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(54) **A flower-carrying accessory**

(57) A flower-carrying accessory comprises a container (2) for liquids which is to receive at least an end portion of the stem of a flower and which is removably associated with a support structure (3) comprising a

base (4) and a platform (5) supported above the base (4). The platform (5) has an opening (7) for permitting the passage of a flower stem so that the platform (5) enables the flower stem to be held laterally, at a predetermined distance from the end portion thereof.

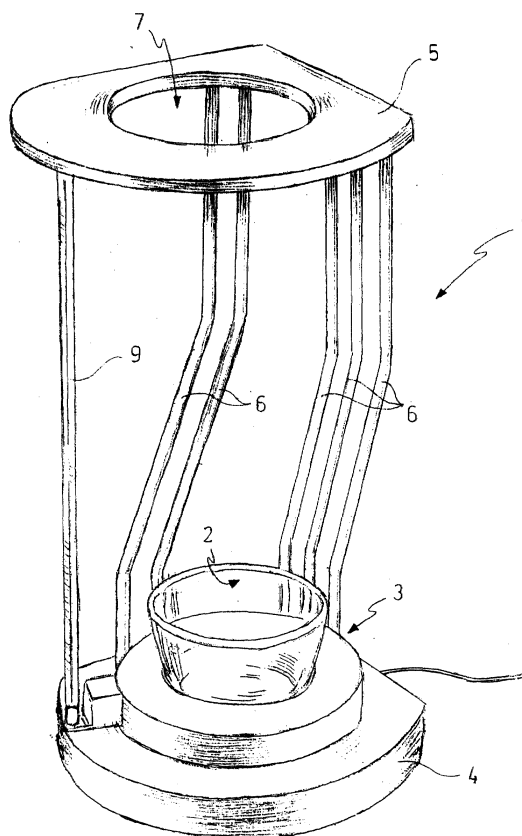


FIG. 1

EP 1 174 062 A1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a flower-carrying accessory comprising a container for liquids, such as, for example, a vase, suitable for receiving at least an end portion of the stem of a flower.

[0002] The use of containers such as vases and the like for supporting cut flowers has long been known. The requirement to be satisfied is to keep the end of the stem of the cut flowers immersed in a liquid, generally water with the addition of any preserving products, in order to prolong the preservation thereof for several days.

[0003] Owing to the fact that flowers are normally cut from the plant taking care to leave a stem of at least 30 cm, it follows that the vase to be used to hold them must be sufficiently tall. In addition, in order to prevent the vase from overturning as a result of the action exerted by the stem of the flowers on the mouth of the vase, the vase is usually filled almost completely so that it is heavier and thus stable.

[0004] Thus, however, a long portion of the stem of the flowers is immersed in the liquid, so that rotting problems arise.

[0005] Furthermore, it is not possible to trim every day the end portion of the stem immersed in the liquid because, as just indicated, the portion to be cut would be too long.

[0006] It should also be pointed out that the operation of changing the liquid contained in the vase is laborious because, in order to be able to carry out that operation, it is necessary to remove the flowers from the vase temporarily, with the consequence that the surrounding area is wetted and soiled.

[0007] The object of the present invention is to devise and make available a flower-carrying accessory which is intended in particular for long-stemmed cut flowers, which accessory enables the above-mentioned requirement to be satisfied and at the same time avoids the disadvantages referred to above with regard to known flower-carrying vases.

[0008] The object is achieved by a flower-carrying accessory in accordance with claim 1.

[0009] Preferably, the container for liquids rests in a removable manner on the base, so that it is interchangeable.

[0010] Preferably, the flower-carrying accessory comprises lighting means integrated in the support structure.

[0011] Other characteristics and the advantages of the flower-carrying accessory according to the invention will become clear from the following description of one of its preferred embodiments which is given by way of nonlimiting example with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 is a perspective view of a flower-carrying accessory according to the invention;
- Figure 2 is an exploded view of the flower-carrying accessory of Figure 1;

- Figure 3 is a side view of the flower-carrying accessory of Figure 1.

