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(54) **A SUPPORT FOR A BOUQUET OR FLORAL ARRANGEMENT AND A METHOD FOR PREPARING A BOUQUET OR FLORAL ARRANGEMENT USING THE SAME**

STÜTZE FÜR EINEN BLUMENSTRAUSS ODER EIN BLUMENARRANGEMENT UND VERFAHREN
ZUR ZUSAMMENSTELLUNG EINES BLUMENSTRAUSSES ODER EINES
BLUMENARRANGEMENTS UNTER VERWENDUNG DERSELBEN

SUPPORT DE BOUQUET OU D'ARRANGEMENT FLORAL ET PROCÉDÉ DE PRÉPARATION DE
BOUQUET OU D'ARRANGEMENT FLORAL FAISANT APPEL AUDIT SUPPORT

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Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This disclosure relates generally to a support for a bouquet or floral arrangement, and a method for preparing a bouquet or floral arrangement using the same.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[0002] The term bouquet or floral arrangement as used throughout this specification may include any arrangement of flowers and/or other flora which have been chosen for the purpose of being arranged in a particular fashion.

[0003] The correct technique for making a bouquet of flowers involves "strausing" the stems of the flowers in the bouquet. Strausing is a skill that requires hours of training before proficiency is reached.

[0004] In some instances, transient and therefore untrained labour must be utilised to prepare floral bouquets. Examples of these instances include those periods that are busiest for florists, flower wholesalers and bouquet makers i.e. Mothers day and Valentines Day. At times like these, employers can ill afford the downtime associated with training transient staff in the correct techniques for preparing floral arrangements, but doing so has until now been a necessity.

[0005] US patent 5,758,452 A describes a floral arranging aid that comprises a base top cover having a plurality of partially scored apertures that are opened by a flower stem. The apertures are arranged in rows and columns that are coded so that each aperture is located at a junction.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0006] It is an object of the present disclosure to overcome, or at least substantially ameliorate, the aforementioned difficulties.

[0007] Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description, taking in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein, by way of illustration and example, an embodiment of the present invention is disclosed.

[0008] For the purpose of this specification the word "comprising" means "including but not limited to", and the word 'comprises' has a corresponding meaning.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] One aspect of the present invention includes a support apparatus for a bouquet or floral arrangement (1), the apparatus including a body portion (2) having a plurality of apertures (4) passing there through, each aperture (4) being adapted to accept at least a stem of a flower or cutting there through, said body (2) being adapted

to be supported in a position above a base portion of the support apparatus (1) and wherein there are a plurality of legs (8) extending from the body (2), wherein the plurality of legs (8) in a second position extending downwardly from the body (2) form the base portion, wherein said legs (8) can be moved between at least a first position in which they extend outwardly from the body (2) and said second position in which at least part of an edge of each leg (8e) is contiguous with at least a part of an edge of another leg (8e), and wherein said base portion has a substantially hollow, inverted, conical shape, which is adapted to retain the end of each stem after it has been passed through an aperture (4) in the body so that the stems are substantially convergent at or toward the ends thereof.

[0010] Preferably, the body is substantially disc shaped.

[0011] Preferably, in an alternative, the body has the shape of a polygon.

[0012] Preferably, the apertures in the body are arranged in a pattern.

[0013] Preferably, when the legs are positioned so as to extend downwardly from the body, they are adapted to support the body, and any flowers or cuttings positioned therein.

[0014] Preferably, when the legs are positioned so as to extend downwardly from the body, they are biased toward convergence via biasing means.

[0015] Preferably, the biasing means includes an elastic band placed around the downwardly extending legs so as to bias these together.

[0016] Preferably, the support apparatus is made or manufactured so that the legs and the body are integral or unitary.

[0017] Preferably, the support apparatus is made out of a suitable plastic material.

[0018] Preferably, in alternative, the apparatus is made out of a suitable (i.e. waterproof) cardboard material, paper or metal.

[0019] Preferably, the support apparatus is sized and adapted to be positioned within a vase or container when the legs are extending downwardly.

[0020] Preferably, the support apparatus is adapted to releasably engage the vase or container.

[0021] Preferably, a base of the support apparatus is adapted to releasably engage the vase or container.

