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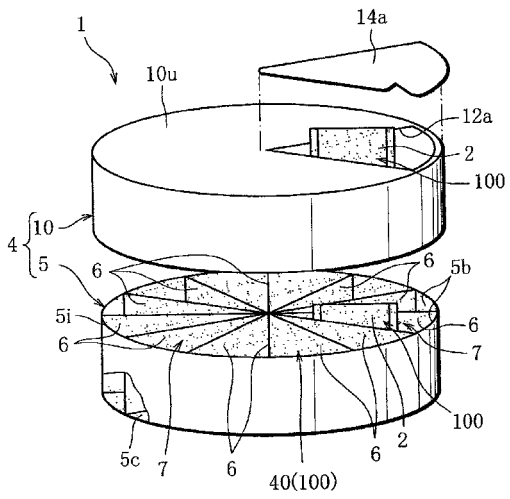
(54) **ORAL PRODUCT HOLDER DEVICE**

(57) A holder device (1) for an oral product includes a case body (5) configured to contain pouches (2) of oral tobacco, and a cover (10) configured to removably cover the case body (5). The interior of the case body (5) is divided by partition walls (6) into containing chambers (7) each for containing the pouch (2).

FIG. 1



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Description

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to holder devices for oral products, and more particularly, to a holder device which is capable of keeping items of oral product hygienic and from which the oral product items can be taken out with ease.

Background Art

[0002] Storage containers for containing solid oral products such as chewing gum have been conventionally known. Such storage containers include a type disclosed in Patent Document 1. Specifically, this storage container includes a case body for containing a large number of oral product items, a large pick-out opening formed in the case body and permitting an oral product item to be picked out, a small shake-out opening formed in the case body and permitting an oral product item to be shaken out, and lids having different sizes and configured to open and close the respective openings.

[0003] When taking out an oral product item from the case body through the shake-out opening, the user holds the storage container upside down with the opened shake-out opening directed downward, and then shakes the storage container to cause an oral product item to fall from the shake-out opening to his/her palm.

Also, as one type of oral product, oral tobacco has been known which allows a user to take in tobacco components without being lit. Snus (SNUS), which is a kind of oral tobacco, contains as its chief constituent tobacco shreds obtained by finely shredding tobacco material, and the tobacco shreds have a high moisture content. More particularly, snus can be classified into a loose type in which tobacco shreds are not wrapped, and a portion type, or what is called a pouch type, in which tobacco shreds are wrapped in a wrapper of nonwoven fabric or the like.

[0004] In the case of pouch type snus, the user puts the snus directly in his/her mouth and holds it under the upper lip, to enjoy flavor of the snus and also to take in, through the gums, the tobacco components of the tobacco shreds leaching out into saliva.

As storage containers for storing such snus, a storage container disclosed in Patent Document 2 has been known. The storage container of Patent Document 2 has a movable partition wall therein and is capable of containing unused snus and used snus separately from each other.

[0005] On the other hand, a snus storage container disclosed in Patent Document 3 includes a case body for containing a large number of snus pouches, a plurality of containing chambers formed inside the case body and separated from each other by partition walls extending inside the case body, and an opening-closing seal removably covering an aperture plane of the containing chambers.

Prior Art Documents

Patent Documents

[0006]

Patent Document 1: JP 2007-238128 A
Patent Document 2: WO 2008-066450 A1
Patent Document 3: US 2010/0018883 A1

Summary of the Invention

Problems to be Solved by the Invention

[0007] In the case of the storage container disclosed in Patent Document 1, multiple oral product items can possibly be shaken out at a time from the shake-out opening, and it is impossible for the user to take out oral product items one by one without fail. If more than necessary oral product items come out, the user has to pick each of the unnecessary product items with his/her fingers and put it back into the case body through the pick-out opening.

[0008] The oral product item thus touched with the user's fingers and put back into the case body comes into contact with other oral product items contained in the case body. It is not desirable from a hygiene standpoint that the oral product item once taken out be returned to the container.

Further, in the case of soft or readily deformable oral product, such oral product items are randomly contained in the case body, and it is therefore difficult to cause a single oral product item to be located reliably at the shake-out opening.

[0009] The storage container disclosed in Patent Document 2 is only capable of containing unused and used oral

product items separately. Also, even with the storage container disclosed in Patent Document 3, a plurality of oral product items can merely be contained in the multiple containing chambers in the storage container. Namely, the oral product items are stored in the storage container in a manner such that unused oral product items contained in one containing chamber are in contact with one another. Also, during storage, the oral product items may possibly stick together into a mass inside the storage container.

[0010] Where the oral product is pouch type snus, the tobacco components may possibly seep out together with water to the outer surface, namely, the nonwoven fabric or the like, of a pouch during storage because the tobacco shreds have a high moisture content. Thus, if snus pouches are contained in contact with one another inside the storage container, seepage of the tobacco components of a snus pouch is transferred to other adjoining snus pouches, with the result that the external appearance of the snus pouches is deteriorated.

[0011] An object of the present invention is to provide a holder device which is capable of containing oral product items such that the individual oral product items do not come into contact with one another during storage and which also allows a user to access and take out only a target oral product item with ease.

Means for Solving the Problems

[0012] The object is achieved by a holder device of the present invention, which comprises: a large number of oral product items to be put in a user's mouth for use; and a holder configured to hold the oral product items at a predetermined distance from each other such that the oral product items do not come into contact with each other, wherein the holder includes a container, and a large number of partition walls arranged in the container and dividing an interior of the container into containing chambers capable of containing respective ones of the oral product items.

[0013] Specifically, the container includes: a cylindrical case body having an aperture plane opening in one of an upper surface and an outer peripheral surface thereof, the containing chambers being formed by radially dividing an interior of the case body by the partition walls and having respective openings accessible from the aperture plane; a cylindrical cover configured to cover the aperture plane of the case body and rotatable in a circumferential direction of the case body; and a take-out opening formed in the cover and capable of being opened and closed to allow access to one of the containing chambers as the cover is rotated.

[0014] The oral product items are contained separately in the respective containing chambers separated by the partition walls and therefore, do not stick together while contained in the holder device. Also, when taking out an oral product item, the user can take out only a target oral product item without touching other oral product items, which is desirable from a hygiene standpoint. Further, a used oral product item can be temporarily kept in the empty containing chamber.

[0015] The holder may further include a ratchet mechanism configured to restrict rotation of the cover to a single rotating direction. In this case, where a used oral product item is put in a containing chamber, the containing chamber containing the used oral product item does not coincide with the take-out opening again until all oral product items in the holder device are used.

Preferably, the holder further includes a seal element configured to cover an entire opening area of the containing chambers and permitting the oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the case body.

[0016] Specifically, the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the case body so as to resealably cover a whole of the aperture plane of the case body, the pull sheet being capable of being pulled out of the cover. As the pull sheet is peeled from the upper surface of the case body, the cover is caused to rotate relative to the case body. That is, as the pull sheet is peeled off, one containing chamber opens and at the same time coincides with the take-out opening of the cover. As a result, the oral product item contained in this containing chamber is exposed through the take-out opening.

[0017] The container may include: an outer case having an elongate box-like shape; and at least one elongate inner case accommodated in the outer case in such a manner that the inner case can be pulled out from the outer case, the inner case having an aperture plane opening in one of an upper surface and a side surface thereof, wherein the partition walls are arranged inside the inner case and spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the inner case to divide an interior of the inner case into the containing chambers. The oral product items are contained separately in the respective containing chambers separated by the partition walls and therefore, do not stick together while contained in the holder device.

[0018] Preferably, the holder further includes opening-closing seals affixed to the inner case and resealably covering the respective containing chambers. Also, the container may include upper and lower inner cases capable of being accommodated in the outer case in two tiers.

The holder may further include a seal element configured to cover a whole of the aperture plane of the inner case and permitting the oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the inner case.

[0019] Specifically, the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the inner case so as to resealably cover the whole aperture plane of the inner case, the pull sheet being capable of being pulled out of the outer case.

The pull sheet may have a distal end fixed to an open end of the outer case, or have a pull tab extended out of an open end of the outer case.

[0020] The seal element may further include a cutter arranged on an outer surface of the outer case and capable of cutting the pull sheet. In this case, the cutter is used to cut the pull sheet for a length corresponding to a distance over which the inner case has been pulled out, that is, the peeling length of the pull sheet.

The container may include: an elongate lower base having a take-out chamber formed only in one end portion thereof, the take-out chamber opening upward and capable of containing only one of the oral product items; and an upper case slidably stacked on the lower base and extending along the lower base, the upper case having an aperture plane opening in a lower surface thereof, the containing chambers being formed in an interior of the upper case by the partition walls and arranged in a longitudinal direction of the upper case, the containing chambers being accessible from the aperture plane, wherein each of the containing chambers is capable of coinciding with the take-out chamber in accordance with a position to which the upper case is slid.

[0021] The holder may further include a seal element configured to cover a whole of the aperture plane of the upper case and permitting the oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the upper case. Specifically, the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the upper case so as to resealably cover the whole aperture plane of the upper case.

The pull sheet may have a pull tab, and the lower base may have a slit formed near the take-out chamber and configured such that the pull tab is passed therethrough toward an underside of the lower base.

[0022] Also in this case, the oral product items are contained separately in the respective containing chambers partitioned by the partition walls and, therefore, do not stick together while contained in the holder device. Further, as the pull sheet is pulled, it is peeled off the lower surface of the upper case and at the same time, the upper case slides in one direction relative to the lower base. Thus, when a containing chamber containing an oral product item coincides with the take-out chamber, the oral product item contained in that containing chamber drops into the take-out chamber. The upper case is then slid in the opposite direction, whereupon the take-out chamber is exposed, enabling the user to easily take out the oral product item.

[0023] The holder device may further comprise a reel rotatably arranged in the lower base and configured to wind and unwind the pull sheet while being accompanied by sliding of the upper case.

Preferably, an inner surface of the container is waterproofed. In this case, even if the content of an oral product item seeps out to its outer surface, such seepage does not adhere to other oral product items.

Each of the oral product items includes tobacco particles made from tobacco material and a wrapper wrapping the tobacco particles therein, and allows a user to take in tobacco components via saliva when put in the user's mouth.

Advantageous Effects of the Invention

[0024] With the holder device according to the present invention, the oral product items can be contained so that the individual oral product items may not come into contact with one another during storage, and the user can easily access and take out only a target oral product item.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0025]

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a holder device of cylindrical container type according to Embodiment A(1) of the preset invention.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged sectional view showing an outer peripheral wall of a case body and a peripheral wall of a cover as viewed from above the holder device of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment A(2) of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment A(3) of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a case body of a holder device according to Embodiment A(4) of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a plan view of a cover of the holder device according to Embodiment A(4) of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a plan view of the holder device according to Embodiment A(4) of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a plan view of a holder device according to Embodiment A(5) of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a perspective view of a case body of the holder device according to Embodiment A(5) of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a side view of the holder device according to Embodiment A(5) of the present invention.

FIG. 11 is a side view of a holder device according to Embodiment A(6) of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of a holder device of box container type according to Embodiment B(1) of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(2) of the present invention.

