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Clothesline umbrella.

A means for protecting clothes on a clothesline (2) from precipitation has a retractable cover (5) which is preferably mounted to the same vertical support (2) as provided for supporting the clothesline. The cover (5) is adapted to have a high transparency to light and heat radiation and also includes drainage means (26) and wind-resistant means (35). Side portions (30) are also provided for protection against precipitation moving horizontally or near horizontally.

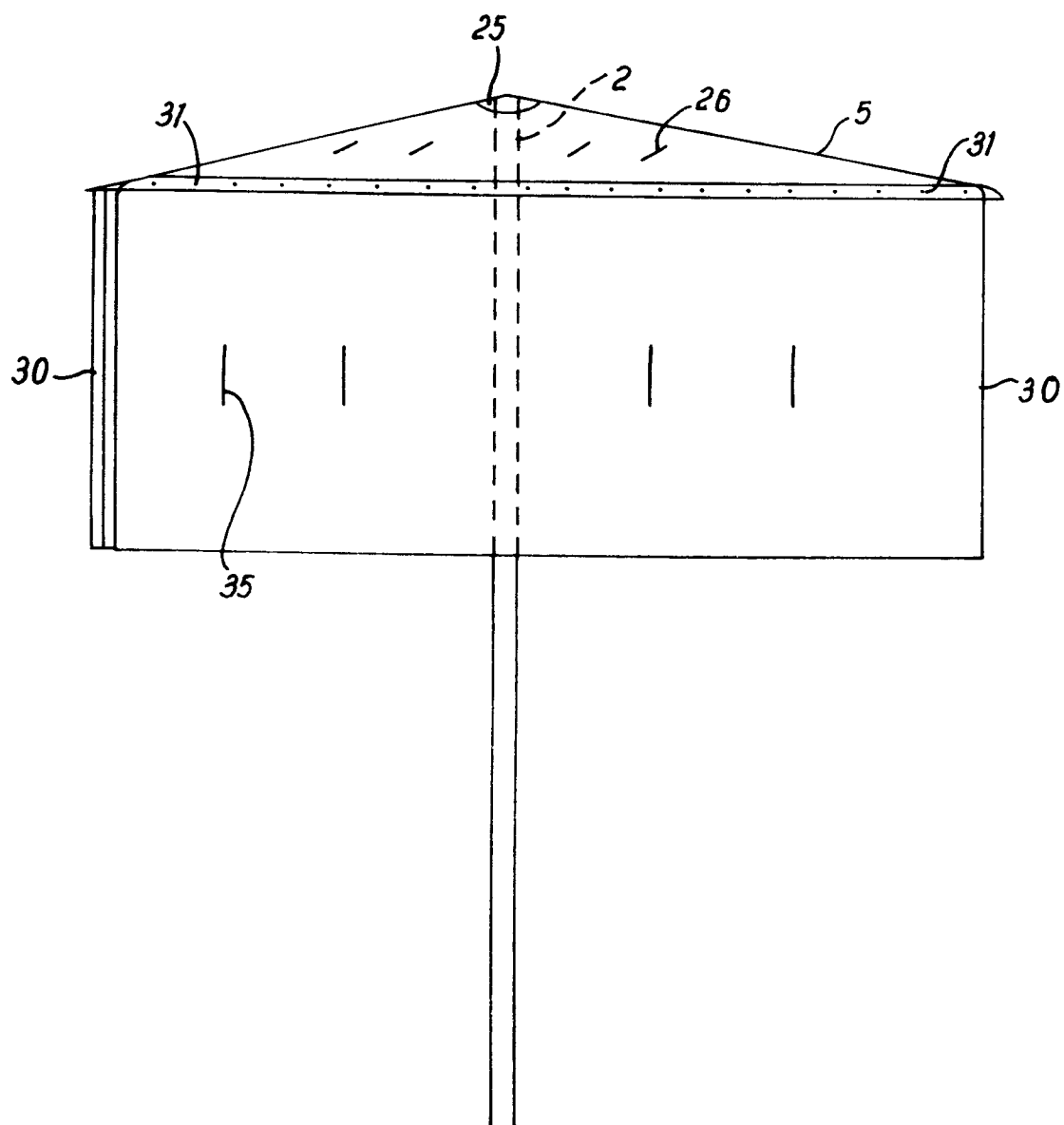


FIG. 3

This invention relates to a means of protecting clothes from precipitation when left outside to dry.