[0022] In a further aspect, the invention may be said to include a method for forming a bouquet or floral arrangement using the support apparatus described above, including the steps of positioning the legs so that they extend downwardly from the body so that they form thereby the base portion and inserting the stems of flowers or cuttings into the apertures.

[0023] Preferably, the method includes the further step of inserting the support in a vase or container before positioning any flowers therein.

[0024] Preferably, the method includes the further step of placing a rubber band around the legs before position-

ing the support in the vase or container.

[0025] Preferably, the method includes the further step of cutting the stems to a desired length according to flower type prior to inserting these in the support.

[0026] In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and to the arrangements of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawing. The invention is capable of embodiments in addition to those described and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein, as well as the abstract, are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

[0027] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate certain embodiments of the invention, and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

[0028] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception upon which this disclosure is based may readily be utilized as a basis for designing other structures, methods, and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, to recognize that the invention should be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the scope of the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0029] For a better understanding of this disclosure it will now be described with respect to one or more exemplary embodiments, which shall be described herein with the assistance of drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a top view of an exemplary blank for a support apparatus, illustrating the legs extending outwards from the body;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the exemplary support apparatus in Figure 1, illustrating the legs extending downward from the body so as to form thereby the base portion;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of an exemplary blank for a support apparatus according to a further aspect, illustrating the legs extending outwards from the body;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the exemplary support apparatus in Figure 3, illustrating the legs extending downward from the body so as to form thereby the base portion;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of an exemplary support apparatus according to a further aspect, illustrating the legs extending straight down;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the exemplary support apparatus in Figure 5, illustrating the legs extending downward from the body so as to form thereby the element adapted to retain the stems; and

Figure 7 is a perspective view of an exemplary support apparatus and an exemplary support vase for the same.

10 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0030] Referring now to the illustrations, and in particular to Figure 1, where there is illustrated a blank of a support for a floral arrangement 1 including a disc shaped body 2 having a plurality of apertures 4 passing there through, each aperture being adapted to accept a stem of a flower or cutting there through. These apertures are arranged in a hexagonal pattern, but they may be arranged in any desired pattern, including the shape of any of a star, triangle, square, round, letter or numeral.

[0031] There are a series of legs 8 (6 in this case) attached to the body 2 so that they can be moved between at least a first position in which they extend outwardly from the body, as illustrated in Figure 1, and a second position in which they extend downwardly from the body, as illustrated in Figure 2.

[0032] An advantage of being able to extend the legs 8 outward of the body 2 is that this folds the support 2 substantially flat, allowing a large number of these to be stacked for ease of transport and storage.

[0033] Referring now to Figure 2, it can be seen that each leg 8 includes two sets of opposing semi-circle shaped cut-outs 9a and 9b positioned at spaced apart locations along the length thereof. A rubber band can be placed around the legs 8 and located in one (or in the case of two rubber bands, both) of these sets of cut-outs so as to bias the legs 8 together and form a base portion.

[0034] When these legs 8 are extending downwardly, they can be converged until at least part of an edge of each leg (the part 8e extending below uppermost cut-outs 9a in this case) is contiguous with a part of an edge of another leg.

[0035] In this position, the legs 8 not only support the body 2 and any flowers or cuttings positioned therein, but they form a hollow, inverted, substantially conical base that is adapted to retain the end of each stem after it has been passed through an aperture 4 in the body. More particularly, the stems are retained so that these are substantially convergent at or toward the ends thereof.

[0036] In use, the stems of the flowers or cuttings are passed through the holes 4 in the body 2 until they reach the bottom of the vase or container. Preferably, the vase or container has an upwardly domed floor, or has been provided with a disc shaped insert that is upwardly domed. In doing so, the stems are converged by the legs 8, forming thereby a "straining" effect in the completed flower arrangement.

[0037] The stems can be cut to a desired length (by product) before production, so that the depth of flowers in the arrangement is consistent.

[0038] The apertures 4 in the disc 2 can be arranged in a pattern, and a guide or recipe provided to persons preparing the arrangements that shows them precisely which type of flower is to be inserted into a given aperture. This ensures both consistency in the volume and arrangement of flowers in a bouquet, and repeatability in arrangements.

[0039] In one embodiment of the invention, the body of the support is adapted to interconnect with the case or container in which it is positioned. This provides stability for the arrangement during both shipping and retail display.