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(3) of the present invention.
FIG. 15 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(4) of the present invention.
FIGS. 16(A) to 16(C) are sectional views of a holder device according to Embodiment B(5) of the present invention.
FIGS. 17(A) to 17(C) are sectional views of a holder device according to Embodiment B(6) of the present invention.
FIGS. 18(A) to 18(C) are sectional views of a holder device according to Embodiment B(7) of the present invention.
FIG. 19 is a sectional view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(8) of the present invention.
FIG. 20 is a plan view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(9) of the present invention.
FIG. 21 is a front view of the holder device according to Embodiment B(9) of the present invention.
FIG. 22 is a sectional view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(10) of the present invention.
FIG. 23 is a sectional view of a holder device according to Embodiment B(11) of the present invention.
FIGS. 24(A) and 24(B) are side views of a holder device according to Embodiment B(12).
FIGS. 25(A) to 25(C) are sectional views of a holder device of two-tiered box type according to Embodiment C(1) of the present invention.
FIG. 26 is a sectional view of a holder device according to Embodiment C(2) of the present invention.
FIG. 27 is a schematic view of a reel mechanism shown in FIG. 26.
FIG. 28 is a side view of the holder device according to Embodiments C(1) and C(2), provided with an outer case.
FIG. 29 is a schematic view of the holder device according to Embodiments C(1) and C(2), in which a lower base is held by an upper case.
FIG. 30 is a perspective view of a holder device of plate type according to Embodiment D(1) of the present invention.
FIG. 31 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment D(2) of the present invention.
FIG. 32 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment D(3) of the present invention.
FIG. 33 is a perspective view of a holder device according to Embodiment D(4) of the present invention.

Mode for Carrying out the Invention

[0026] First, holder devices of cylindrical container type belonging to the group of Embodiments A will be described. A holder device 1 of Embodiment A(1) illustrated in FIG. 1 has a large number of pouches 2 as oral product and a container case 4 capable of containing the pouches 2.

Each pouch 2 includes tobacco particles made from tobacco material, and a wrapper, that is, a sheet of nonwoven fabric, wrapping the tobacco particles therein. The tobacco particles are obtained by shredding or pulverizing tobacco material. When using the pouch 2, the user takes out the pouch 2 from the container case 4 and puts the pouch 2 in his/her mouth. Specifically, the user holds the pouch 2 under his/her upper lip and takes in, through the gums, the tobacco components of the tobacco particles leaching out into the saliva. Accordingly, the user can taste the flavor of the tobacco particles while taking in the tobacco components of the tobacco particles. In order to allow the tobacco components to easily leach out and be taken in, the tobacco particles have a high moisture content.

[0027] On the other hand, the container case 4 includes a case body 5 and a cover 10 removably covering the case body 5. The case body 5 and the cover 10 are both made of synthetic resin.

Specifically, the case body 5 is in the form of a low-profile cylinder which is open at an upper surface thereof, and a large number of partition walls 6 are arranged inside the case body 5. Each partition wall 6 rises vertically from an inner bottom surface of the case body 5 and extends radially outward from the center of the case body 5 up to a peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5. Consequently, the partition walls 6 and the peripheral wall 5i cooperate with each other to radially divide the interior of the case body 5 into a large number of containing chambers 7, and the pouch 2 is contained in each containing chamber 7. The upper edges of the partition walls 6 are located in the same plane as the upper edge of the peripheral wall 5i.

[0028] The interior of the case body 5 is waterproofed. That is, the inner bottom surface 5c, peripheral wall 5i and partition walls 6 of the case body 5, which form the containing chambers 7, are applied with a waterproofing agent 40 over their entire areas. The waterproofing agent 40 may be paraffin, for example.

The cover 10, on the other hand, is in the form of a low-profile cylinder which is open at a lower surface thereof and has a size enough to surround the upper open face end and peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5.

[0029] An opening 12a serving as a take-out opening is formed in an outer region of the upper surface 10u of the cover 10 and has a shape and a size similar to those of an aperture plane of the aforementioned containing chamber 7. Accordingly, as the cover 10 is rotated in a principal direction of the case body 5 with the case body 5 covered with the cover 10, the opening 12a becomes aligned with one of the containing chambers 7.

Further, an opening-closing seal 14a is affixed to the upper surface 10u of the cover 10 so as to cover the opening 12a. The opening-closing seal 14a is a resealable type which can be affixed again to the upper surface 10u.

[0030] The cover 10 is allowed to rotate only in one direction along the peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5. To this end, a ratchet mechanism is provided between the peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5 and a peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10.

Specifically, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the ratchet mechanism includes a single pawl 16 and a large number of pawls 18. The pawl 16 protrudes from an outer peripheral surface 5a of the peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5, and the pawls 18 protrude from an inner peripheral surface 10a of the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10. The pawls 16 and 18 are each generally in the form of a right triangle. That is, the pawl 16; 18 has a perpendicular surface 16a; 18a and an inclined surface 16b; 18b. The perpendicular surface 16a; 18a is perpendicular to the corresponding peripheral wall 5i; 10i, and the inclined surface 16b; 18b is inclined with respect to the corresponding peripheral wall 5i; 10i. The pawls 16 and 18 are oriented in directions opposite to each other, as viewed in the circumferential direction of the peripheral walls 5i and 10i. Accordingly, when the cover 10 is rotated relative to the case body 5 in the principal direction from left to right, as viewed in FIG. 2, and one of the pawls 18 of the cover 10 reaches the single pawl 16 of the case body 5, the pawl 18 runs on the pawl 16 with the inclined surface 18b thereof disposed in sliding contact with the inclined surface 16b of the pawl 16. While being accompanied by elastic deformation of the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10, the pawl 18 thereafter climbs over the pawl 16, and at this point of time, the peripheral wall 10i is rid of the elastic deformation. As a result, the pawl 18, which has climbed over the pawl 16, moves toward the peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5 and assumes a position where the pawl 18 can abut against the pawl 16 when the cover 10 is rotated in the opposite direction. Namely, when the cover 10 is rotated in the opposite direction from right to left, the perpendicular surface 18a of the pawl 18 abuts against the perpendicular surface 16a of the pawl 16, thus preventing inverse rotation of the cover 10. The pawls 18 are distributed in the circumferential direction of the cover 10 at regular intervals equal to the circumferential length of a section of the peripheral wall 5i corresponding to one containing chamber 7. Also, when one pawl 18 is butted against the pawl 16 in the opposite direction of the cover 10, the opening 12a coincides with a corresponding one of the containing chambers 7.

[0031] With the holder device 1 of the aforementioned Embodiment A(1), the user peels the opening-closing seal 14a from the upper surface 10u of the cover 10 to have the opening 12a exposed, and rotates the cover 10 in the forward direction, if necessary, to make the opening 12a coincide with one of the containing chambers 7. While in this state, the user picks, with his/her fingers, the pouch 2 contained in that containing chamber 7 and takes out the pouch 2 from the holder device 1 through the opening 12a. The user puts the pouch 2 in his/her mouth and holds it between the upper lip and the gum, so that the user can enjoy the taste of tobacco.

[0032] The pouches 2 are contained individually in the respective containing chambers 7 separated by the partition walls 6, and therefore, while contained in the holder device 1, the pouches 2 do not stick together. Also, the user can pick out a pouch 2 without touching the other pouches 2. That is, the user can easily pick out only a target pouch 2. Further, even if the content of a pouch 2 seeps out to its outer surface, such seepage does not adhere to the other pouches 2. The other pouches 2 in the holder device 1 can therefore be kept hygienic.

[0033] The interiors of the containing chambers 7, that is, the inner bottom surface, peripheral wall 5i and partition walls 6 of the case body 5, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40. Thus, even if the content of a pouch 2 seeps out, such seepage is prevented from penetrating through the partition walls 6 and adhering to the pouches 2 contained in the other containing chambers 7.

After use, the used pouch 2 may be contained in the empty containing chamber 7. Since the cover 10 is allowed to rotate only in one direction, the containing chamber 7 containing the used pouch 2 does not again come to a position coinciding with the opening 12a until all of the pouches 2 contained in the holder device 1 are used.

[0034] Since the tobacco particles in the pouch 2 have a high moisture content as stated above, water contained in the tobacco particles possibly seeps out on the surface of the pouch 2. In such case, the tobacco components of the tobacco particles may also seep out together with the water. In order to compensate for such loss of the tobacco components, at least one of the wrapper of the pouch 2, namely, the nonwoven fabric sheet, and the case body 5 may contain a food flavoring agent 100. Where the food flavoring agent 100 is contained in the case body 5, it may be applied to at least one of the inner bottom surface 5c, peripheral wall 5i and each partition wall 6, which form the individual containing chambers 7, of the case body 5 over their entire area.

[0035] The food flavoring agent 100 may contain menthol, mint, vanilla, apricot, black tea, cocoa, licorice or honey singly or in combination so as to meet users' needs. The food flavoring agent 100 should, however, not spoil the savor of the tobacco particles, and also since the tobacco particles are alkaline, the use of acidic flavoring agents should be avoided.

Also, the food flavoring agent 100 is used in a powder form or in a liquid form obtained by dissolving the flavoring agent in a solvent. For the solvent, water, alcohol, glycerin, propylene glycol or the like may be used.

[0036] Where the food flavoring agent 100 is contained in the pouch 2, it is desirable that the food flavoring agent 100 contain glycerin, propylene glycol or the like that also functions as a humectant. In this case, the nonwoven fabric sheet is applied with 1 weight % of glycerin on the basis of a mixture containing tobacco particles as its chief constituent.

On the other hand, where the food flavoring agent 100 is contained in the case body 5, a menthol solution obtained by dissolving 1 weight % of menthol in alcohol is used as the food flavoring agent 100. The menthol solution is applied, by spray coating, to at least one of the inner bottom surface 5c, peripheral wall 5i and each partition wall 6, which form the individual containing chambers 7, of the case body 5 over their entire area.

[0037] A holder device 1 according to Embodiment A(2), illustrated in FIG. 3, has a case body 5 with containing chambers 7 opening sideways. Specifically, the peripheral wall 5i of the case body 5 has nearly rectangular openings formed therein so as to correspond in position to the respective containing chambers 7. An opening 12b, instead of the aforementioned opening 12a, is formed in the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10 and has a size coinciding with that of each opening formed in the case body 5. An opening-closing seal (not shown) for opening and closing the opening 12b is affixed to the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10. Also, a ratchet mechanism similar to the aforementioned ratchet mechanism is provided between the case body 5 and the cover 10, to allow the cover 10 to rotate in one direction only.

[0038] The interior of the case body 5, that is, the inner bottom surface 5c, top plate 5d and partition walls 6 of the case body 5, which form the individual containing chambers 7, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire areas.

A holder device 1 according to Embodiment A(3), illustrated in FIG. 4, includes an inner peripheral wall 9i located in the case body 5. The inner peripheral wall 9i is disposed concentrically with the peripheral wall 5i. Accordingly, a temporary containing chamber 9 is defined inside the inner peripheral wall 9i, and an annular space 20 is defined between the inner peripheral wall 9i and the peripheral wall 5i. A large number of partition walls 6 are arranged in the annular space 20. The partition walls 6 extend in radial directions of the case body 5 from the inner peripheral wall 9i to the peripheral wall 5i and are arranged at regular intervals in the circumferential direction of the case body 5. Also in this case, the partition walls 6 divide the annular space 20 radially into a large number of containing chambers 7, and the pouch 2 is contained in each of the containing chambers 7.