It is well known that there exists various and many types of devices and apparatus upon which clothes may be hung or attached for drying purposes. Such devices are often referred to under the generic term "clotheslines". It is also well known that the process of drying is generally achieved by a combination of the heat provided by the sun's radiation and also by the passing of ambient air which evaporates moisture from the clothing. These factors which provide a most efficient form of drying are found in exposed outdoor areas.

However, one of the main problems or disadvantages associated with the drying of clothes and the like on outdoor clotheslines is the event of precipitation. Changes in the weather may happen so quickly and unexpectedly that garments or clothing attached to an outdoor clothesline may not be able to be retrieved and sheltered before becoming wet from precipitation. This, of course, is especially true when a person who is responsible for drying the clothes is physically remote from the clothesline throughout the day for whatever reason.

In the present invention this significant disadvantage of drying clothes and the like on an outdoor or exterior clothesline is removed.

According to a particular aspect of the invention there is provided a means of protecting clothes on a clothesline from exposure to precipitation comprising a cover, wherein said cover is disposed vertically above the clothing by a mounting means.

Preferably, the cover is mounted by said mounting means to the vertical support upon which the clothesline is also mounted.

Preferably, the cover is made of a suitable material having a high transparency to light and heat radiation.

Preferably, the cover includes drainage means, whereby precipitation falling upon the cover is drained off the cover and away from the clothes.

Preferably, the cover includes one or more apertures to provide access for wind through the cover.

Preferably, the cover is independent of the radial arms of the clothesline.

Preferably, the cover is physically remote from the arms of the clothesline.

Preferably, the means for protecting clothes on a clothesline also includes side portions, wherein said side portions are adapted to protect the clothes from precipitation travelling in a horizontal or near horizontal direction.

Preferably, said side portions are detachable.

Preferably, said side portions are attachable at the perimeter or near perimeter of said cover.

Preferably, said side portions are of sufficient weight to hang vertically or near vertically in a strong wind.

Preferably, the means of protecting clothes on a clothesline from exposure to precipitation also includes a cover retracting means, wherein the cover retracting means enables the cover to be retracted to a position where it does not cause direct interference of the sun's rays on the clothes, and wherein the cover retracting means also enables the cover to be extended back to a position where it is vertically disposed above the clothing.

Preferably, said cover retracting means may be controlled from a point in the vertical support of the clothesline.

According to the present invention there is provided a means of protecting clothes on a clothesline from exposure to precipitation comprising a cover mounted between two vertical supports upon which said clothesline is also mounted, wherein said cover is disposed vertically above the clothesline by a mounting means, characterised in that said mounting means includes a rotatable rod, wherein said cover is substantially planar and rotatable by rotation of said rotatable rod between a first position and a second position, said first position and said second position being approximately 90 degrees apart from each other, wherein when said cover is in said first position it shelters the clothesline from precipitation and wherein when said cover is in said second position it no longer shelters said clothesline from precipitation.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is an elevation of an embodiment of the invention applied to a conventional type clothesline;

Fig. 2 is an elevation of a further embodiment of the invention applied to another type of clothesline; and

Fig. 3 is an elevation of a further embodiment of the invention including side portions.

Referring firstly to Fig. 1, a means of protecting clothes from precipitation, generally described at 1, is applied to a conventional type of clothesline. The clothesline has a central pole which supports four horizontal arms, disposed at right angles from each other, and bridged or connected by lines upon which clothes may be attached.

According to this embodiment of the invention the central pole 2 extends upward above the horizontal arms 3. At the top of the pole is a cover 5 which is shaped in likeness to an umbrella and is of suitable diameter to extend over and above the outermost limits of the horizontal arms 3.

The cover is made from a suitable material such as polythene or the like and in this example, although not of necessity is transparent to allow a maximum quantity of radiation from the sun to pass therethrough. It is found in the invention that a high proportion of the sun's heat may still be permitted to pass

through to the clothes while, at the same time, providing a shelter from precipitation. Additionally, it has been found that the cover serves to trap the sun's rays that are reflected from the clothes and the ground, thereby providing an enhanced drying environment.

The cover 5 may include apertures 25 or tears 26 suitable for allowing any wind or gust of wind to pass therethrough. This serves to lengthen the life of the cover and prevents undue damage which may arise in strong winds.

Preferably, the apertures 25 or tears 26 in the cover 5 are reinforced to ensure there is no further tearing and situated such that any precipitation passing through the apertures or tears will not fall upon clothes directly below.

Extending from the top of the pole 2 towards the circumference of the cover are support wires 6. In similar fashion to a normal umbrella the support wires 6 may be contracted or extended to enable the cover to take on an open or closed position. Thus, if fine weather is guaranteed the cover may simply be withdrawn or closed negating the need for it to be actually removed if its use is undesired.