[0040] Referring now to Figures 3 and 4, where there is illustrated a further embodiment wherein the support for a floral arrangement 100 includes a circular body 102 having a downwardly extending perimeter skirt 103.

[0041] As before, there is a plurality of apertures 104 passing through the body 102, each aperture being adapted to accept a stem of a flower or cutting there through.

[0042] There is a pair of legs 108 attached to the downwardly extending perimeter skirt 103 of the body 102 so that they can be moved between at least a first position in which they extend outwardly there from, as illustrated in Figure 3, and a second position in which they extend downwardly there from, as illustrated in Figure 4. These legs 108 are shaped so that when they are positioned so as to be in the fully downwardly extended position they are contiguous with each other along the entire length of the side edges 108e thereof, and form thereby a conically shaped cup base.

[0043] At the end of each leg 108 there is an outwardly extending lip 110 that is adapted to capture a rubber band (not shown) passed around the legs 108 to bias these together. Preferably, there would be a further lip positioned approximately half way up each of the legs as well.

[0044] Referring now to Figures 5 and 6, where there is illustrated an embodiment wherein the support for a floral arrangement 200 includes a circular body 202 having a downwardly extending perimeter skirt 203.

[0045] There are a series of legs 208 (6 in this case) attached to the body so that they can be moved between at least a first position in which they extend outwardly from the body, and a second position in which they extend downwardly from the body, as illustrated in Figure 6, so as to form a base.

[0046] Similar to the first embodiment, only the edges 208e of lower portion of each leg 208 are adapted to be contiguous when the legs are converged.

[0047] Similar to the second embodiment, at the end of each leg 208 there is an outwardly extending lip 210 that is adapted to capture a rubber band (not shown) passed around the legs 208 to bias these together. Preferably, there would be a further lip positioned approximately half way up each of the legs as well.

[0048] Referring now to Figure 7, where there is illustrated a support apparatus 300, and a support vase 302, upon which the support apparatus 300 may be disposed whilst a bouquet is being assembled. This allows both hands of the person preparing the floral arrangement to be free during production. If the support vase 302 is partially filled with water, an unfinished arrangement can be left temporarily without risk of the flowers drying out. When assembly of the bouquet is completed, the support apparatus 300 is lifted off of the support vase 302 and the elastic band 304 biases the legs 306 of the support apparatus 300 together, so as to capture and converge the stems of the flowers.

[0049] In each case, the supports according to the respective aspects or embodiments described above are used in substantially the same fashion.

[0050] The supports according to the present invention may be made cheap enough for mass production, or equally up market versions may be produced that incorporate attractive designs and colours. In the cases of the later, they may provide a suitable location for promotional indicia to be printed.

[0051] Furthermore, it is considered that the supports according to the present invention lend themselves to utilisation in an automated production system, where machines may be used to load them.

[0052] Finally, it is considered that the support for a floral arrangement according to the present invention will be of considerable use to florists, flower wholesalers and bouquet makers who from time to time utilise transient and/or unskilled labour to meet demand, because it allows these novices to quickly and consistently prepare near perfect floral arrangements.

[0053] Although the invention has been herein shown and described in what is conceived to be the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is recognized that departures can be made within the scope of the invention, which is not to be limited to the details described herein but is to be accorded the full scope of the appended claims so as to embrace any and all equivalent devices and apparatus.

Claims

1. A support apparatus for a bouquet or floral arrangement (1), the apparatus including a body portion (2) having a plurality of apertures (4) passing there through, each aperture (4) being adapted to accept at least a stem of a flower or cutting there through, said body (2) being adapted to be supported in a position above a base portion of the support apparatus (1) and wherein there are a plurality of legs (8) extending from the body (2), wherein the plurality of legs (8) in a second position extending downwardly from the body (2) form the base portion, wherein said legs (8) can be moved between at least a first position in which they extend outwardly from the body (2) and

said second position and wherein said base portion has a substantially hollow, inverted, conical shape, which is adapted to retain the end of each stem after it has been passed through an aperture (4) in the body so that the stems are substantially convergent at or toward the ends thereof, **characterised in that**, in the second position, at least part of an edge of each leg (8e) is contiguous with at least a part of an edge of another leg (8e).

2. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 1, wherein the legs (8) are biased toward convergence via biasing means.
3. The support apparatus (1) of claim 2, wherein the biasing means includes an elastic band placed around the downwardly extending legs (8) so as to bias the downwardly extending legs (8) together.
4. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 3, wherein the support apparatus (1) is made or manufactured so that the legs (8) and the body (2) are integral with one another.
5. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 4, wherein the body (2) has the shape of a polygon.
6. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 2, **characterized in that** the legs (8) have at least one cut out portion (9) positioned on an edge (8e) thereon for receiving the biasing means so as to hold the biasing means in place on the legs (8).
7. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 6, wherein the support apparatus (1) is made out of a suitable plastic material.
8. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 6, wherein the support apparatus (1) is sized and adapted to be positioned within a vase or container when the legs (8) are extending downwardly.
9. The support apparatus (1) as in claim 6, wherein the support apparatus (1) is adapted to releasably engage the vase or container.
10. The support apparatus (1) of claim 6, wherein the base of the support apparatus (1) is adapted to releasably engage the vase or container.
11. A method for forming a bouquet or floral arrangement using a support apparatus (1) according to claim 1, the method including the steps of positioning the legs (8) so that they extend downwardly from the body (2) so that they form thereby the base portion, and inserting the stems of flowers or cuttings into the apertures (4).

Patentansprüche

1. Stütze (1) für einen Blumenstrauß oder ein Blumenarrangement, wobei die Stütze einen Körperabschnitt (2) mit einer Vielzahl von Öffnungen (4) aufweist, die hindurch führen, jede Öffnung (4) dazu eingerichtet ist, zumindest einen Stängel einer Blume oder einen Abschnitt aufzunehmen, wobei der Körper (2) dazu eingerichtet ist, in einer Position über einem Basisabschnitt der Stütze (1) gestützt zu werden, und wobei sich eine Vielzahl von Beinen (8) von dem Körper (2) erstreckt, wobei die Vielzahl von Beinen (8) in einer zweiten Position, in der sie sich von dem Körper (2) nach unten erstreckt, den Basisabschnitt bildet, wobei die Beine (8) zwischen mindestens einer ersten Position, in der sie sich von dem Körper (2) nach außen erstrecken, und der zweiten Position bewegt werden können, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** in der zweiten Position zumindest ein Teil eines Randes jedes Beines (8e) an zumindest einem Teil eines Randes eines weiteren Beines (8e) anliegt, , und wobei der Basisabschnitt eine im Wesentlichen hohle, umgekehrte, konische Form aufweist, die dazu eingerichtet ist, das Ende jedes Stängels zu halten, nachdem dieser durch eine Öffnung (4) in dem Körper geführt wurde, so dass die Stängel an oder nahe ihren Enden im Wesentlichen zusammenlaufen.
2. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Beine (8) mithilfe von Vorspannungsmitteln zusammenlaufend vorgespannt sind.
3. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 2, wobei die Vorspannungsmittel ein elastisches Band beinhalten, das um die sich nach unten erstreckenden Beine (8) angeordnet ist, um die sich nach unten erstreckenden Beine (8) zusammenzuspannen.
4. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 3, wobei die Stütze (1) so hergestellt oder gefertigt ist, dass die Beine (8) und der Körper (2) einteilig ausgeführt sind.
5. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 4, wobei der Körper (2) die Form eines Vielecks aufweist.
6. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Beine (8) mindestens einen ausgeschnittenen Teil (9) an einem Rand (8e) des Beines aufweisen, um die Vorspannungsmittel aufzunehmen und an den Beinen (8) zu fixieren.
7. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 6, wobei der Körper (1) aus einem geeigneten Kunststoffmaterial gefertigt ist.
8. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 6, wobei die Stütze (1) dazu bemessen und eingerichtet ist, in einer Vase

oder einem Behälter angeordnet zu werden, wenn sich die Beine (8) nach unten erstrecken.

9. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 6, wobei die Stütze (1) dazu eingerichtet ist, entfernbar in die Vase oder den Behälter eingesetzt zu werden. 5
10. Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 6, wobei die Basis der Stütze (1) dazu eingerichtet ist, entfernbar in die Vase oder den Behälter eingesetzt zu werden. 10
11. Verfahren zum Zusammenstellen eines Blumenstraußes oder eines Blumenarrangements unter Verwendung der Stütze (1) nach Anspruch 1, wobei das Verfahren folgende Schritte aufweist: Positionieren der Beine (8) so, dass sie sich von dem Körper (2) nach unten erstrecken und den Basisabschnitt bilden, und Einsetzen der Stängel von Blumen oder Abschnitten in die Öffnungen (4). 15

Revendications

1. Appareil de support pour un bouquet ou une composition florale (1), l'appareil comprenant une partie de corps (2) ayant une pluralité d'ouvertures (4) passant à travers cette dernière, chaque ouverture (4) étant adaptée pour accepter au moins une tige d'une fleur ou une bouture à travers cette dernière, ledit corps (2) étant adapté pour être supporté dans une position au-dessus d'une partie de base de l'appareil de support (1) et dans lequel il y a une pluralité de pattes (8) s'étendant à partir du corps (2), dans lequel la pluralité de pattes (8) dans une seconde position, s'étendant vers le bas à partir du corps (2) à partir de la partie de base, dans lequel lesdites pattes (8) peuvent être déplacées entre au moins une première position dans laquelle elles s'étendent vers l'extérieur du corps (2) et ladite seconde position, et dans lequel ladite partie de base a une forme conique inversée, sensiblement creuse, qui est adaptée pour retenir l'extrémité de chaque tige après qu'elle est passée dans une ouverture (4) dans le corps de sorte que les tiges sont sensiblement convergentes au niveau de ou vers leurs extrémités, **caractérisé en ce que**, dans la seconde position, au moins une partie d'un bord de chaque patte (8e) est contigu avec au moins une partie d'un bord d'une autre patte (8e). 20
2. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 1, dans lequel les pattes (8) sont sollicitées vers la convergence via des moyens de sollicitation. 25
3. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 2, dans lequel les moyens de sollicitation comprennent une bande élastique placée autour des pattes (8) s'étendant vers le bas afin de solliciter les pattes (8) s'étendant vers le bas, ensemble. 30
4. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 3, dans lequel l'appareil de support (1) est réalisé ou fabriqué de sorte que les pattes (8) et le corps (2) sont solidaires entre eux. 35
5. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 4, dans lequel le corps (2) a la forme d'un polygone. 40
6. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 2, **caractérisé en ce que** les pattes (8) ont au moins une partie découpée (9) positionnée sur un bord (8e) pour recevoir les moyens de sollicitation afin de maintenir les moyens de sollicitation en place sur les pattes (8). 45
7. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 6, dans lequel l'appareil de support (1) est réalisé avec une matière plastique appropriée. 50
8. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 6, dans lequel l'appareil de support (1) est dimensionné et adapté pour être positionné à l'intérieur d'un vase ou d'un contenant lorsque les pattes (8) s'étendent vers le bas. 55
9. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 6, dans lequel l'appareil de support (1) est adapté pour mettre en prise de manière amovible le vase ou le contenant.
10. Appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 6, dans lequel la base de l'appareil de support (1) est adaptée pour mettre en prise de manière amovible le vase ou le contenant.
11. Procédé pour former un bouquet ou une composition florale à l'aide d'un appareil de support (1) selon la revendication 1, le procédé comprenant les étapes consistant à positionner les pattes (8) de sorte qu'elles s'étendent vers le bas à partir du corps (2) de sorte qu'elles forment ainsi la partie de base, et insérer les tiges des fleurs ou les boutures dans les ouvertures (4).

