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(71) Applicant: **Veldhuijzen van Zanten, Johan Karel
 Wilhelm
 7811 AS Emmen (NL)**

(72) Inventor: **Veldhuijzen van Zanten, Johan Karel
 Wilhelm
 7811 AS Emmen (NL)**

(74) Representative: **Bartelds, Erik et al
 Arnold & Siedsma,
 Sweelinckplein 1
 2517 GK The Hague (NL)**

(54) Ornamental object comprising a transparant container and a plant accommodated therein

(57) The invention relates to a decorative object, comprising a transparent, sealed container which is filled with a liquid and in which a plant is situated. The plant can be fully immersed in the liquid, and the interior of the

container can be sterile.

The container can be slender, for instance take the form of a test tube, and can be accommodated in a support member resting on a surface, for instance a rack in which the container is suspended.

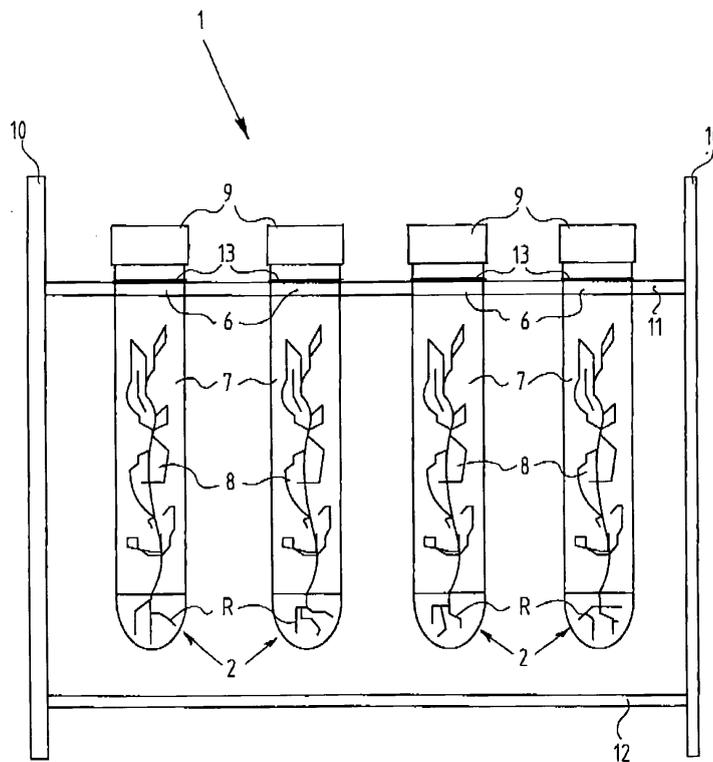


FIG. 2

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Description

[0001] The invention relates to a decorative object formed by a container with one or more plants therein.

[0002] It is generally known to use plants and cut flowers in pots or vases as decorative objects with which an interior can be given more colour. Potted plants have the drawback however that they require regular care in order to stay alive. Not only must the plants be watered regularly, but they must also periodically have vermin removed or be pruned. Cut flowers require hardly any care but, conversely, have a very limited lifespan, in the order of several days to a maximum of two weeks. In addition, plants and flowers cannot be placed just anywhere in an interior, because they are for instance sensitive to direct sunlight, temperature fluctuations or draught. The necessity for regular care or regular replacement of plants and cut flowers also has the result that they can be placed only at readily accessible locations in an interior. Finally, plants and flowers often take up a lot of space, which is a problem particularly in small interiors.

[0003] The invention therefore has for its object to provide a decorative object on the basis of a plant in a container, wherein these drawbacks do not occur. According to the invention this is achieved by a decorative object comprising at least one sealed container which is at least partly transparent and at least partly filled with a liquid, and in which at least one plant is situated. Accommodating the plant or plants in a sealed container prevents it/ them being influenced by the environment, so that it is possible to do without periodic care.

[0004] The at least one plant is preferably fully immersed in the liquid, whereby ambient influences are excluded still further and optimal conditions can be set for the plant(s). In particular, the plant(s) immersed in the liquid remain(s) clean, while the liquid-filled container with the plant(s) herein has a bright appearance. In order to prevent the plant(s) being affected by bacteria or viruses, it is recommended that the interior of the at least one container is sterile.

[0005] In order to ensure that the user can enjoy the plant for as long as possible, the decorative object according to the invention preferably has means for regulating the growth of the at least one plant, for instance in the form of one or more substances present in the liquid. The container preferably has a seal permanently connected thereto, and the plant growth-regulating means are preferably adapted to limit the growth of the or each plant to the height of the container, whereby the plant(s) can in principle remain in the container indefinitely.