A control means 7 extends down the vertical pole 2 to a handle 8. The handle 8 is positioned at a height easily accessible to a person standing on the ground. The combination of the handle 8 and control means 7 provides a cover contracting means, generally described at 9, by which the cover may be contracted or extended to take on a closed or open position respectively.

In the invention it is envisaged that there are many modifications and embodiments by which a cover contracting means may be provided, and it is held that this invention is not limited to any one of these methods.

Referring now to Figure 2, a further type of clothesline is shown having a plurality of parallel wires upon which clothes may be hung. This also is a common type of clothesline found in the market. It may be seen that the invention is easily applied to this type of clothesline, and in fact any other type, in that the cover may take on any shape or dimensions required in order to provide interference of precipitation falling on the clothes.

In this example the cover 20 is substantially planar and disposed in a near horizontal attitude when in use. The cover is mounted on a rotatable rod 23 which is connected between two poles supporting the clothesline. In this example, the cover may be put out of use simply by rotating it into a vertical, or near vertical, plane. The cover is generally planar but sloped to provide a drainage means for precipitation falling thereon.

In Fig. 3 the cover 5 is substantially formed from three triangular portions in likeness to a hollow triangular pyramid. Any number of such triangular portions may be used in the invention. Along the bottom edge

of each triangular portion is provided, by way of example only, clipping means 31 for attachment of side portions 30. The side portions 30 are preferably made of a heavy material such as canvas to resist excessive movement in the event of a strong wind. Further resistance to movement may be obtained by the provision of small apertures or tears 35 in similar manner to that which may be provided in the cover.

The provision of the side portions further ensures that clothes or the like left on the clothesline are allowed to remain dry in the event of precipitation. When conditions are not only wet but also windy, it is common for light rain to not only fall vertically but also be blown horizontally. The side portions prevent the clothes from being dampened by precipitation moving horizontally or near horizontally.

The side portions may be removed when not required or alternatively, in a particular embodiment, they may be rolled up similar to a roller blind to the perimeter or near perimeter of the cover. Replacement of the side portions may be possible without replacing the whole clothesline umbrella. Furthermore, the clothesline umbrella may be sold in conjunction with, or separately from a clothesline.

Other embodiments, modifications and improvements may exist without departing from the scope of this invention.