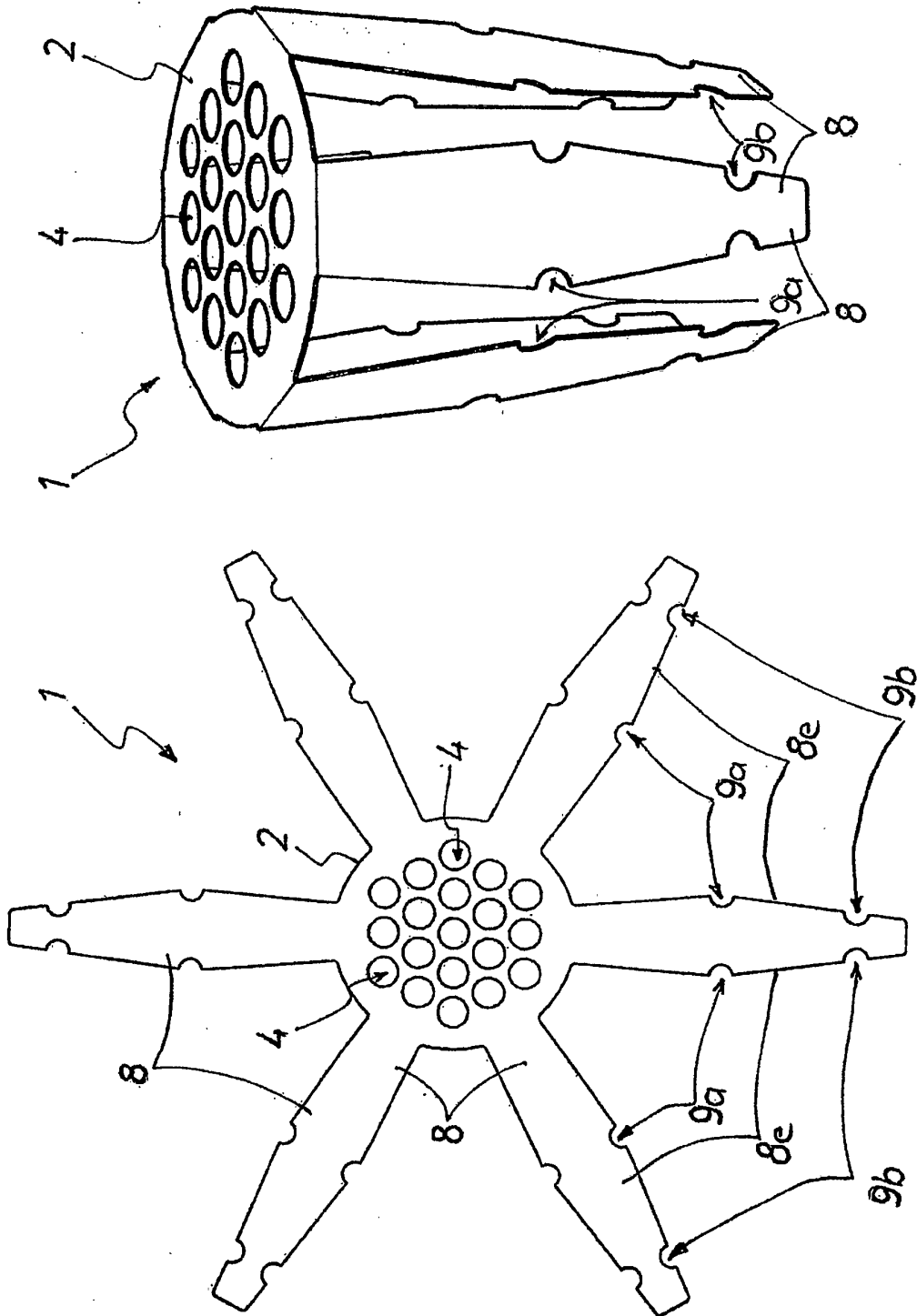


Fig 2

Fig 1

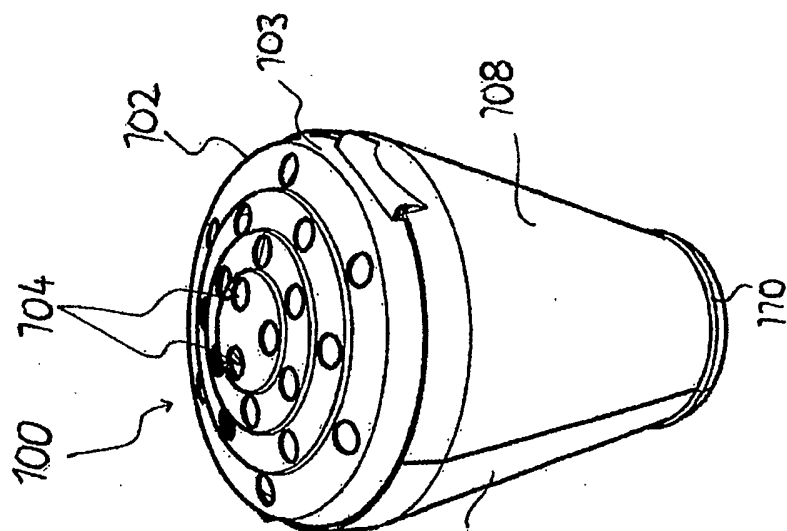


Fig 4

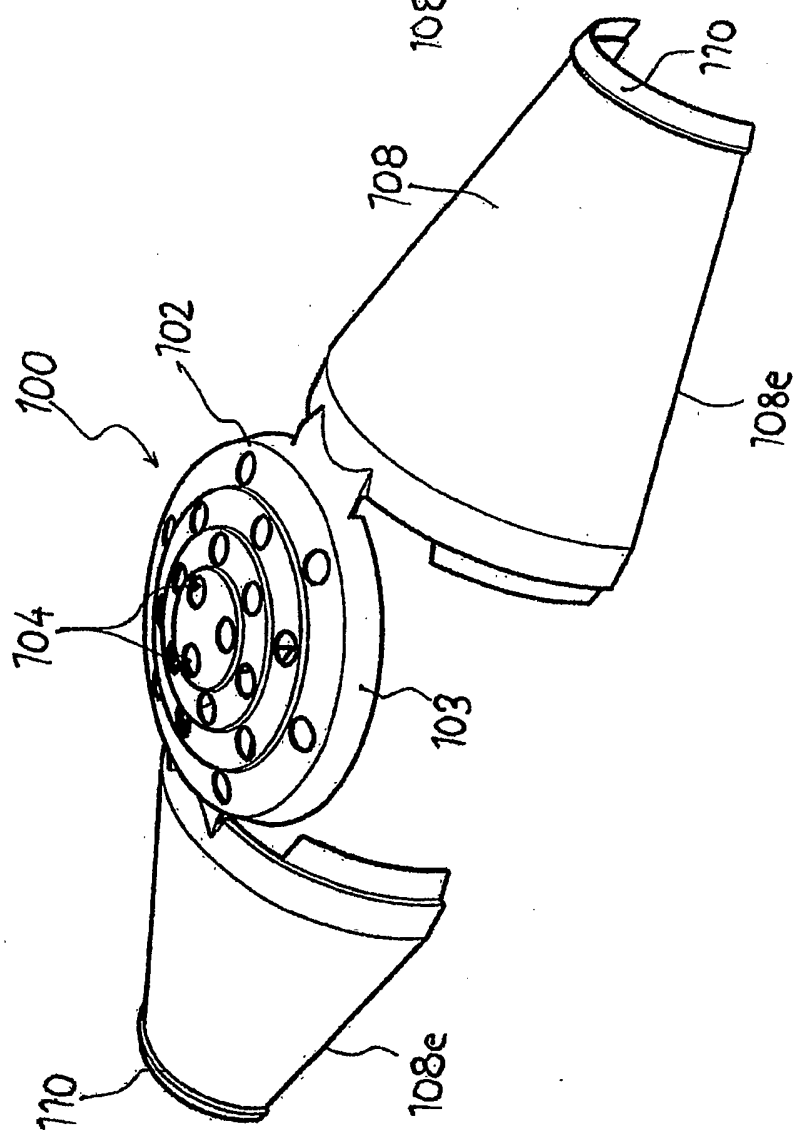


