

Materials

Drum Body: Gourds are grown in most states, but most are grown in warm-climate states. They need a long growing season, well-drained soil, and water. You can probably find someone who sells gourds in your home state. If you have trouble, check the Web and see if you have a chapter of the American Gourd Society. If so, they probably hold an annual festival where everything gourd is sold. If that doesn't work, check the American Gourd Society web site:

<http://www.americangourdsociety.org/>

There are also lots of gourd vendors on the web. All will ship; some have a minimum order. I've included a list at the back of the manual.

If you're going to make a box, you can use any solid wood. A hardwood like oak will produce a crisper sound than a soft wood – pine, for example.

Drum Top: You can use any solid wood from ¼" to ½" thick. I have seen references to ¾" tops, but haven't made any that thick yet. You don't want to use plywood, even though it's widely available and usually cheaper than comparable solid wood. If the plywood separates, your drum isn't going to sound very good.

Sanding Drum: You're going to mark, cut-out, and glue the tongue to the top of the gourd. But, no matter how carefully you mark and cut, you're going to have to sand the edge of the top to follow the angle and contour of the gourd. If you're using a relatively soft wood, you can probably sand by hand. But, if you're using a hard wood, such as oak, hand-sanding could take a long time. A sanding drum that you mount in either a handheld drill or, better yet, a drill press, is cheap and works very well.



If you're going to make a box for the body of your drum, you wouldn't use the sanding drum.

Sealer/Finisher: You can use anything you like to seal and finish your tongue drum, or you can use nothing at all. Once it's dry, practically nothing will penetrate a gourd's surface. I've used "Danish" oil, colored