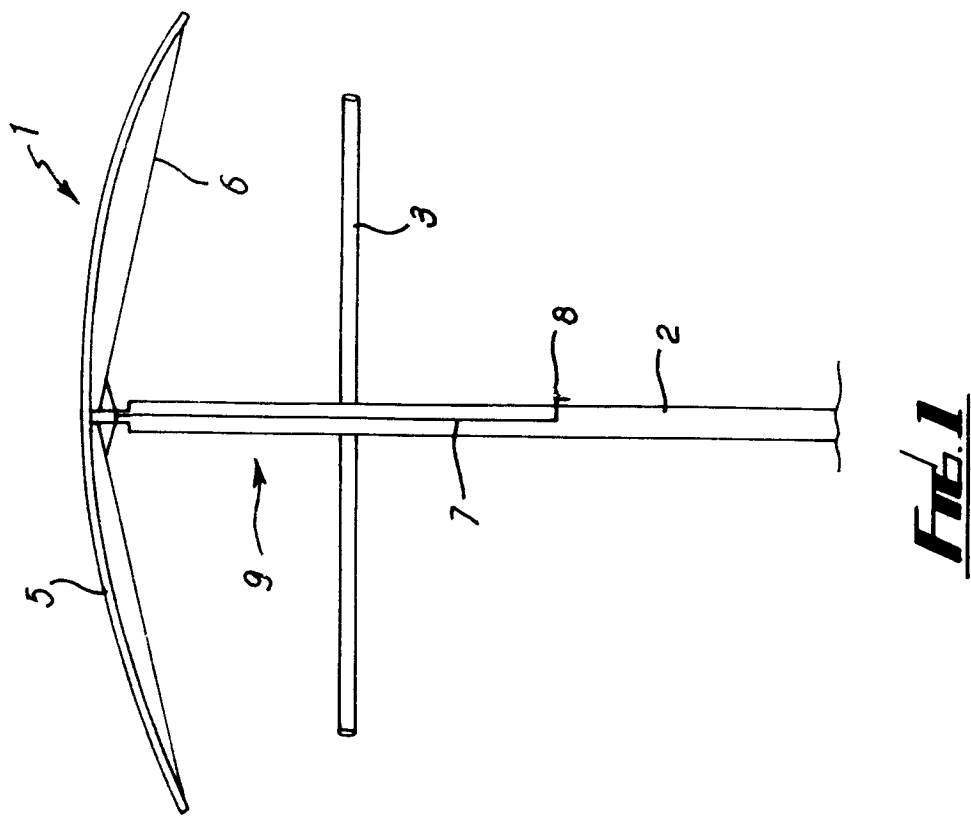
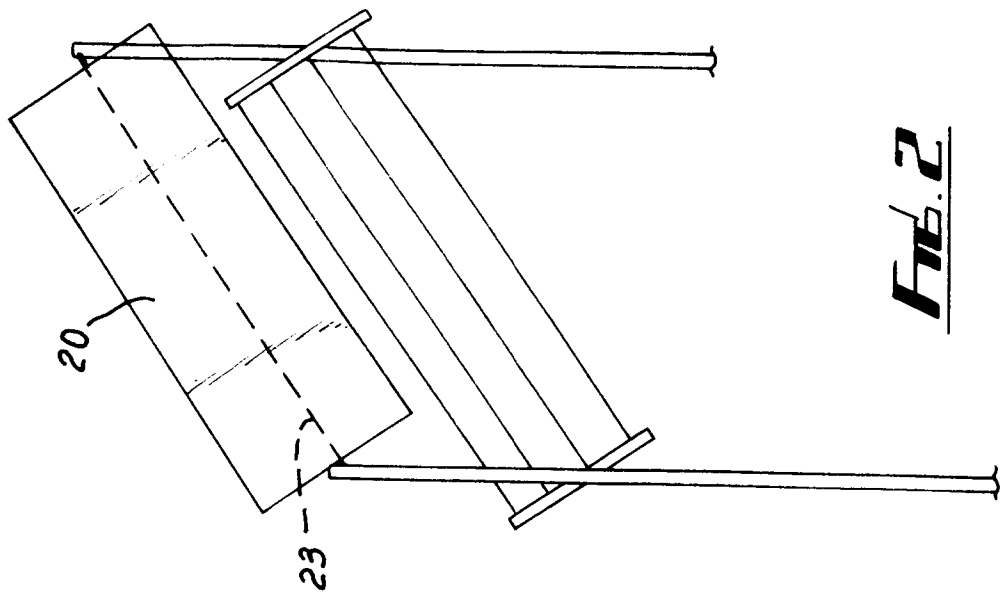
Claims

1. A means of protecting clothes on a clothesline from exposure to precipitation comprising a cover, characterised in that said cover is disposed vertically above and independent from the clothesline by a mounting means.
2. A means as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the cover is mounted by said mounting means to the vertical support upon which the clothesline is also mounted.
3. A means as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the cover is made of a suitable material having a high transparency to light and heat radiation.
4. A means as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims, wherein the cover includes drainage means, whereby precipitation falling upon the cover is drained off the cover and away from the clothes.
5. A means as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims, wherein the cover includes one or more apertures to provide access for wind through the cover.
6. A means as claimed in any one of the preceding

Claims, wherein the cover is physically remote from the the clothesline.

7. A means as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims, wherein said means also includes side portions, wherein said side portions are adapted to protect the clothes from precipitation travelling in a horizontal or near horizontal direction. 5
8. A means as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said side portions are detachable. 10
9. A means as claimed in Claim 7 or Claim 8, wherein said side portions are attachable at the perimeter or near perimeter of said cover. 15
10. A means as claimed in any one of Claims 7 to 9, wherein said side portions are of sufficient weight to hang vertically or near vertically in a strong wind. 20
11. A means as claimed in any one of the preceding Claims, wherein said means also includes a cover retracting means, wherein the cover retracting means enables the cover to be retracted to a position where it does not cause direct interference of the sun's rays on the clothes, and wherein the cover retracting means also enables the cover to be extended back to a position where it is vertically disposed above the clothing. 25 30
12. A means as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said retracting means may be controlled from a point in the vertical support of the clothesline. 35
13. A means of protecting clothes on a clothesline from exposure to precipitation comprising a cover mounted between two vertical supports upon which said clothesline is also mounted, wherein said cover is disposed vertically above the clothesline by a mounting means, characterised in that said mounting means includes a rotatable rod, wherein said cover is substantially planar and rotatable by rotation of said rotatable rod between a first position and a second position, said first position and said second position being approximately 90 degrees apart from each other, wherein when said cover is in said first position it shelters the clothesline from precipitation and wherein when said cover is in said second position it no longer shelters said clothesline from precipitation. 40 45 50