Fig 3

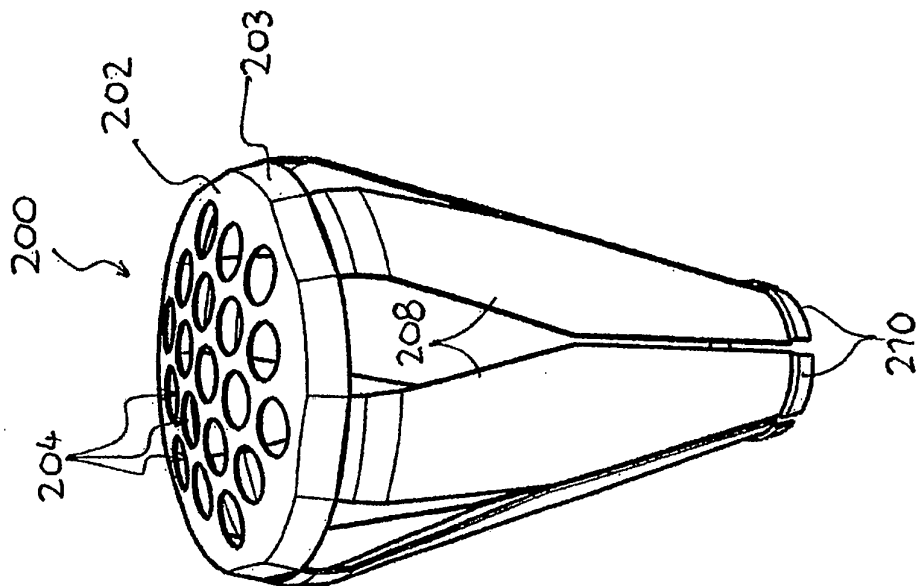


Fig 6

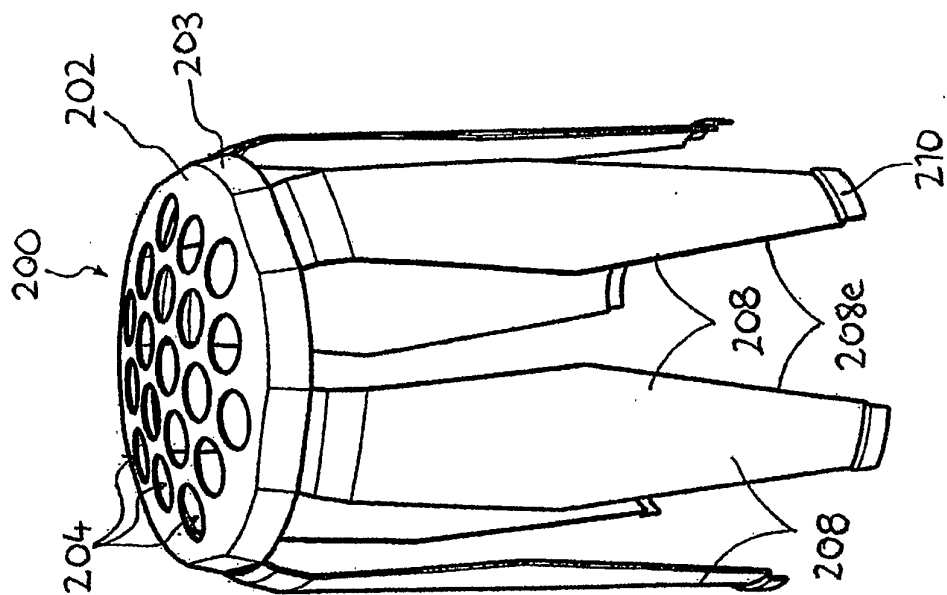


Fig 5