[0006] A very attractive and modern decoration, which can nevertheless be placed in an interior in stable manner, is achieved when the at least one container is slender and accommodated in a support member resting on a surface. For a "high-tech" appearance the at least one container can take the form of a test tube. Such a test tube can moreover be integrated in many ways into support members of varying form and dimensions. The sup-

port member can thus take the form of a rack in which the or each container is suspended. The "high-tech" appearance is hereby enhanced further.

[0007] Particularly when use is made of relatively small containers, such as for instance test tubes, it is recommended that the at least one plant is a cutting, meristem, bulb, seed or piece of tissue culture.

[0008] The invention is now elucidated on the basis of three exemplary embodiments, wherein reference is made to the accompanying drawing in which corresponding components are designated with the same reference numerals, and in which:

- figure 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of the decorative object according to the invention, with a single container in the form of a test tube which is situated in a curved support member,
- figure 2 is a front view of a second embodiment of the decorative object according to the invention, with a number of identical containers in the form of test tubes which are suspended in a support member embodied as a rack, and
- figure 3 is a perspective front view of a third embodiment of the decorative object according to the invention, with a single, relatively large container in a support member embodied as a rack.

[0009] A decorative object 1 according to the present invention comprises a container 2, here in the form of a test tube, which is received in a support member 3 which stands on a surface G (figure 1). In the shown embodiment support member 3 is formed by bending a strip of metal, and has a foot 4 resting on surface G and a C-shaped standing part 5 into which two openings 6 are recessed. Container 2 protrudes through these openings 6 and rests with its base on foot 4.

[0010] Accommodated in container 2, which is almost wholly filled with liquid 7, is a plant 8 which lies under liquid surface L and is thus fully immersed in liquid 7. The plant hereby remains attractive under all conditions, while the container 2 almost wholly filled with liquid 7 makes a lively impression. Plant 8 can be placed in container 2 in the form of a cutting, meristem, bulb, seed or even a piece of tissue culture, whereafter plant growth-regulating means in liquid 7 ensure that, while plant 8 does grow, the growth thereof nevertheless remains limited such that plant 8 does not grow out of container 2. Use can be made for this purpose of a suitably chosen mixture of growth-stimulating means such as auxin, cytokinin, brassinosteroids and gibberellin, and growth-inhibiting means such as abscisic acid and ethylene. The content of container 2 is otherwise sterilized, for instance in an autoclave, to prevent problems in respect of infection. In order to keep the contents of container 2 sterile, it is hermetically sealed using a cap 9, which can be connected non-releasably, and so permanently, to container 2. Device 1 is therefore prepared once-only, whereafter plant 8 can in principle be kept therein indefinitely. Device 1 is

then of course not suitable for re-use.

[0011] In an alternative embodiment of the invention the decorative object 1 comprises a number of identical containers 2, here four, which are suspended in a support member 3 embodied as a rack (figure 2). In this case support member 3 has two side walls 10, between which two beams 11, 12 are fixed. Recessed into upper beam 11 is a number of openings 6 in which containers 2 can be suspended. In the shown embodiment containers 2 are each provided for this purpose close to their top side with a peripheral edge or collar 13 which comes to rest on the edge of opening 6. This figure also shows schematically that the plant growth-regulating means collect close to the bottom of each container 2, where the roots R of plants 8 are situated.

[0012] Instead of containers 2 in the form of test tubes, which are relatively slender and in which there is therefore only space for small plants, it is also possible to envisage the use of a larger and wider container 2 (figure 3). This could then be accommodated in for instance a support member 3 in the form of a rack, which is distinguished from rack 3 of figure 2 in that an opening 6 for receiving container 2 is now formed not only in upper beam 11 but also in lower beam 12. Rack 3 can herein be manufactured from any suitable material. For a laboratory-like or "high-tech" appearance this could for instance be formed from a transparent plastic such as acrylic plastic. For a more cheerful or homely appearance, use could conversely be made of coloured plastics and/or natural materials.

[0013] Although the invention is elucidated above on the basis of a number of embodiments, it will be apparent that it is not limited thereto. Containers of completely different shape, for instance containers of spherical, rectangular or irregular form, could therefore also be used. Nor do the containers have to be wholly transparent, but use could be made of containers which are partially opaque or coloured. In addition, the support member could for instance be provided with lighting directed at the container so as to also cause the plant to stand out well at night. A plurality of plants can further be accommodated in a container. The scope of the invention is therefore defined solely by the appended claims.

