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GOURDS MAKE HOMES FOR
MANY KINDS OF BIRDS

"Gourds for Bird Houses and Other Purposes" is the title of a leaflet (No. 36-L) just issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, describing the culture and uses of these long-cultivated plants. Gourd vines are raised on suitable supports for use as screens and for the variously colored and grotesquely shaped gourds that the plants produce. Some kinds, when young and tender, are used for food, being prepared in the same manner as summer squashes.

Other uses for gourds mentioned in the new leaflet are almost as many as the varieties of gourds. The lagenaria gourd, for example, is used for drinking cups, water jugs and flasks, storage containers, and bird houses. The dish-rag gourd, or so-called vegetable sponge, is used after bleaching and other treatments as a sponge for scrubbing. In some parts of the world gourds are of great value, entering into the every-day lives of the people as household utensils. Some varieties are even used as cooking vessels. In America, however, gourds are at present employed mainly for ornamentation and as bird houses.

Gourds with various sized holes cut in them for entrances offer weather-proof homes for such birds as woodpeckers, purple martins, wrens, nut-hatches, chickadees, and bluebirds, and directions are given in the leaflet for cutting the entrances for each species and for placing the gourds to obtain best results.

Copies of the leaflet may be had free on request to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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