[0039] The interior of the case body 5, that is, the inner bottom surface 5c, peripheral wall 5i, partition walls 6 and inner peripheral wall 9i of the case body 5, which form the containing chambers 7 and the temporary containing chamber 9, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire areas.

On the other hand, the cover 10 has an opening 12c as take-out opening and another opening 12d formed in the upper surface 10u thereof, respectively. The opening 12c is located in an outer region of the upper surface 10u and has a shape and a size similar to those of the aperture plane of each containing chamber 7. The opening 12d is located in the center of the upper surface 10u and has a shape and a size coinciding with those of the temporary containing chamber 9. Also, opening-closing seals 14c and 14d are affixed to the upper surface 10u. The opening-closing seals 14c and 14d are used to open and close the openings 12c and 12d, respectively, and are of a resealable type which can be affixed again to the upper surface 10u. The openings 12c and 12d may be a single opening, and likewise, the opening-closing seals 14c and 14d may be a single seal.

[0040] A holder device 1 according to Embodiment A(4), illustrated in FIGS. 5 to 7, additionally includes a pull sheet 22 affixed to the upper surface of the case body 5 of Embodiment A(3). The pull sheet 22 is annular in shape and covers all of the containing chambers 7, namely, the annular space 20, of the case body 5.

Specifically, the pull sheet 22 has a circumferential length greater than that of the annular space 20. Thus, when the annular space 20 is covered with the pull sheet 22, a surplus portion of the pull sheet 22 forms a pull tab 22a extending upward from the upper surface of the case body 5, as shown in FIG. 5.

[0041] As illustrated in FIG. 6, the cover 10 has the aforementioned openings 12c and 12d and a pull-out slot 24 for the pull sheet 22, all formed in the upper surface 10u thereof. The openings 12c and 12d are covered with respective opening-closing seals 36 and 38 of resealable type which can be affixed again to the upper surface 10u. In FIG. 6, the opening-closing seals 36 and 38 are indicated by dot-dot-dash lines. The pull-out slot 24 is located near the opening 12c, extends in a radial direction of the cover 10, and has a size enough to permit the pull sheet 22 to be pulled out therethrough. One of opening edges of the pull-out slot 24 is formed as a zigzag cutting part 26 capable of cutting the pull sheet 22.

[0042] While the case body 5 is covered with the cover 10 as illustrated in FIG. 7, the pull sheet 22 is in a state such that the pull tab 22a is pulled out of the pull-out slot 24 and located on the upper surface 10u of the cover 10.

When taking out a pouch 2 from the holder device 1 of FIG. 7, first, the user peels off the opening-closing seal 36 to have the opening 12c exposed. The user then holds the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 and pulls the pull sheet 22 upward through the pull-out slot 24, whereby the pull sheet 22 is peeled from the upper surface of the case body 5. This peeling action causes the cover 10 to rotate clockwise relative to the case body 5, as viewed in FIG. 7. As a result, one containing chamber 7 is opened due to the pull of the pull sheet 22 and at the same time the opened containing chamber 7 coincides with the opening 12c of the cover 10 and is exposed through the opening 12c.

[0043] Accordingly, the user can easily take out the pouch 2 contained in the exposed containing chamber 7 through the opening 12c. The used pouch 2 is put in the empty containing chamber 7 or, after the opening-closing seal 38 is peeled to have the opening 12d exposed, put in the temporary containing chamber 9 through the opening 12d.

As the aforementioned pull of the pull sheet 22 is repeated, a new containing chamber 7 is opened one after the other and at the same time the opened containing chamber 7 coincides with the opening 12c and is exposed therethrough. The user can therefore access only a target pouch 2 with ease and can easily take out the target pouch 2 alone from the case body 5.

[0044] If the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 becomes too long because of the repeated pull of the pull sheet 22, the

user can cut off the surplus portion of the pull tab 22a by using the cutting part 26 of the pull-out slot 24.

A holder device 1 according to Embodiment A(5), illustrated in FIGS. 8 to 11, has the pull-out slot 24 formed in the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10, and an opening 12e similar to the opening 12b of Embodiment A(2). The opening 12e can be opened and closed by a sliding lid 30. The lid 30 is attached to the inner peripheral surface of the cover 10 and is slidable in the circumferential direction of the cover 10. Further, a cutter 34 is arranged near the pull-out slot 24. The cutter 34 extends in an axial direction of the cover 10 and has a cutting part directed in a radially outward direction of the cover 10.

[0045] Also, as shown in FIG. 9, the case body 5 has an open outer periphery, in place of the open upper surface of the case body 5 of Embodiment A(3). Specifically, the containing chambers 7 open in radially outward directions of the case body 5. In this case, the case body 5 has a top plate 5d in place of the peripheral wall 5i. Consequently, each containing chamber 7 is defined by the top plate 5d, inner bottom surface 5c, inner peripheral wall 9i and partition walls 6 of the case body 5. Also in this case, the interior of the case body 5, that is, the top plate 5d, inner bottom surface 5c, partition walls 6 and inner peripheral wall 9i of the case body 5, which form the containing chambers 7 and the temporary containing chamber 9, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire areas.

[0046] The pull sheet 22 is affixed to the outer periphery of the case body 5 and covers the openings of the individual containing chambers 7. In FIG. 10, the pull sheet 22 is indicated by a broken line. As clearly shown in FIG. 10, the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 is extended to the outside of the cover 10 through the pull-out slot 24.

When taking out a pouch 2 from the holder device 1 of Embodiment A(5), first, the user slides the lid 30 in the circumferential direction of the cover 10 to have the opening 12e exposed. Then, the user pulls the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 in the circumferential direction of the cover 10, and as the pull sheet 22 is pulled away from the cover 10, it is peeled off the outer periphery of the case body 5. This peeling action causes the cover 10 to rotate from right to left, as viewed in FIG. 10, with respect to the case body 5. Further, the containing chamber 7 which has been opened because of the peeling of the pull sheet 22 coincides with the opening 12e. Consequently, the user can take out the pouch 2 in the containing chamber 7 through the opening 12e.

[0047] A holder device 1 according to Embodiment A(6), illustrated in FIG. 11, has a long, narrow cut 32 formed in the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10, in place of the pull-out slot 24. The cut 32 extends in an axial direction of the cover 10 and is different from the pull-out slot 24 in that it opens in the lower end of the peripheral wall 10i of the cover 10. The cutter 34 is arranged in the vicinity of the cut 32.

[0048] In the case of the holder device 1 of Embodiment A(6), the user has only to position the cut 32 in alignment with the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 when putting the cover 10 over the case body 5. The user can thereafter pull the pull tab 22a of the pull sheet 22 through the cut 32 to the outside of the cover 10. The cut 32 facilitates detachment and attachment of the cover 10 from and to the case body 5 when the user refills the case body 5 with pouches 2. For purposes of refilling, a refill case body 5 containing pouches 2 may be prepared separately, and the cover 10 may be put over the refill case body 5 to obtain a new holder device 1.

[0049] The holder devices 1 of Embodiments A(2) to A(6) also provide advantages similar to those of Embodiment A (1). Also, with the holder devices 1 of Embodiments A(3) to A(6), the pouch 2 being used can be temporarily contained in the temporary containing chamber 9 of the case body 5. Needless to say, the temporary containing chamber 9 may be used to contain a used pouch 2.

In the holder devices 1 of Embodiments A(1) to A(6), the case body 5 and the cover 10 may be made of colorless, transparent synthetic resin. In this case, the user can ascertain the number of the remaining pouches 2 contained in the holder device 1 without the need to look into the individual containing chambers 7 through the opening 12a, 12b, 12c, 12e.

[0050] Further, in the holder devices 1 of Embodiments A(1) to A(4), the opening-closing seal 14a, 14c, 14d for covering the opening 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d may be replaced by a sliding-type or hinge-type lid, for example.

In the holder devices 1 of Embodiments A(5) and A(6), on the other hand, the sliding lid 30 may be replaced with a lid rotatable about a hinge or with an opening-closing seal.

[0051] Holder devices 1 of box container type belonging to the group of Embodiments B will be now described.

The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(1), illustrated in FIG. 12, has an outer case 52 in the form of an elongate box, and an inner case 42 slidably accommodated in the outer case 52. The outer case 52 and the inner case 42 are both made of synthetic resin. The outer case 52 is open at one end. Thus, when the inner case 42 is completely accommodated in the outer case 52, an outer end face 42a of the inner case 42 is exposed through the open end of the outer case 52.

[0052] The inner case 42 is open solely at its upper surface, and a large number of partition walls 44 are arranged inside the inner case 42. The partition walls 44 extend across the interior of the inner case 42 and are equally spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the inner case 42. Consequently, the partition walls 44 divide the interior of the inner case 42 into a large number of containing chambers 46, and each containing chamber 46 has a size enough to contain the pouch 2.

[0053] Each partition wall 44 has an arcuate cut formed in a central portion of an upper edge thereof. The upper edge portions on both sides of the cut are located in the same plane as the aperture plane of the inner case 42.

Further, the interiors of the containing chambers 46, that is, an inner bottom surface 42c, inner side surfaces 42i and partition walls 44 of the inner case 42, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire areas.

[0054] A tab 48 is formed at an upper edge of the outer end face 42a of the inner case 42 and extends in a width direction of the inner case 42. The tab 48 serves not only as a pull which the user holds to pull the inner case 42 out of the outer case 52, but also as a mark indicative of the aperture plane of the inner case 42, that is, the orientation of the openings of the containing chambers 46. Specifically, the user holds the holder device 1 with the tab 48 of the inner case 42 located upward, and then pulls the inner case 42 out of the outer case 52. It is therefore possible to avoid a situation where the user mistakenly pulls the inner case 42 with the openings of the containing chambers 46 directed downward and the pouches 2 drop from the containing chambers 46.

[0055] The holder device 1 is further provided with a stopper mechanism 50 for limiting the amount of pull of the inner case 42. The stopper mechanism 50 includes, for example, a pair of engaging portions 50a and 50b capable of engaging with each other and formed by parts of the inner and outer cases 42 and 52, respectively. Specifically, the engaging portion 50a is formed at the lower edge of an inner end face 42b of the inner case 42 located longitudinally opposite the outer end face 42a, extends in the width direction of the inner case 42 over its entire width, and is directed obliquely downward toward the outer end face 42a of the inner case 42. The other engaging portion 50b is formed at the open end-side bottom of the outer case 52, extends in the width direction of the outer case 52 over its entire width, and is directed obliquely upward toward the closed end of the outer case 52. Thus, when the inner case 42 is about to be completely pulled out of the outer case 52, the engaging portions 50a and 50b come into engagement with each other. Where the holder device 1 is provided with the stopper mechanism 50, the inner case 42 is prevented from being completely pulled out of the outer case 52 even if the user jerks out the inner case 42. The stopper mechanism 50 is also effective in preventing the pouches 2 from flying out of the containing chambers 46.

[0056] Also with the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(1), the pouches 2 can be separately contained in the inner case 42, and by pulling out the inner case 42 from the outer case 52, the user can take out a desired pouch 2 without touching the other pouches 2, like the holder devices 1 belonging to the group of Embodiments A. The holder device 1 can also be used to contain a used pouch 2 in an empty containing chamber 46. Further, the pouches 2 are contained separately from one another, and therefore, if the content of a pouch 2 seeps out, such seepage does not adhere to the other pouches 2.