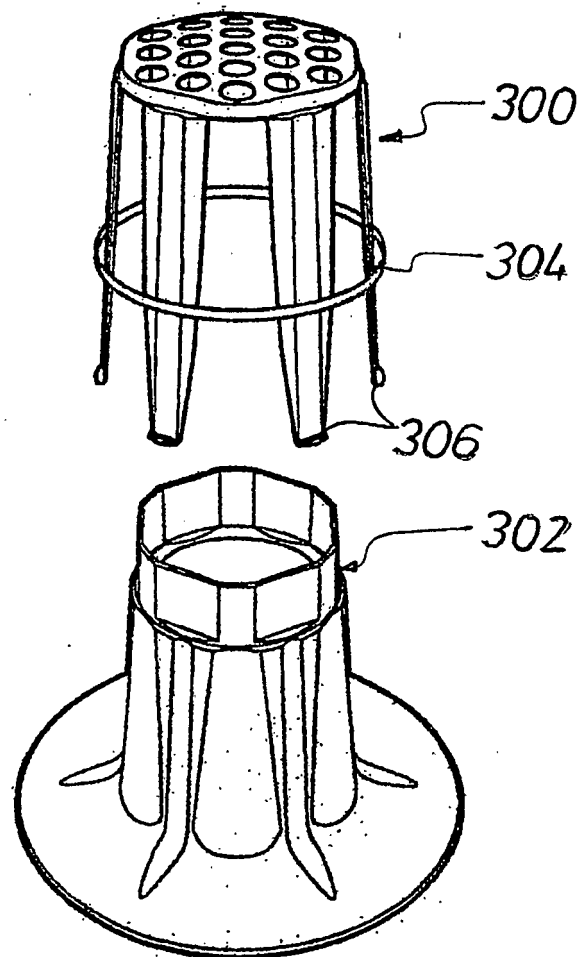


Fig 7

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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