[0012] Referring to Figures 1 to 3, a flower-carrying accessory according to the invention is generally indicated 1 and is intended preferably, but not exclusively, to support long-stemmed cut flowers indicated F in Figure 3 and represented by broken lines.

[0013] The flower-carrying accessory comprises a container 2 for liquids which is to receive an end portion of the stem of the flowers F, in order to enable the above-mentioned end of the stem to be kept immersed in water, or another liquid. In the example, the container 2 for liquids is in the form of a crystal bowl, although it is possible to use a bowl produced from glass, plastics material or other material.

[0014] Advantageously, the container 2 is associated with a support structure 3 which is to support and hold up the flowers F, as will be seen more clearly in the course of the description. The support structure 3 comprises a supporting base 4, a platform 5 supported above the base 4 and at least one connecting upright 6 between the platform 5 and the base 4.

[0015] In the example shown in the drawings, the supporting base 4 is in the form of a parallelepipedal body from which a plurality of tubular members acting as uprights 6 extend in a substantially vertical direction. The tubular members 6 support the platform 5 at a predetermined distance L from the supporting base.

[0016] At least one opening 7 permitting the passage of the stems of the flowers F is formed in the platform 5. In the example shown in the drawings, the opening 7 is in the form of a circular through-hole formed centrally in the platform 5 and having a sufficiently large diameter, for example 15 cm, to contain the stems of a bunch of flowers F. The platform 5 is therefore annular.

[0017] In the example shown in the drawings, the platform 5 is positioned in such a manner that it is substantially superposed over the supporting base 4, so that the stability of the support structure 3 is increased. It will be appreciated, however, that the platform 5 may also be partially or completely eccentric relative to the supporting base 4, and it is in that case necessary only to increase the weight of the supporting base in order to make the support structure stable.

[0018] In the example, the tubular members acting as uprights 6 are fixedly joined to the supporting base 4 and to the platform 5, although it would be possible to connect them by means of hinge connections in order to be able to vary the configuration of the support structure 3 of the flower-carrying accessory. In that case, it is expedient to provide means for locking the hinge connections in the desired position or to provide hinges having a high coefficient of friction.

[0019] The container 2 for liquids, that is to say, the above-mentioned bowl, is supported by the supporting base 4. Preferably, the container 2 rests on the supporting base 4 in such a manner that it is removable there-

from.

[0020] For that purpose, the top of the supporting base 4 is shaped in such a manner as to form a seat 8 for receiving the container 2.

[0021] Preferably, there is a male/female form-fit between the container 2 and the supporting base 4, enabling the container 2 to be maintained centred in position relative to the support structure 3, in particular relative to the supporting base 4.

[0022] When the flower-carrying accessory 1 is in use, the container 2 with water is positioned in the seat 8 of the supporting base 4.

[0023] Subsequently, the flowers F are inserted from above through the opening 7 in the platform 5, in such a manner that the ends of their stems are inserted in the container 2, resting on the bottom of the container 2. The platform 5 therefore holds the stems of the flowers F laterally, at a predetermined distance from the end of their stems.

[0024] In order to ensure correct lateral support of the flowers F, it is preferable for the platform 5 to be at a distance L from the supporting base 4 of at least 10 cm, an optimum value of the distance L in the case of long-stemmed cut flowers being from 25 cm to 35 cm.

[0025] Instead of providing a single opening 7, the platform may be provided with a plurality of smaller openings, each of which is to contain one or more flower stems.

[0026] The flower-carrying accessory 1 may advantageously comprise lighting means (for example, incandescent lamps, fluorescent lamps, LED's and others) integrated in the support structure 3.

[0027] In the example shown in the drawings, the lighting means comprise a fluorescent tube, indicated 9 in the drawings, accommodated in an upright 6 so that it extends between the supporting base 4 and the platform 5.

[0028] The above-mentioned lighting means may also be accommodated in the platform 5 or in the supporting base 4.

[0029] If the lighting means require a voltage transformer 10, the latter may advantageously be accommodated in the supporting base 4.