[0057] Furthermore, the interiors of the containing chambers 46, that is, the inner bottom surface 42c, inner side surfaces 42i and partition walls 44 of the inner case 42, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 over their entire areas. Thus, even if the content of a pouch 2 seeps out, such seepage is prevented from penetrating through the partition walls 44 and adhering to the pouches 2 contained in the other containing chambers 46.

In Embodiment B(2) illustrated in FIG. 13, the inner case 42 further includes opening-closing seals 56 detachably covering the aperture planes of the respective containing chambers 46. The opening-closing seals 56 are each a resealable type which can be affixed again to the upper surface of the inner case 42. The opening-closing seals 56 may alternatively be a single seal covering the whole aperture plane of the inner case 42.

[0058] In Embodiment B(3) illustrated in FIG. 14, the outer case 52 further includes an opening 54 formed in the upper surface thereof. The opening 54 has a size such that while the inner case 42 is accommodated in the outer case 52, the opening 54 coincides with one containing chamber 46. Further, an opening-closing seal 57 is affixed to the upper surface of the outer case 52 so as to resealably cover the opening 54. With the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(3), by peeling the opening-closing seal 57, the user can access the containing chambers 46 also from the opening 54.

[0059] In Embodiment B(4) illustrated in FIG. 15, two, upper and lower tiers of inner cases 43u and 431 are contained in the outer case 52. The lower-tier inner case 431 is similar to the inner case 42 shown in FIG. 13, for example. Specifically, unused pouches 2 are contained in the respective containing chambers 46, and the opening-closing seal 56 covering a containing chamber 46 is peeled so that the pouch 2 can be taken out of that containing chamber 46.

[0060] On the other hand, the upper-tier inner case 43u is similar to the inner case 42 shown in FIG. 14. Also, like the outer case 52 shown in FIG. 14, the opening 54, which can be opened and closed by the opening-closing seal 57, is formed in the upper surface of the outer case 52. The upper-tier inner case 43u is used to contain used pouches 2, and in this case, with the inner case 43u pulled out, a used pouch 2 is put into an empty containing chamber 46 directly or through the opening 54.

[0061] Alternatively, unused pouches 2 may be contained in the upper-tier inner case 43u, and used pouches 2 may be contained in the lower-tier inner case 431.

Also, the outer cases 52 shown in FIGS. 12 to 15 may be open at both ends. In this case, the inner case 42 has opposite outer end faces 42a exposed at the respective open ends of the outer case 52, and the tab 48 is preferably formed at each of the outer end faces 42a.

[0062] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(5), illustrated in FIG. 16(A), additionally includes a single pull sheet 58 resealably covering an entire aperture plane of the inner case 42. The outer end of the pull sheet 58, that is, the distal end of the pull sheet 58 located close to the outer end face 42a of the inner case 42, is fixed to the upper edge

of the open end of the outer case 52. Thus, as the inner case 42 is pulled out from the outer case 52, the pull sheet 58 is gradually peeled from one side thereof close to the outer end face 52a (FIG. 16(B)).
Consequently, the containing chambers 46 of the inner case 42 are successively exposed from the one located closer to the outer end face 42a. When the inner case 42 is pushed back into the outer case 52 thereafter, the pull sheet 58 again covers the containing chamber 46, namely, the entire aperture plane of the inner case (FIG. 16(C)).

[0063] In the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(5), the pouch 2 is contained in each containing chamber 46, and as the pull sheet 58 is peeled, that is, as the inner case 42 is pulled out, a desired containing chamber 46 is exposed in accordance with the peeling length of the pull sheet 58, namely, the distance over which the inner case 42 is pulled out. Accordingly, the user can easily pick out the pouches 2 one by one from the containing chambers 46. A used pouch 2 may be temporarily contained in the containing chamber 46 from which the pouch 2 has been taken out.

[0064] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(6), illustrated in FIG. 17, is provided with the inner case 42, the outer case 52 and the pull sheet 58, like the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(5). This embodiment differs from Embodiment B(5) only in that the distal end of the pull sheet 58 is not fixed to the open end of the outer case 52 but is formed as a pull tab 59 (FIG. 17(A)).

[0065] The user holds the pull tab 59 of the pull sheet 58, and with the pull sheet 58 folded back around the upper edge of the open end of the outer case 52 as shown in FIG. 17(B), the user pulls the pull tab 59 toward the closed end of the outer case 52 located opposite the open end, whereby the inner case 42 is pulled out from the outer case 52 with the pull sheet 58 gradually peeled from the inner case 42, and the containing chambers 46 are successively exposed from the one closest to the outer end face 42a. When the inner case 42 is pushed back into the outer case 52, the pull sheet 58 is again affixed to the inner case 42 as the inner case 42 enters the outer case 52, and covers the containing chambers 46 one after the other (FIG. 17(C)).

[0066] Also in the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(6), the pouch 2 is contained in each containing chamber 46, and as the pull sheet 58 is peeled, namely, as the inner case 42 is pulled out, the containing chambers 46 are exposed in accordance with the peeling length of the pull sheet 58, that is, the distance over which the inner case 42 is pulled out. The user can therefore take out the pouches 2 one by one from the inner case 42.
The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(7), illustrated in FIG. 18, additionally includes a cutter 60a arranged on the upper surface of the outer case 52 and capable of cutting the pull sheet 58 (FIG. 18(A)). Specifically, the cutter 60a extends in the width direction of the outer case 52 and is used to cut the pull sheet 58 for a length corresponding to the distance over which the inner case 42 is pulled out, that is, the peeling length of the pull sheet 58 (FIG. 18(B)). In this case, when the inner case 42 is pushed back into the outer case 52 as shown in FIG. 18(C), the containing chamber 46 exposed due to the cutting of the pull sheet 58 remains open.

[0067] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(8), illustrated in FIG. 19, is provided with a folding cutter 60b. Specifically, the cutter 60b is attached to the upper surface of the outer case 52 through a hinge 62 and is swingable about the hinge 62 between an upright position indicated by the solid line in FIG. 19, and a folded position indicated by the dot-dot-dash line. While in the folded position, the cutter 60b can be brought into close contact with the upper surface of the outer case 52.

[0068] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(9), illustrated in FIGS. 20 and 21, is provided with a sliding cutter 60c. The cutter 60c includes a supporting base 63, and as shown in FIG. 20, the supporting base 63 extends immediately above the outer case 52 in the width direction of the outer case 52 and has legs at its opposite ends, respectively. The supporting base 63 holds the opposite side surfaces of the outer case 52 with its legs and thus is attached to the outer case 52 so that a predetermined gap may be secured between the supporting base 63 and the upper surface of the outer case 52 (FIG. 21). Also, a slot 64 extending in the width direction of the outer case 52 is formed in a central portion of the supporting base 63. A movable cutting part 61 is inserted into the slot 64 so as to be slidable along the slot 64.

[0069] In the case of the holder device 1 of Embodiment B(9), the pull sheet 58 is passed through the gap between the upper surface of the outer case 52 and the supporting base 63 and is cut by sliding the movable cutting part 61.
The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(10), illustrated in FIG. 22, further includes a stopper mechanism. When the inner case 42 is pulled out from the outer case 52, the stopper mechanism prevents the inner case 42 from being pulled too fast from the outer case 52. Specifically, as shown in FIG. 22, a plurality of grooves 55 each with a triangular cross section are formed in a lower surface 42d of the inner case 42. The grooves 55 extend in the width direction of the inner case 42 and are spaced from each other in the longitudinal direction of the inner case 42 at equal intervals identical with the pitch of the containing chambers 46. Specifically, the grooves 55 are formed in the lower surface 42d of the inner case 42 at locations corresponding to the centers of the respective partition walls 44. A ridge 65 with a triangular cross section is formed on an inner bottom surface 52b of the outer case 52 at a location close to its open end. The ridge 65, which is capable of engaging with one of the grooves 55 in the inner case 42, extends in the width direction of the outer case 52.

[0070] While the inner case 42 is received in its entirety in the outer case 52, the groove 55 nearest to the outer end face 42a of the inner case 42 is engaged with the ridge 65 of the outer case 52. As the pull sheet 58 is pulled and thus

the inner case 42 is applied with force in the pull-out direction, the groove 55 of the inner case 42 is disengaged from the ridge 65 of the outer case 52, and the inner case 42 is pulled out from the outer case 52. When one containing chamber 46 is exposed, the next groove 55 of the inner case 42 engages with the ridge 65 of the outer case 52, so that the pull, or sliding, of the inner case 42 is restricted.

[0071] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(11), illustrated in FIG. 23, includes a container case 66 having the pull sheet 58 affixed to an upper surface thereof and corresponding to the inner case 42. Also in this case, by peeling the pull sheet 58 to cause a desired containing chamber 46 containing a pouch 2 to be exposed, the user can take out the pouch 2 from the container case 66. The container case 66 of Embodiment B(11) can also be used as the inner case 42, namely, a refill inner case, for the holder devices 1 of Embodiments B(6) to B(8) shown in FIGS. 17 to 19.

[0072] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment B(12), illustrated in FIG. 24, has a window 67 formed in an outer side surface of the outer case 52. The window 67 has a rectangular shape extending in the longitudinal direction of the outer case 52. Where the window 67 is thus formed, the corresponding outer side surface of the inner case 42 is partly exposed through the window 67. When taking out the inner case 42 from the outer case 52, therefore, the user can slide the inner case 42 while pushing, with his/her thumb or finger, the exposed side surface of the inner case 42 exposed through the window 67.

[0073] Further, in the holder device 1 of FIG. 24(A), the exposed side surface of the inner case 42 is provided with an anti-slip device 68. The anti-slip device 68 is formed, for example, by embossing. The anti-slip device 68 serves to increase the frictional resistance of the exposed side surface of the inner case 42, so that the user can easily take out the inner case 42.

The holder device 1 of FIG. 24(B) is provided, in addition to or in place of the anti-slip device 68, with graduations 69 marked on the outer side surface of the inner case 42 exposed through the window 67. Numerical values of the graduations 69 are located so as to correspond to the respective containing chambers 46. Specifically, when the inner case 42 is pulled out from the outer case 52, a numerical value of the graduations 69 corresponding to the number of the containing chambers 46 then exposed is positioned exactly at that edge of the window 67 which is closer to the open end of the outer case 52. Thus, by reading the numerical value of the graduations 69, the user can ascertain the number of the pouches 2 remaining in the inner case 42.

[0074] In all holder devices belonging to the above group of Embodiments B, the containing chambers 46 open upward but may alternatively open to one side of the inner case 42. In this case, the outer cases 52 shown in FIGS. 14 and 15 are configured such that the opening 54 opens in the same direction as the containing chambers 46.

Also, in the group of Embodiments B, the inner case 42 and the outer case 52 may both be made of colorless, transparent material. In this case, the user can check the pouches 2 contained in the holder device 1 without the need to pull out the inner case 42 from the outer case 52.

[0075] Holder devices 1 of two-tiered box type belonging to the group of Embodiments C will be now described.

The holder device 1 according to Embodiment C(1), shown in FIG. 25, is provided with an upper case 72 and a lower base 82. The upper case 72 and the lower base 82 are each in the form of an elongate box and made of synthetic resin. The upper case 72 and the lower base 82 are coupled together with the former stacked upon the latter. Also, the upper case 72 is slidable in a longitudinal direction thereof relative to the lower base 82.

