden Carp Relief Carving Class



Relief carving: Outlining with an inverted cone and finished in gold leaf.

Design by Reggie Eakin: I've been carving and wood burning on gourds for 6 years. I've had many great teachers and mentors. I began teaching in 2009 to share what I've learned and to learn from others:

[http://georgiagourdguy.com/Tools\\_and\\_Techniques.html](http://georgiagourdguy.com/Tools_and_Techniques.html)

- Dremel or similar rotary tool or similar power tool with cord (not battery)
- HSS ball cutter or structured cutter to remove gourd skin
- A 5" to 7" diameter gourd (1/4 to 3/8 inch thick) – cut or whole.
- Safety – dust mask and ear plugs
- Paint brush and stipple brush
- Transfer paper and pencil
- HSS Inverted Cone Cutter to outline design
- Structured tooth cutters to remove gourd skin
- Sand paper and/or drum sander – if needed
- Acrylic Paint and Acrylic Dye
- Gold leaf, glue, and leaf varnish
- Hairdryer
- Spray sealer

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Carving Technique: The rotary cutter turns in a clockwise direction - Hold the carving tool like a potato peeler. If you are right handed, the cutter should be moving toward your body. If you are left handed, the tool will move away from your body.

Hold the gourd firmly in your lap with one hand and the rotary tool in your other hand. Support the gourd firmly on your knees.

Sink the cutter into the gourd until the tool is riding on the shank of the cutter. THEN turn the gourd under the cutter – DO NOT move your cutting tool hand over the gourd. You will have MORE control by holding your hand in one position and turning the gourd under the cutter.

When working on the broad outlines – (NOT fine details) use an inverted cone or cutting wheel, MOVE or TURN the gourd NOT the cutter - Make **LONG** continuous stokes NOT little short stokes. Let your tool-hand thumb be your guide and support for the cutting head.

RIGHT Handed – rotate the gourd away from your body. LEFT Handed - rotate the gourd toward your body. Practice on a scrap piece of gourd.

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When you carve fine detail – hold the cutting tool like a pencil or paint brush.

**Step One:** Determine and draw the center lines on the front of the gourd (horizontal and perpendicular). This intersection will be the location of the center of your pattern.

**Step Two:** Select a pattern and draw it either directly on the gourd or using transfer paper. If you use tracing paper and pattern then make a small pilot hole with you awl to use as a guide for any re-drawing needed. **DON'T put the transfer paper upside down.**

**Step Three:** Mark the gourd surface areas where the skin will be removed. In the drawing template – it will be the dark area. The light (white) area will be left and the gold leaf will be applied to it later.

**Step Four:** With the inverted cone - make the longest cuts around the frame first. Decide how you plan to cut the pattern – so that there will always be a solid gourd surface under the cutter shank. Use the inverted cone to outline the whole design that will be covered with gold leaf. There should be a shape edge where the top of the cutter outlined the design.

**Step Five:** Determine the skin surface to remove with a ball or cylinder cutter. DO NOT cut deeper than the deepest level from the inverted cone. Use the cone diamond or HSS cutter and lightly stipple the background area where you removed the outer skin.

**Step Six:** Clean up any of the sharp edges. Paint the cut area with Navy Blue Acrylic Paint – Blow Dry or Heat Set. Do not paint the area that will be covered with Gold Leaf.

**Step Seven:** Make sure the paint is dry – If you desire, stain the rest of the gourd with acrylic stain. Blow Dry – You can spray with a flat clear paint (or Statuary Base Coat).

**Step Eight:** *You may want to stop – if it is a windy day and finish at home.*

Apply glue to the areas that you plan to cover with gold leaf. Let Dry. We can speed up the drying process. When the glue turns clear – lightly apply the gold leaf sheet.

CATCH gold droppings on the wax paper to re-use. Use a same stippling brush to tap gold leaf in place. Dust off gold remnants. Apply varnish with a small brush.

When dry spray the whole gourd with a clear spray or brushed varnish.

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