[0030] In that case, openings must be provided in the supporting base 4 for the passage of electrical wires. Of course, in order to avoid the risk of short circuits and/or electrocution, the supporting base 4 and the above-mentioned openings must be closed by seals capable of preventing the ingress of liquids into the supporting base 4.

[0031] It is worthwhile pointing out that the flower-carrying accessory 1 permits the efficient and stable support of a bunch of flowers F without the risk of overturning and makes it possible for just a short end portion of a flower stem to be kept immersed in the liquid in the container 2. In fact, as already indicated, the container 2 may advantageously be in the form of a bowl, since it is not required to hold the flower stems laterally.

[0032] In order to change daily the water or liquid contained in the bowl 2, it is necessary only to lift the flowers F just sufficiently to enable the bowl 2 to be removed from the support structure 3. When the bowl 2 has been removed from the support structure 3, the ends of the stems of the flowers F may advantageously rest on the supporting base 4, more particularly in the seat 8. When the bowl 2 has been cleaned and the water has been changed, the bowl 2 can again be positioned on the supporting base 4. It will be appreciated that the operation of changing the liquid in the bowl 2 can be carried out without necessarily having to remove the flowers F from the flower-carrying accessory 1 and therefore without soiling the surrounding area.

[0033] In addition, it should be pointed out that, when the bowl 2 has been removed from the support structure 3, it is possible to cut a few centimetres off the ends of the flower stems, thus removing the portion of the stem previously immersed in the liquid and avoiding the occurrence of rotting phenomena.

[0034] The lighting means with which the flower-carrying accessory may advantageously be provided permit the accessory to be used also as a source of light for the surroundings in which the accessory is arranged.

[0035] As will be appreciated from the above description, the flower-carrying accessory according to the invention is particularly useful and easy to use, enabling the above-mentioned requirement to be satisfied without, at the same time, having the disadvantages discussed with reference to the accessories of the prior art.

[0036] A further advantage of the flower-carrying accessory according to the invention resides in its unusual structural and functional simplicity.

[0037] Another advantage of the flower-carrying accessory according to the invention resides in the possibility of producing it in more diverse forms.

[0038] In order to satisfy contingent and specific requirements, a person skilled in the art could introduce to the preferred embodiment of the flower-carrying accessory described above numerous modifications, adaptations and replacements of members by other functionally equivalent members without, however, departing from the scope of the following claims.

[0039] Thus, for example, the uprights connecting the platform to the supporting base may be in the form of one or more walls.

[0040] In addition, it is possible to produce the flower-carrying accessory in such a manner that it has two or more platforms arranged substantially side by side and also two or more bowls supported by the base.

Claims

1. A flower-carrying accessory comprising a container (2) for liquids which is to receive at least an end portion of the stem of a flower (F), **characterized in that** the container (2) for liquids is associated with

a support structure (3) comprising a base (4) and at least one platform (5) supported above the base (4), and **in that** at least one opening (7) for permitting the passage of the stem of a flower (F) is formed in the platform (5), the platform (5) enabling the stem of a flower (F) to be supported at a predetermined distance from the end portion thereof. 5

2. An accessory according to claim 1, wherein the container (2) for liquids is supported by the base (4). 10
3. An accessory according to claim 2, wherein the container (2) for liquids rests in a removable manner on the base (4). 15
4. An accessory according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the base (4) is shaped in such a manner as to form a seat (8) for receiving the container (2) for liquids.
5. An accessory according to claim 2 or 3, wherein there is a form-fit between the container (2) for liquids and the base (4). 20
6. An accessory according to claim 1, wherein the structure comprises at least one connecting upright (6) between the platform (5) and the base (4). 25
7. An accessory according to claim 1, wherein the platform (5) is spaced vertically by at least 10 cm from the base (4). 30
8. An accessory according to claim 1, comprising lighting means (9) integrated in the support structure (3).
9. An accessory according to claim 8, wherein the lighting means are accommodated in the platform (5). 35
10. An accessory according to claim 8, wherein the lighting means (9) are accommodated in the at least one connecting upright (6) between the platform (5) and the base (4). 40
11. An accessory according to claim 8, comprising a voltage transformer (10) accommodated in the base (4) and connected electrically to the lighting means, and wherein the base (4) is provided with openings for the passage of electrical wires, the base (4) and the openings being sealed to prevent the ingress of liquids into the base (4). 45 50
12. An accessory according to claim 1, wherein the container (2) for liquids is a bowl. 55