[0076] Specifically, the upper case 72 opens solely in its lower surface and has a large number of partition walls 74 arranged therein. The partition walls 74 extend across the interior of the upper case 72 and are equally spaced from each other in the longitudinal direction of the upper case 72. Consequently, the partition walls 74 divide the interior of the upper case 72 into a plurality of containing chambers 75. The containing chambers 75 are accessible from the aperture plane of the upper case 72 and each have a size enough to contain the pouch 2. Further, the interiors of the containing chambers 75, that is, a ceiling surface 72s, inner side surfaces 72i and partition walls 74 of the upper case 72, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire areas.

[0077] The open lower surface of the upper case 72 is covered with a single pull sheet 76 in its entirety except for both side edges of the upper case 72. Thus, the pull sheet 76 forms the bottom of the individual containing chambers 75. The pull sheet 76 has a pull tab 77 formed at its distal end.

On the other hand, the lower base 82 has a take-out chamber 83 formed in one end portion thereof. The take-out chamber 83 opens only in the upper surface of the lower base 82 and has a size nearly equal to that of the containing chamber 75, that is, a size enough to contain one pouch 2. Also, the lower base 82 has a slit 84 formed near the take-out chamber 83. The slit 84 vertically penetrates through the lower base 82 and extends in the width direction of the lower base 82. Specifically, the slit 84 has a length and a width permitting the pull sheet 76 to pass therethrough. Thus, as shown in FIG. 25(A), the distal end of the pull sheet 76 with the pull tab 77 is passed through the slit 84 and extended to the underside of the lower base 82.

[0078] While the upper case 72 and the lower base 82 are stacked one upon the other with their opposite ends respectively aligned, the take-out chamber 83 of the lower base 82 is closed with one end portion of the upper case 72. While in this state, the user pulls the pull tab 77 of the pull sheet 76 downward, whereupon the upper case 72 slides in one direction relative to the lower base 82 with the pull sheet 76 gradually peeled from the lower surface of the upper

case 72. When a containing chamber 75 of the upper case 72 coincides with the take-out chamber 83 of the lower base 82 as shown in FIG. 25(B), the pull sheet 76 is removed from between the containing chamber 75 and the take-out chamber 83, with the result that the containing chamber 75 opens at its bottom. At this time, the pouch 2, if contained in the containing chamber 75, drops from the containing chamber 75 into the take-out chamber 83. The upper case 72 is then slid in the opposite direction as shown in FIG. 25(C), whereupon the take-out chamber 83 is exposed, allowing the user to take out the pouch 2 contained in the take-out chamber 83. When the upper case 72 is slid in the opposite direction, the pull sheet 76 is again affixed to the lower surface of the upper case 72, so that the open containing chamber 75 is closed again.

[0079] Also in the holder device 1 of Embodiment C(1), the pouches 2 are separately contained in the respective containing chambers 75, and the take-out chamber 83 is capable of containing only one pouch 2. Accordingly, the user can take out a pouch 2 by just sliding the upper case 72 relative to the lower base 82 such that a containing chamber 75 coincides with the take-out chamber 83.

Also, the interiors of the containing chambers 75, that is, the ceiling surface 72s, inner side surfaces 72i and partition walls 74 of the upper case 72, are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 over their entire areas. Accordingly, even if the content of a pouch 2 seeps out, such seepage is prevented from penetrating through the partition walls 74 and adhering to the pouches 2 contained in the other containing chambers 75.

[0080] The holder device 1 according to Embodiment C(2), illustrated in FIGS. 26 and 27, is additionally provided with a reel mechanism 85 for the pull sheet 76.

The reel mechanism 85 includes a groove 88 formed in the lower base 82 in place of the aforementioned slit 84. The groove 88 opens in the upper surface of the lower base 82 and extends in the width direction of the lower base 82. A guide roller 89 is rotatably arranged in the groove 88 and extends in the width direction of the lower base 82. Specifically, the guide roller 89 is located adjacent to the take-out chamber 83 such that an apex thereof is positioned nearly at the level of an aperture plane of the groove 88, that is, the upper surface of the lower base 82.

[0081] Further, a reel 86 is rotatably arranged in the groove 88. The reel 86 is located below the guide roller 89 and extends in parallel with the guide roller 89. A recess 80 is formed in the outer surface of each of the opposite side walls of the lower base 82. The reel shaft of the reel 86 has opposite ends rotatably penetrating through the respective opposite side walls of the lower base 82 and projecting into the respective recesses 80. A round knob 87 is attached to each of the opposite ends of the reel shaft and rotatably arranged in the corresponding recess 80. Each knob 87 does not project from the upper or side surface of the lower base 82 and projects only slightly from the lower surface of the lower base 82.

[0082] The distal end of the pull sheet 76 is guided to the reel 86 via the guide roller 89 and fixed to the reel 86. Thus, as the knobs 87 are rotated in one direction together with the reel 86, the pull sheet 76 is wound around the reel 86. The winding of the pull sheet 76 causes the upper case 72 to slide relative to the lower base 82 with the pull sheet 76 gradually peeled from the lower surface of the upper case 72. As a result, the pull sheet 76 is removed from the containing chamber 75 coinciding with the take-out chamber 83, so that the containing chamber 75 opens into the take-out chamber 83, allowing the pouch 2 to drop from the containing chamber 75 into the take-out chamber 83.

[0083] When the upper case 72 is slid in the opposite direction, the pull sheet 76 is unwound from the reel 86, and the open containing chamber 75 is again closed with the pull sheet 76.

The holder devices 1 of Embodiments C(1) and C(2) may each be provided further with an outer case 70, as shown in FIG. 28. The outer case 70 is open at both ends and capable of accommodating the upper case 72 and the lower base 82 together. In this case, a slit (not shown) similar to the slit 84 of the lower base 82 is formed in the bottom surface of the outer case 70. Specifically, the distal end of the pull sheet 76 with the pull tab 77 is passed through the slit toward the underside of the outer case 70.

[0084] Further, in the case of the holder devices 1 of Embodiments C(1) and C(2), the upper case 72 may be configured to hold the lower base 82, as shown in FIG. 29. Specifically, the upper case 72 has a width greater than that of the lower base 82 and has extension wall portions 72a extending downward from the opposite side walls, respectively. The extension wall portions 72a have respective lower ends bent toward each other so as to serve as a holding rack 72b for the lower base 82. The lower surface, extension wall portions 72a and holding rack 72b of the upper case 72 cooperate with one another to define a holding chamber 71. The holding chamber 71 is open at its bottom as well as at its opposite ends and has a size large enough to accommodate the lower base 82.

[0085] Thus, when the lower base 82 is accommodated in the holding chamber 71, the upper case 72 holds the lower base 82 with its holding rack 72b. In this state, movement of the lower base 82 in both the vertical and width directions relative to the upper case 72 is restricted.

In the above holder devices 1 of Embodiments C(1) and C(2), the upper case 72 and the outer case 70 may be made of colorless, transparent synthetic resin. In this case, the user can ascertain the number of the pouches 2 remaining in the upper case 72 without the need to slide the upper case 72.

[0086] Holder devices 1 of plate type belonging to the group of Embodiments D will be now described.

The holder device 1 according to Embodiment D(1), illustrated in FIG. 30, is provided with two container plates 92, each being a plate member. The container plates 92 are coupled together by a hinge 93 and can be folded such that one is

stacked upon the other. The container plates 92 are applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over their entire surfaces.

[0087] Each container plate 92 has an inner cover 94 arranged on an inner surface thereof, and the inner cover 94 extends along an outer edge of the container plate 92 located opposite the hinge 93. A predetermined gap is secured between the inner cover 94 and the inner surface of the container plate 92 by a large number of partition ribs 95, and the partition ribs 95 are equally spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the inner cover 94. That is, the inner cover 94 and the partition ribs 95 cooperate with the inner surface of the container plate 92 to form a large number of pockets 96 lined up in the longitudinal direction of the inner cover 94. The pockets 96 open toward the hinge 93 and are each capable of receiving the pouch 2 in such a manner that the pouch 2 is partly exposed, that is, the pouch 2 can be held with the user's fingers. Also, the interiors of the pockets 96, namely, the inner surface of the inner cover 94 and the surfaces of the partition ribs 95, are applied with the waterproofing agent and the food flavoring agent (neither is shown), like the container plate 92.

[0088] When the two container plates 92 are folded, the inner covers 94 of the container plates 92 lie one over the other. Accordingly, a gap corresponding at least to the thicknesses of the two inner covers 94 is secured between the pouches 2 contained in the opposed pockets 96 of the container plates 92, and since the exposed part of each pouch 2 is small as stated above, the pouches 2 contained in one container plate 92 scarcely come into contact with those contained in the other container plate 92.

[0089] In Embodiment D(2) illustrated in FIG. 31, the container plate 92 is provided with slits 98, in place of the pockets 96.

Specifically, a mount 97, which is applied with the waterproofing agent 40 and the food flavoring agent 100 over its entire surfaces, is placed on the upper surface of the container plate 92 and is bonded, only at its outer peripheral edges, to the container plate 92. A plurality of slits 98 extending in the longitudinal direction of the container plate 92 are formed in the mount 97 such that two slits 98 adjacent to each other in the width direction of the container plate 92 form a slit pair.

[0090] Where the slit pairs are formed in this manner, the opposite end portions of a pouch 2a may be inserted through the respective slits 98 of a slit pair into the space between the mount 97 and the container plate 92, whereby the pouch 2a can be retained with its opposite end portions held between the container plate 92 and the mount 97. Alternatively, one end of a pouch 2b may be inserted from one slit 98 of a slit pair and pulled out from the other slit 98 of the slit pair, whereby the pouch 2b can be retained with its central portion held between the container plate 92 and the mount 97. Further, where the holding force is sufficiently large, a pouch 2c may be inserted at only one end portion thereof into the slit 98 so that the pouch 2c may be held between the mount 97 and the container plate 92. The container plate 92 is wrapped in a wrapper 99, and as such wrapper 99, an aluminum metallized film may be used, for example.

[0091] In Embodiment D(3) shown in FIG. 32, the mount 97, which is similar to the one used in Embodiment D(2) of FIG. 31, is not bonded to the container plate 92, and the pouches 2 are held by the mount 97 alone. Also in this case, the pouch 2 can be retained with its opposite end portions, central portion or only one end portion inserted into the slits or slit, as shown in FIG. 31. Needless to say, the mount 97 may be wrapped in the wrapper 99.

[0092] In Embodiment D(4) illustrated in FIG. 33, the pouches 2 are detachably stuck to the upper surface of the container plate 92 by adhesive, such as glue, so as to be located at a distance from each other. Also, the container plate 92 to which the pouches 2 are stuck is wrapped in the wrapper 99.

The holder devices 1 belonging to the aforementioned group of Embodiments D are provided with the pockets 96, slits 98 or adhesive for holding the pouches 2 such that the pouches 2 are separately arranged without coming into contact with one another. The user can therefore take out a desired pouch 2 without touching the other pouches 2. Also, even if the holder device 1 is shaken, a pouch 2 does not come into contact with other pouches 2. Further, the waterproofing agent 40 is applied to the entire surfaces of the container plates 92, the entire surfaces of the mount 97, and the interiors of the pockets 96, that is, the inner surfaces of the inner covers 94 and the surfaces of the partition ribs 95. Thus, even if the tobacco components seep out to the surface of a pouch 2, such seepage is not transferred to other pouches 2. The container plates 92, the inner covers 94, the mount 97 and the wrapper 99 may be made of colorless, transparent material.

