



(11) Publication number : **0 500 298 A3**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(21) Application number : **92301284.3**

(51) Int. Cl.⁵ : **A24C 5/32, A24C 5/34,
B25J 15/02**

(22) Date of filing : **18.02.92**

(30) Priority : **19.02.91 US 657657**

(43) Date of publication of application :
26.08.92 Bulletin 92/35

(84) Designated Contracting States :
**AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IT LI LU MC NL
PT SE**

(88) Date of deferred publication of search report :
03.11.93 Bulletin 93/44

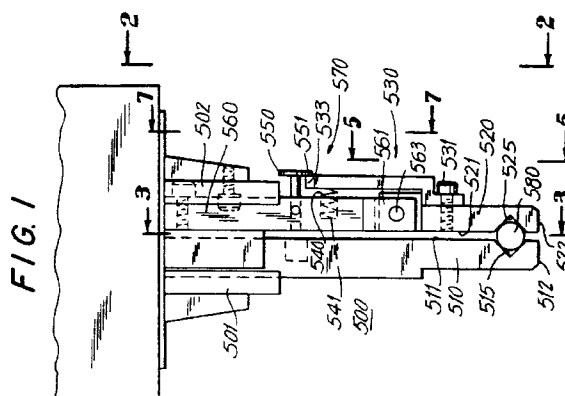
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(54) **Apparatus and method for gripping a cigarette.**

(57) A gripping device 500 for gripping securely each of a plurality of differently dimensioned smoking articles 580 without damaging any of the smoking articles is disclosed. Two opposing members 510, 520 having opposing notches 515, 525 for contacting and gripping the article are provided. The members are translated together to grip securely a smoking article therebetween. One member is movably connected to a support member 560 for relative movement therewith and a means 570 for adjusting the force exerted by the members on the smoking article is provided to control the relative motion of the one member and to adjust the force exerted by the opposing members so that the range of differently sized articles can be securely gripped without deformation and without having to change or readjust the position of the opposing members. The gripping device is useful in an automated test facility for testing smoking articles of different dimensions, particularly circumferences.





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 92 30 1284

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	US-A-3 048 281 (T.A. GODFREY)	1,2,5,6,9-11,14-16,19	A24C5/32 A24C5/34 B25J15/02
A	* the whole document * ---	3,12	
A	US-A-1 626 410 (J.F. HALSTEAD) * the whole document * ---	1,10	
A	EP-A-0 147 082 (FUJITSU LTD.) * claims 1-3; figure 1 * ---	1,10	
A	DE-A-3 011 837 (F. SOMMER) * claims 1,9; figure 1 * -----	3,12	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			A24C B25J
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 01 SEPTEMBER 1993	Examiner RAVEN P.
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>			

EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P0401)