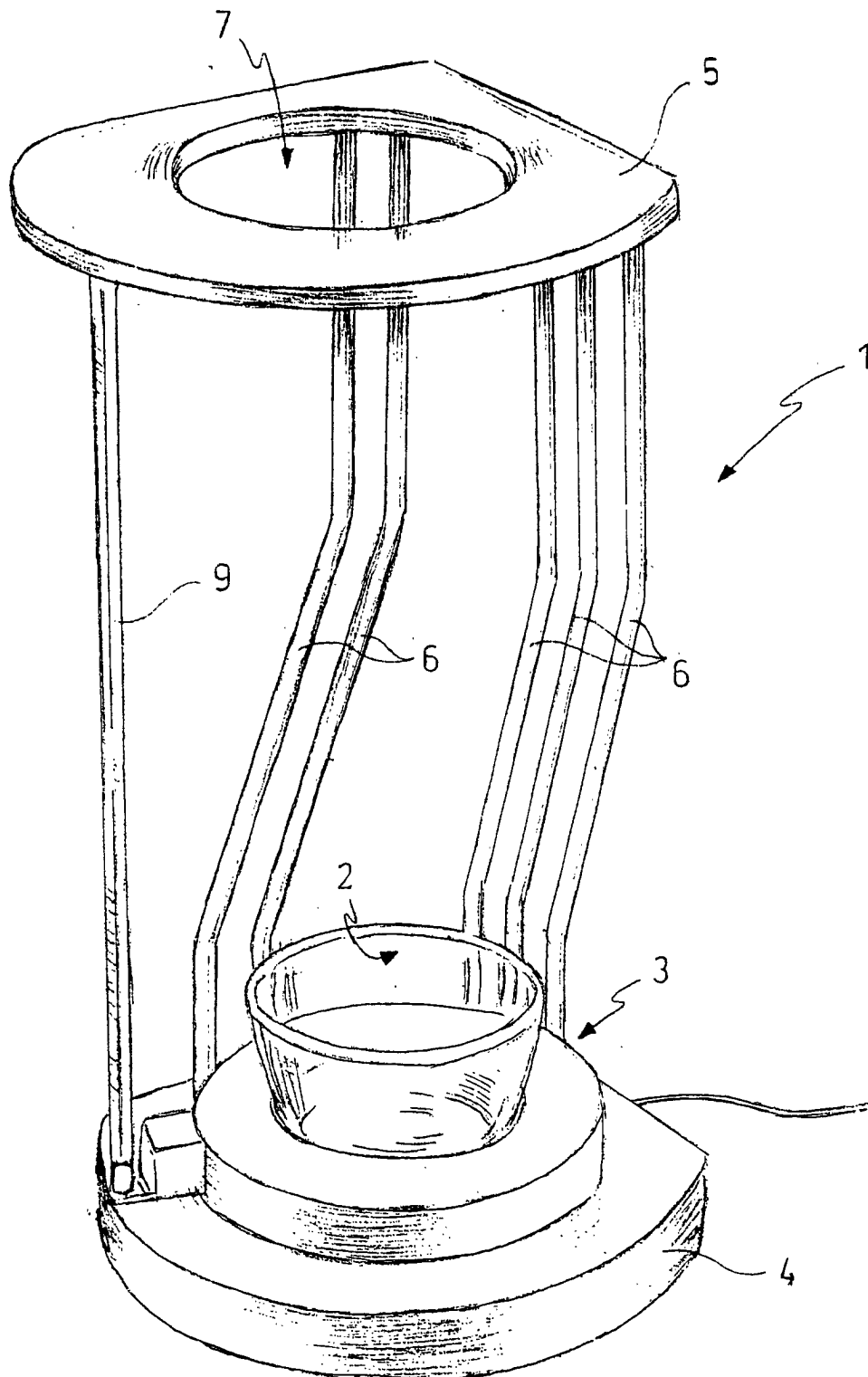


FIG. 1

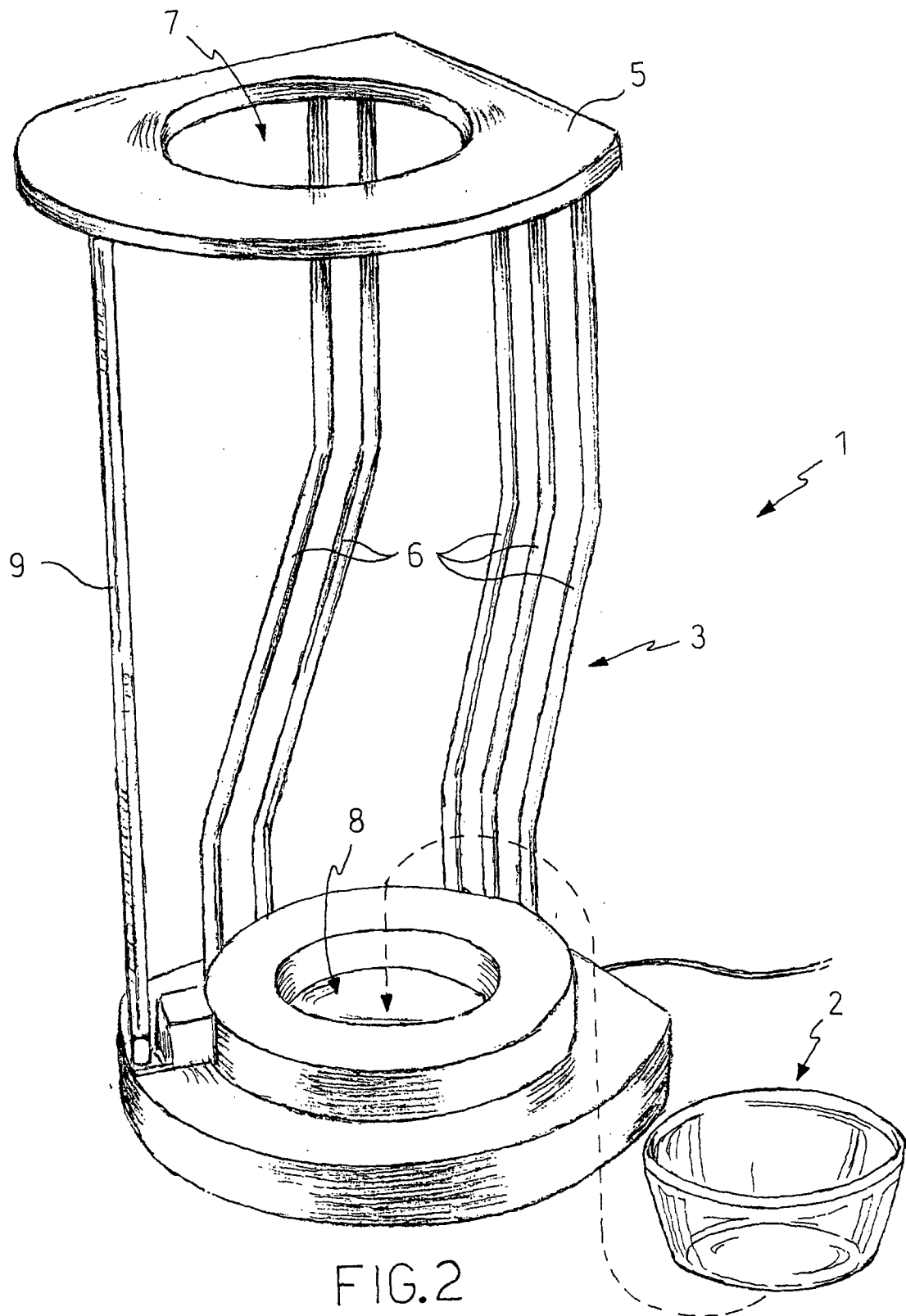


FIG.2

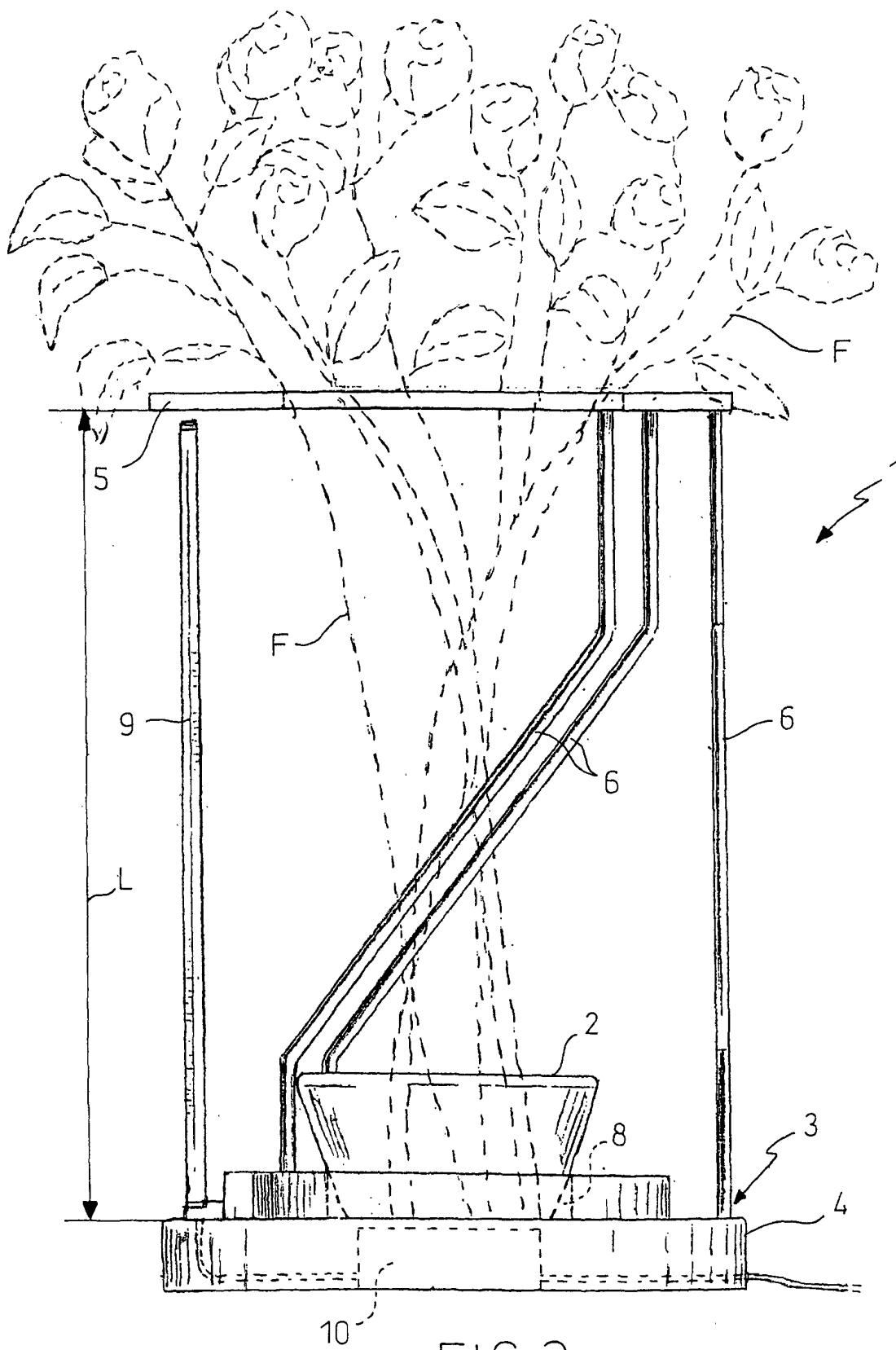


FIG.3



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 83 0568

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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		24 October 2001	Beugeling, G.L.H.
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 00 83 0568

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