[0093] The present invention is not limited to the foregoing embodiments and may be modified in various ways.

For example, the holder devices 1 of cylindrical container type illustrated in FIGS. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 9 and belonging to the group of Embodiments A are each provided with 12 partition walls 6. The number of the partition walls 6 is, however, not limited to 12 and a suitable number may be selected in accordance with the number of the pouches 2 to be contained in the holder device 1.

[0094] Similarly, in the holder devices 1 of box container type illustrated in FIGS. 12, 14 to 19, 22 and 23 and belonging to the group of Embodiments B, the partition walls 44 may be arranged in a desired manner.

Also, in the holder devices 1 of two-tiered box type illustrated in FIGS. 25 and 26 and belonging to the group of Embodiments C, the partition walls 74 may be arranged in a desired manner.

Likewise, in the holder devices 1 of plate type illustrated in FIGS. 30 to 33 and belonging to the group of Embodiments D, the number of the pockets 96 and the number of the slits 98 may be selected as desired.

[0095] Also, the pouches 2 to be contained in the holder device 1 are not limited to oral tobacco but may be any other oral products.
Further, it is not essential that the oral product be wrapped in nonwoven fabric or the like.

Explanation of Reference Signs

[0096]

1:	holder device
2:	pouch (oral product item)
4:	container case
5:	case body
5a:	outer peripheral surface
5b:	inner peripheral surface
5c:	inner bottom surface
5d:	top plate
5i:	peripheral wall
6:	partition wall
7:	containing chamber
9:	temporary containing chamber
9i:	inner peripheral wall
10:	cover
10a:	inner peripheral surface
10i:	peripheral wall
10u:	upper surface
12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 12e:	opening
14:	opening-closing seal
16, 18:	pawl
16a, 18a:	perpendicular surface
16b, 18b:	inclined surface
20:	annular space
22:	pull sheet (seal element)
22a:	pull tab

24:	pull-out slot
26:	cutting part
30:	lid
32:	cut
34:	cutter
36, 38:	opening-closing seal
40:	waterproofing agent
42:	inner case
42a, 43a:	outer end face
42b:	inner end face
42c:	inner bottom surface
42d:	lower surface
42i:	inner side surface
431, 43u:	inner case
44:	partition wall
46:	containing chamber
48:	tab
50:	stopper mechanism
50a, 50b:	engaging portion
52:	outer case
52b:	bottom surface
54:	opening
55:	groove
56, 57:	opening-closing seal
58:	pull sheet
59:	pull tab
60a, 60b, 60c:	cutter
61:	movable cutting part
62:	hinge

63:	supporting base
64:	slot
65:	ridge
66:	container case
67:	window
68:	anti-slip device
69:	graduations
70:	outer case
71:	holding chamber
72:	upper case
72a:	extension wall portion
72b:	holding rack
72i:	inner side surface
72s:	ceiling surface
74:	partition wall
75:	containing chamber
76:	pull sheet
77:	pull tab
80:	recess
82:	lower base
83:	take-out chamber
84:	slit
85:	reel mechanism
86:	reel
87:	knob
88:	groove
89:	guide roller
92:	container plate
93:	hinge

94: inner cover

95: partition rib

96: pocket

97: mount

98: slit

99: wrapper

100: food flavoring agent

Claims

1. A holder device for an oral product, comprising:

a large number of oral product items to be put in a user's mouth for use; and
a holder configured to hold said oral product items at a predetermined distance from each other such that said oral product items do not come into contact with each other,
wherein said holder includes:

a container, and
a large number of partition walls arranged in the container and dividing an interior of the container into containing chambers capable of containing respective ones of said oral product items.

2. The holder device according to claim 1, wherein the container includes:

a cylindrical case body having an aperture plane opening in one of an upper surface and an outer peripheral surface thereof, the containing chambers being formed by radially dividing an interior of the case body by the partition walls and having respective openings accessible from the aperture plane,
a cylindrical cover configured to cover the aperture plane of the case body and rotatable in a circumferential direction of the case body, and
a take-out opening formed in the cover and capable of being opened and closed to allow access to one of the containing chambers as the cover is rotated.

3. The holder device according to claim 2, wherein said holder further includes a ratchet mechanism configured to restrict rotation of the cover to a single rotating direction.

4. The holder device according to claim 2, wherein said holder further includes a seal element configured to cover an entire opening area of the containing chambers and permitting said oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the case body.

5. The holder device according to claim 4, wherein the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the case body so as to resealably cover a whole of the aperture plane of the case body, the pull sheet being capable of being pulled out of the cover.

6. The holder device according to claim 1, wherein the container includes:

an outer case having an elongate box-like shape, and
at least one elongate inner case accommodated in the outer case in such a manner that the inner case can be pulled out from the outer case, the inner case having an aperture plane opening in one of an upper surface and a side surface thereof, and
wherein the partition walls are arranged inside the inner case and spaced from each other in a longitudinal direction of the inner case to divide an interior of the inner case into the containing chambers.

7. The holder device according to claim 6, wherein the holder further includes opening-closing seals affixed to the inner case and resealably covering the respective containing chambers.

8. The holder device according to claim 6, wherein the container includes upper and lower inner cases capable of being accommodated in the outer case in two tiers.

9. The holder device according to claim 6, wherein said holder further includes a seal element configured to cover a whole of the aperture plane of the inner case and permitting said oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the inner case.

10. The holder device according to claim 9, wherein the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the inner case so as to resealably cover the whole aperture plane of the inner case, the pull sheet being capable of being pulled out of the outer case.

11. The holder device according to claim 10, wherein the pull sheet has a distal end fixed to an open end of the outer case.

12. The holder device according to claim 10, wherein the pull sheet has a pull tab extended out of an open end of the outer case.

13. The holder device according to claim 9, wherein the seal element further includes a cutter arranged on an outer surface of the outer case and capable of cutting the pull sheet.

14. The holder device according to claim 1, wherein the container includes:

an elongate lower base having a take-out chamber formed only in one end portion thereof, the take-out chamber opening upward and capable of containing only one of the oral product items, and
an upper case slidably stacked on the lower base and extending along the lower base, the upper case having an aperture plane opening in a lower surface thereof, the containing chambers being formed in an interior of the upper case by the partition walls and arranged in a longitudinal direction of the upper case, the containing chambers being accessible from the aperture plane, and
wherein each of the containing chambers is capable of coinciding with the take-out chamber in accordance with a position to which the upper case is slid.

15. The holder device according to claim 14, wherein the holder further includes a seal element configured to cover a whole of the aperture plane of the upper case and permitting the oral product item contained in each of the containing chambers to be exposed from the upper case.

16. The holder device according to claim 15, wherein the seal element includes a pull sheet detachably affixed to the upper case so as to resealably cover the whole aperture plane of the upper case.

17. The holder device according to claim 16, wherein:

the pull sheet has a pull tab, and
the lower base has a slit formed near the take-out chamber and configured such that the pull tab is passed therethrough toward an underside of the lower base.

18. The holder device according to claim 16, further comprising a reel rotatably arranged in the lower base and configured to wind and unwind the pull sheet while being accompanied by sliding of the upper case.

19. The holder device according to claim 1, wherein an inner surface of the container is waterproofed.

20. The holder device according to claim 1, wherein each of said oral product items includes tobacco particles made from tobacco material and a wrapper wrapping the tobacco particles therein, and allows a user to take in tobacco components via saliva when put in the user's mouth.

FIG. 1

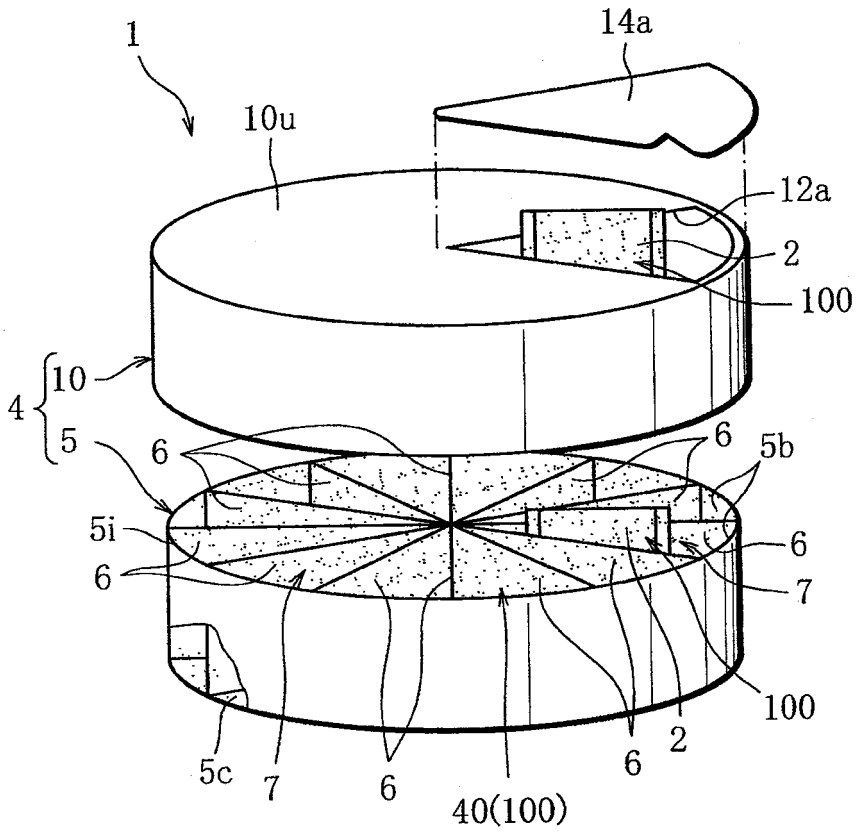


FIG. 2

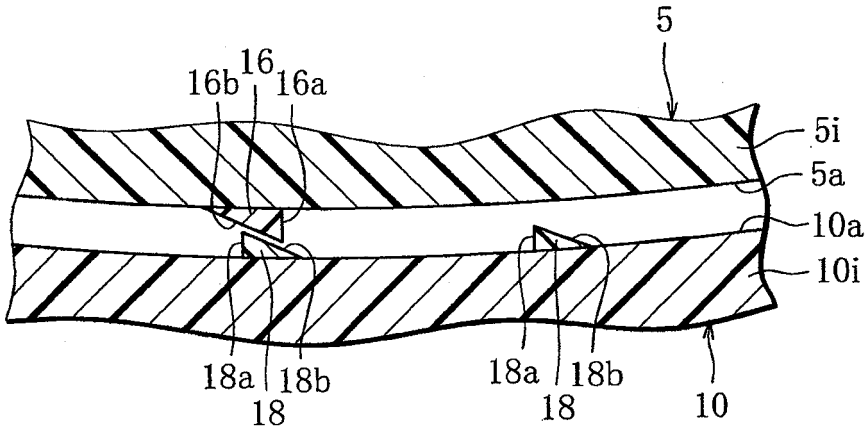

5
16b
16
16a
5i
5a
10a
10i
18a
18b
18
18a
18b
18
10

FIG. 3

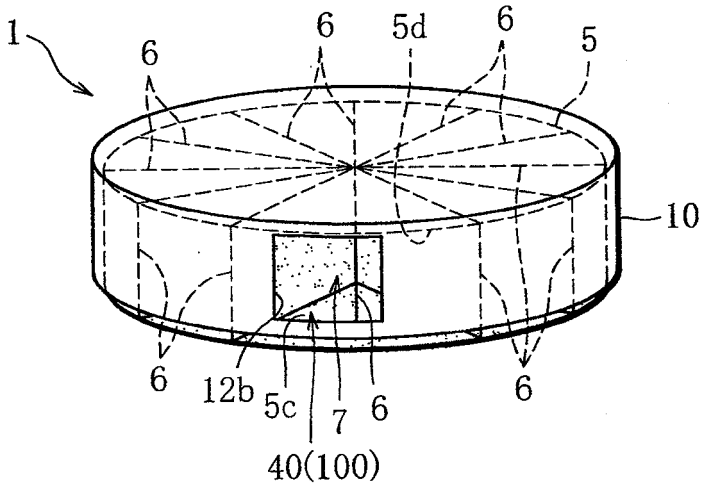

1
6
6
5d
6
5
10
6
12b
5c
7
6
6
40(100)