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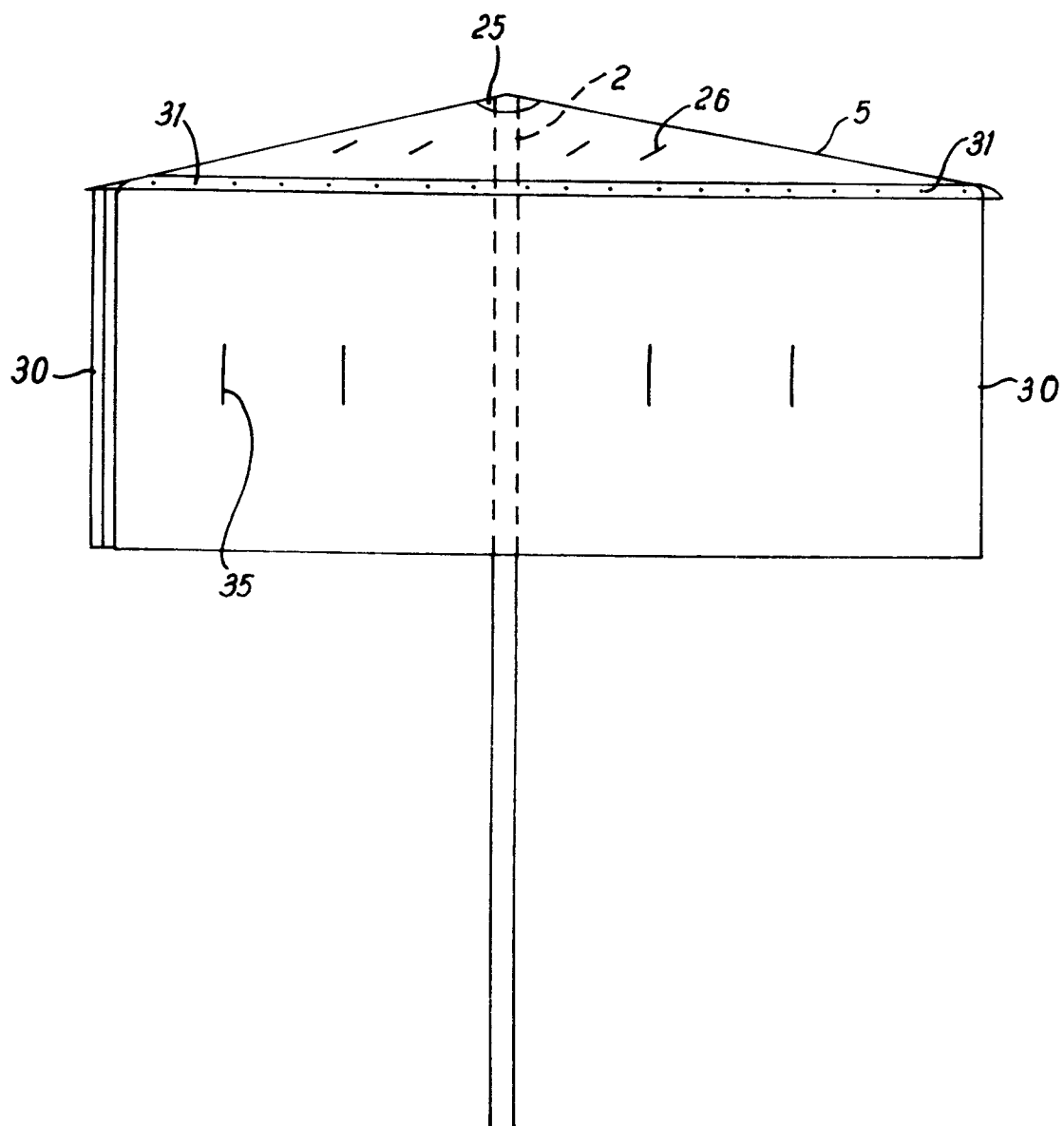


Fig. 3



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 91 30 8091

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
X	AU-B-499 338 (E.M. TIDSWELL) * claims; figures * ---	1-10	D06F57/02 D06F57/04
X	DE-U-8 224 529 (W.H. SIBBE) * page 2, line 28 - page 3; figures * ---	1,2,4,6, 11,12	
X A	FR-A-2 620 466 (A. COLLET) * page 2; figures * ---	1,2,4,6 13	
X A	GB-A-2 175 500 (J.M. MCDAID) * page 2, line 5 - line 32; figures 8-12 * -----	1,2,4,6, 11,12 13	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			D06F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 27 NOVEMBER 1991	Examiner COURRIER G. L. A.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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