Claims

1. Decorative object, comprising at least one sealed container which is at least partly transparent and at least partly filled with a liquid, and in which at least one plant is situated.
2. Decorative object as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the at least one plant is fully immersed in the liquid.
3. Decorative object as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** the interior of the at least one con-

tainer is sterile.

4. Decorative object as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized by** means for regulating the growth of the at least one plant.
5. Decorative object as claimed in claim 4, **characterized in that** the plant growth-regulating means are formed by one or more substances present in the liquid.
6. Decorative object as claimed in claim 4 or 5, **characterized in that** the container has a seal permanently connected thereto, and the plant growth-regulating means are adapted to limit the growth of the or each plant to the height of the container.
7. Decorative object as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the at least one container is slender and accommodated in a support member resting on a surface.
8. Decorative object as claimed in claim 7, **characterized in that** the at least one container takes the form of a test tube.
9. Decorative object as claimed in claim 7 or 8, **characterized in that** the support member takes the form of a rack in which the or each container is suspended.
10. Decorative object as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the at least one plant is a cutting, meristem, bulb, seed or piece of tissue culture.

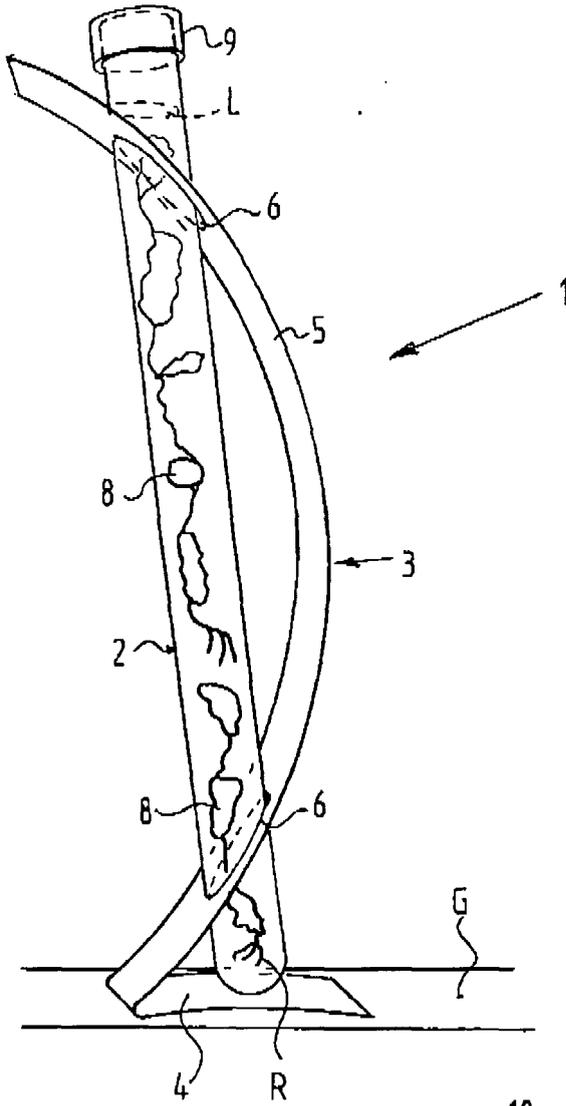
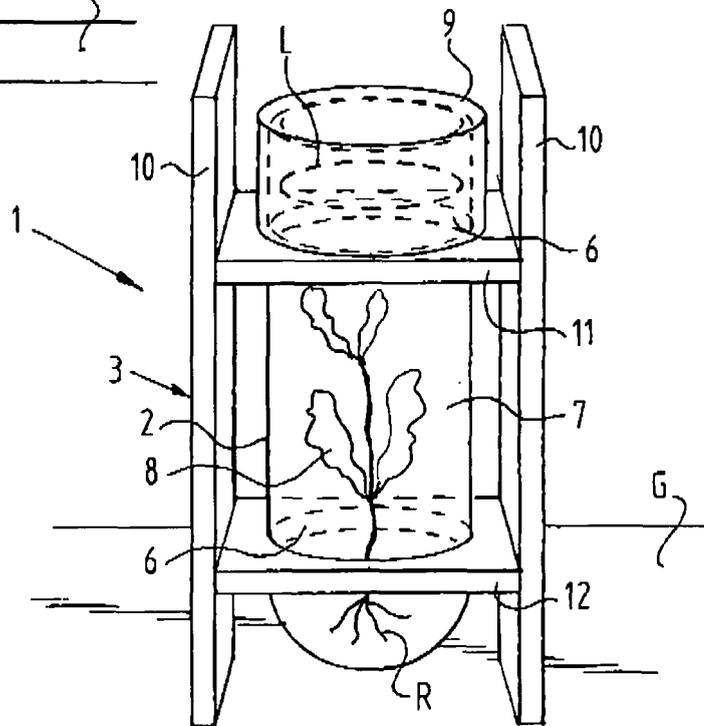