FIG. 4

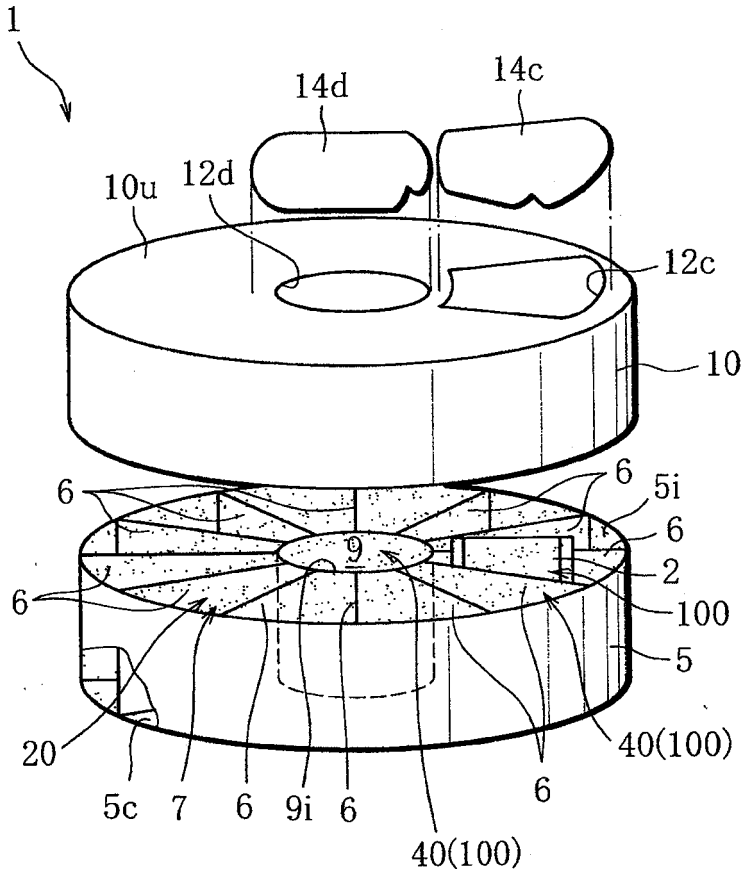


FIG. 5

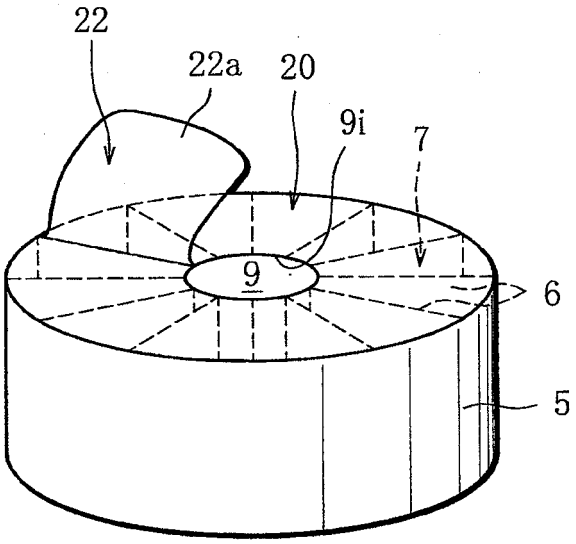


FIG. 6

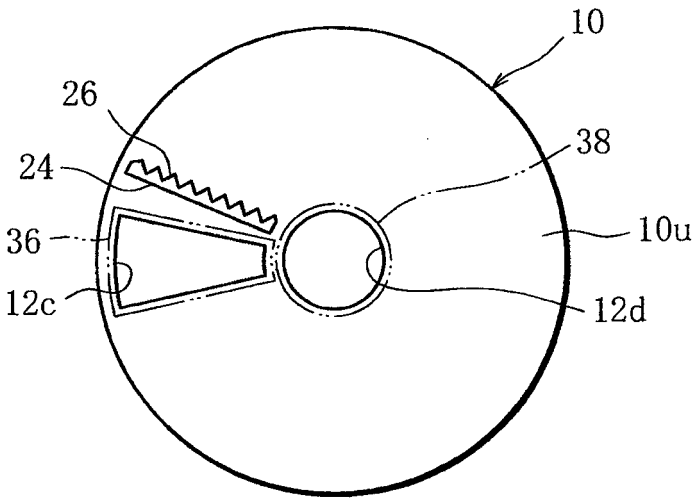


FIG. 7

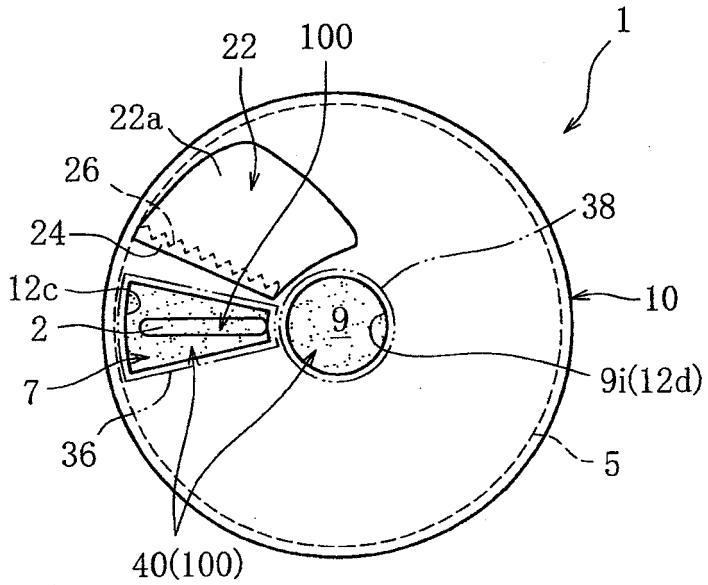

1
22
100
22a
26
24
12c
2
7
36
40(100)
38
10
9
9i(12d)
5

FIG. 8

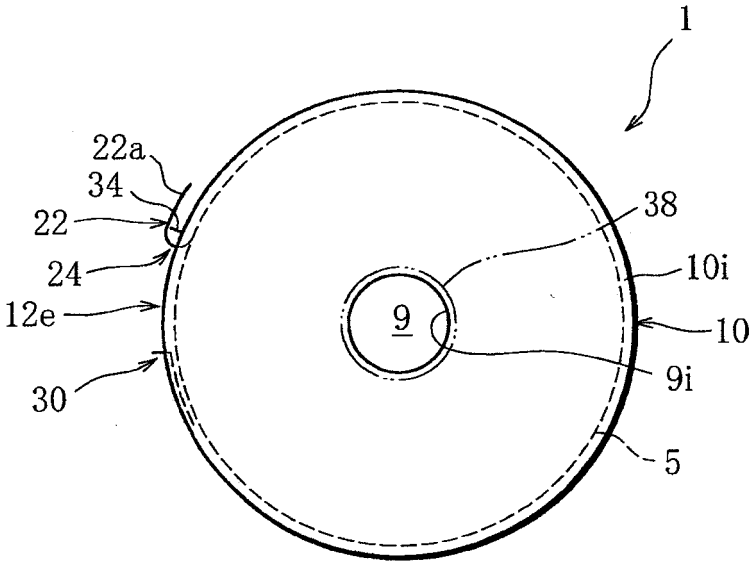

1
22a
34
22
24
12e
30
38
10i
10
9
9i
5

FIG. 9

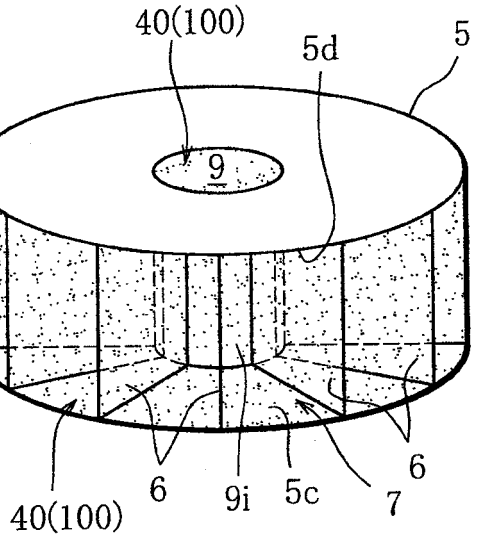


FIG. 10

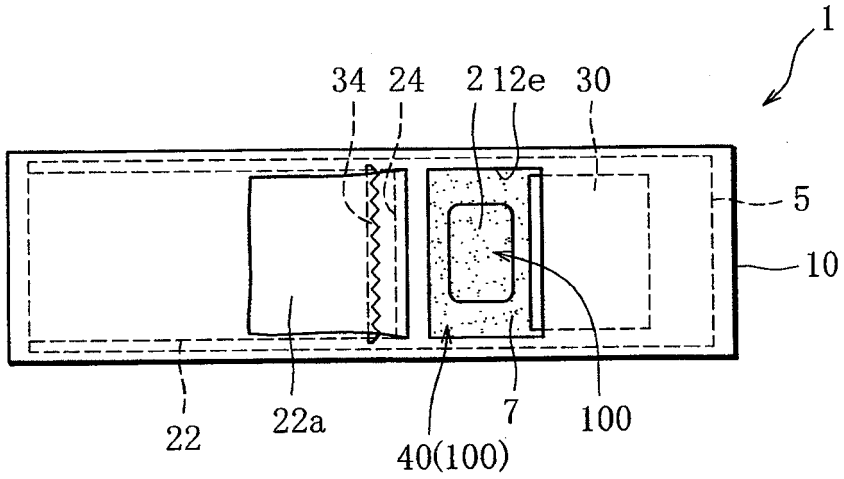


FIG. 11

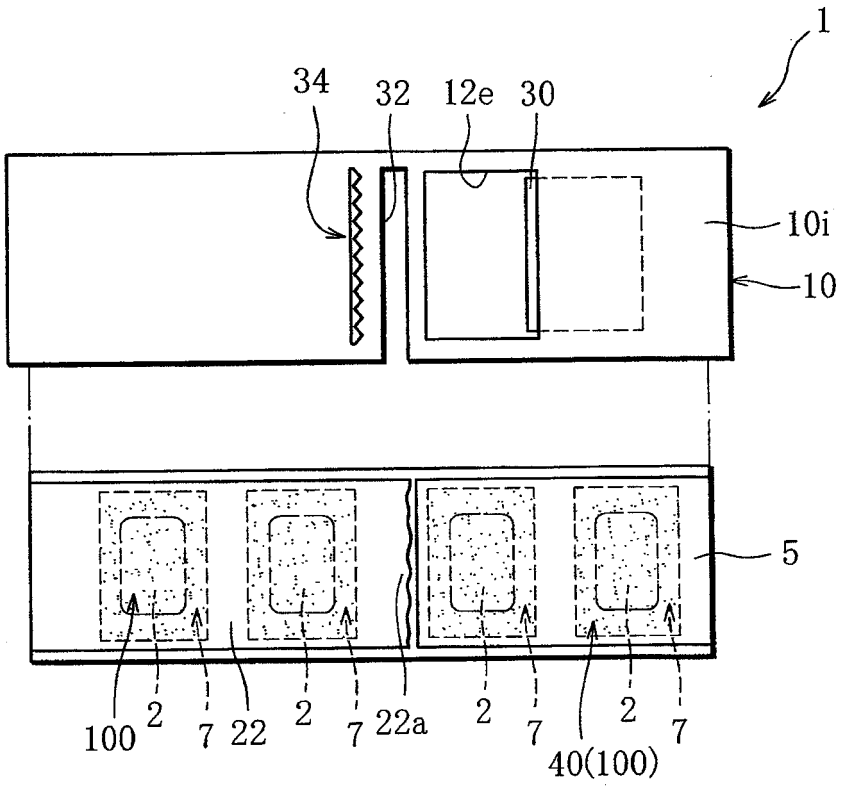


FIG. 12

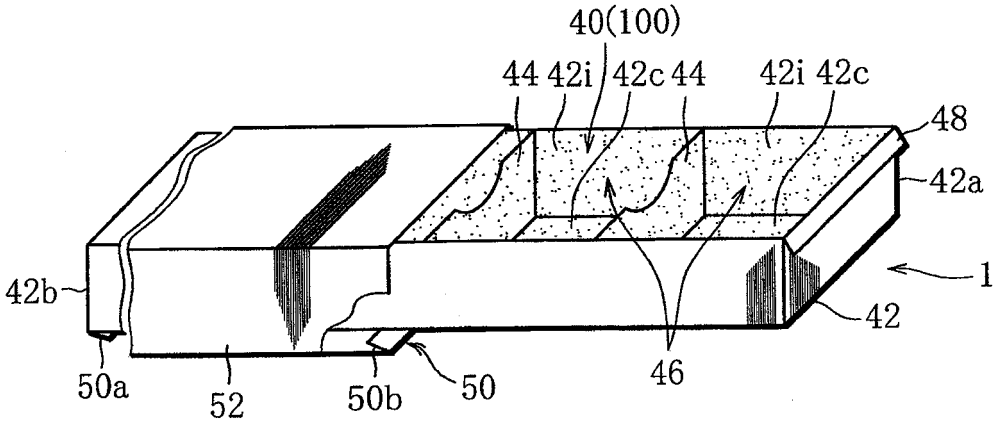

40(100)