FIG. 1

FIG. 3



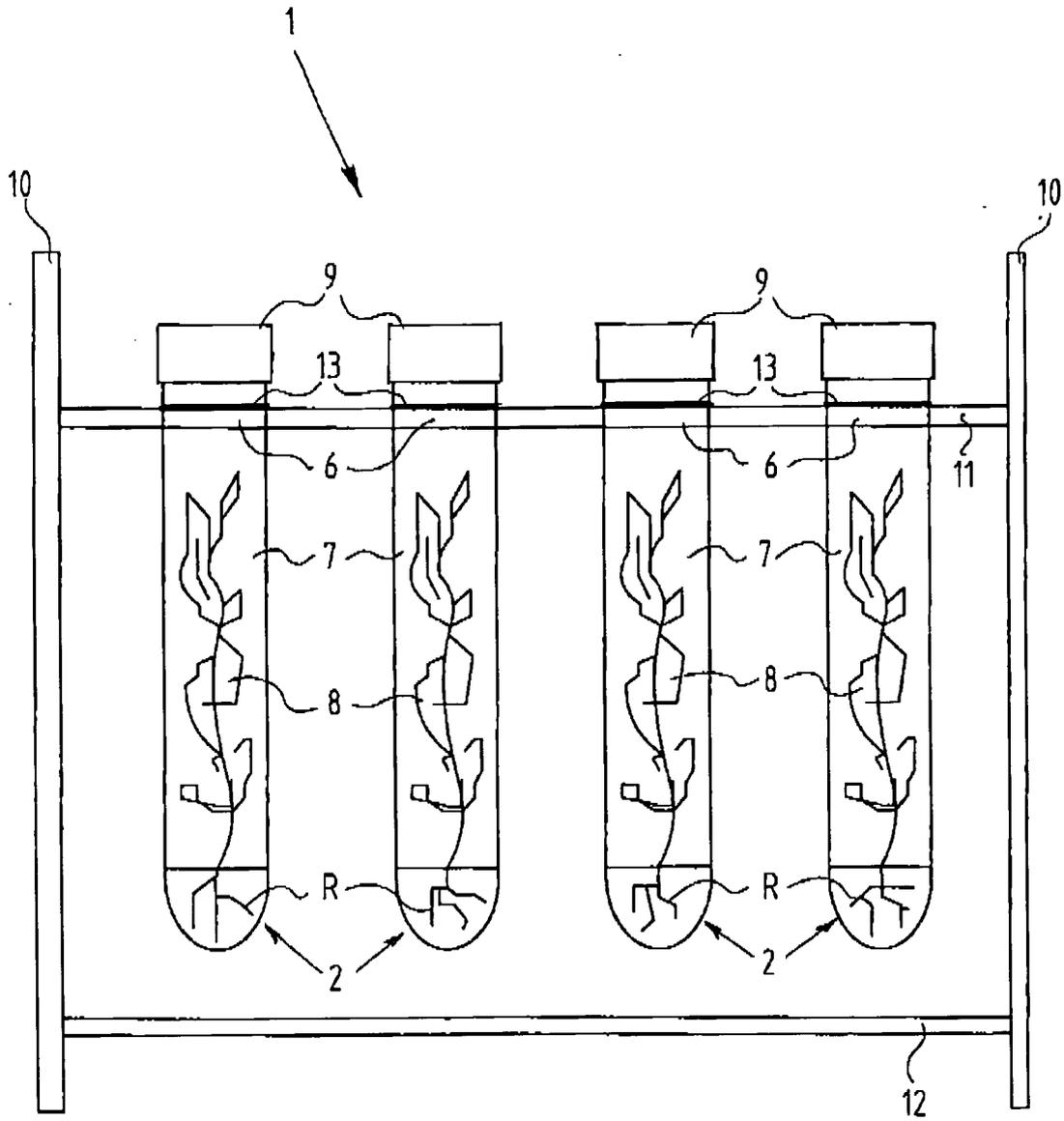


FIG. 2



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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
Munich		22 February 2006	Reichhardt, 0
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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 05 07 7663

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