44
42i
42c
44
42i
42c
48
42a
1
42
42b
50a
52
50b
50
46

FIG. 13

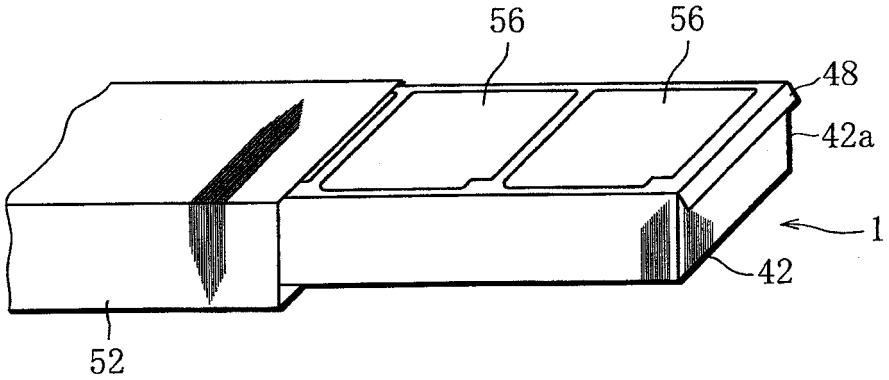

56
56
48
42a
1
42
52

FIG. 14

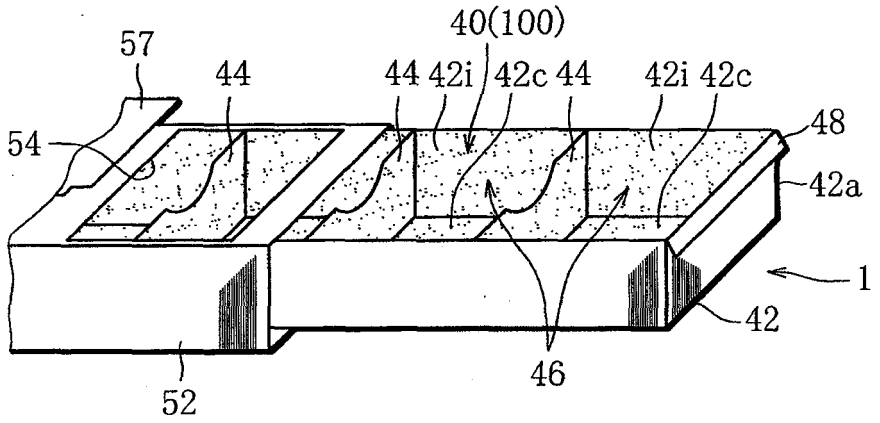

40(100)
57
44
44 42i 42c 44
42i 42c
54
48
42a
1
42
46
52

FIG. 15

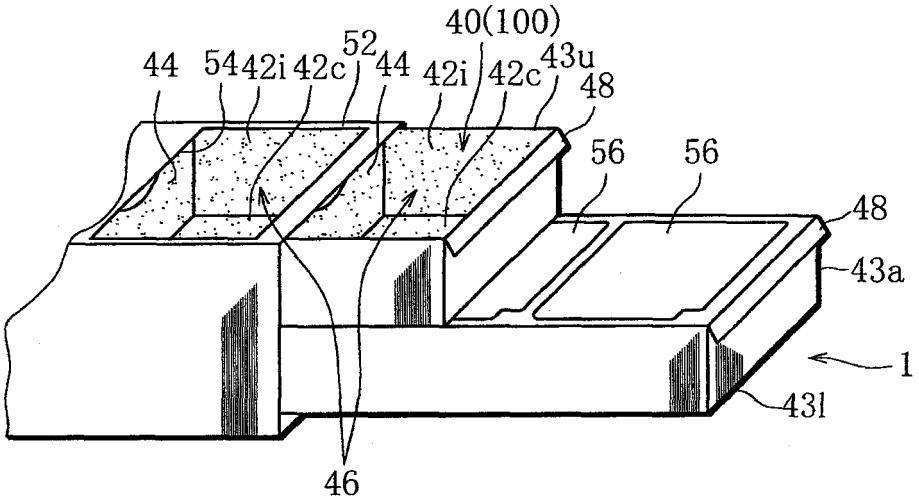

40(100)
44
54
42i
42c
52
44
42i
42c
43u
48
56
56
48
43a
1
43l
46

FIG. 16

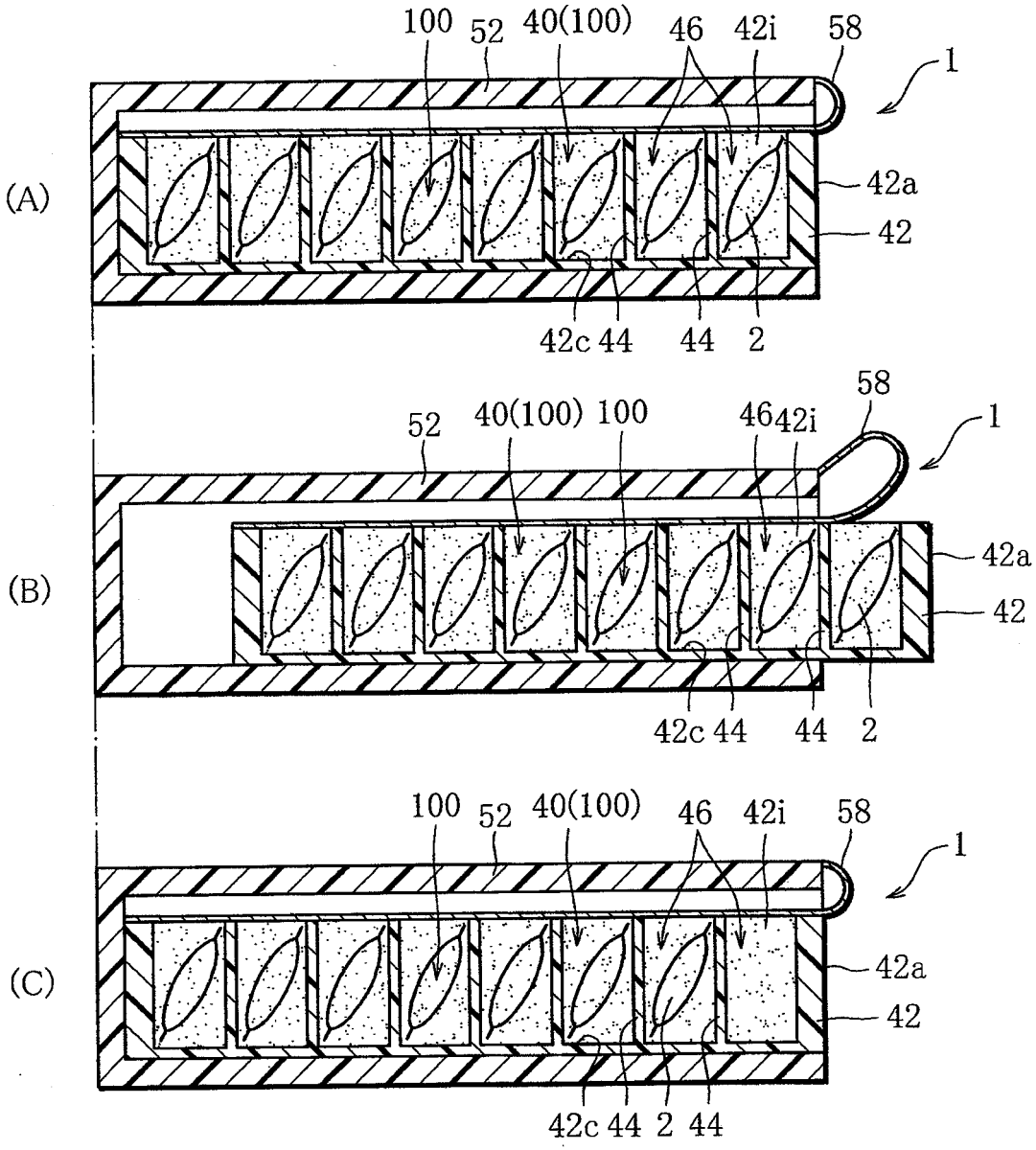

(A)
100
52
40(100)
46
42i
58
1
42a
42
42c
44
44
2
(B)
52
40(100)
100
46
42i
58
1
42a
42
42c
44
44
2
(C)
100
52
40(100)
46
42i
58
1
42a
42
42c
44
2
44

FIG. 17

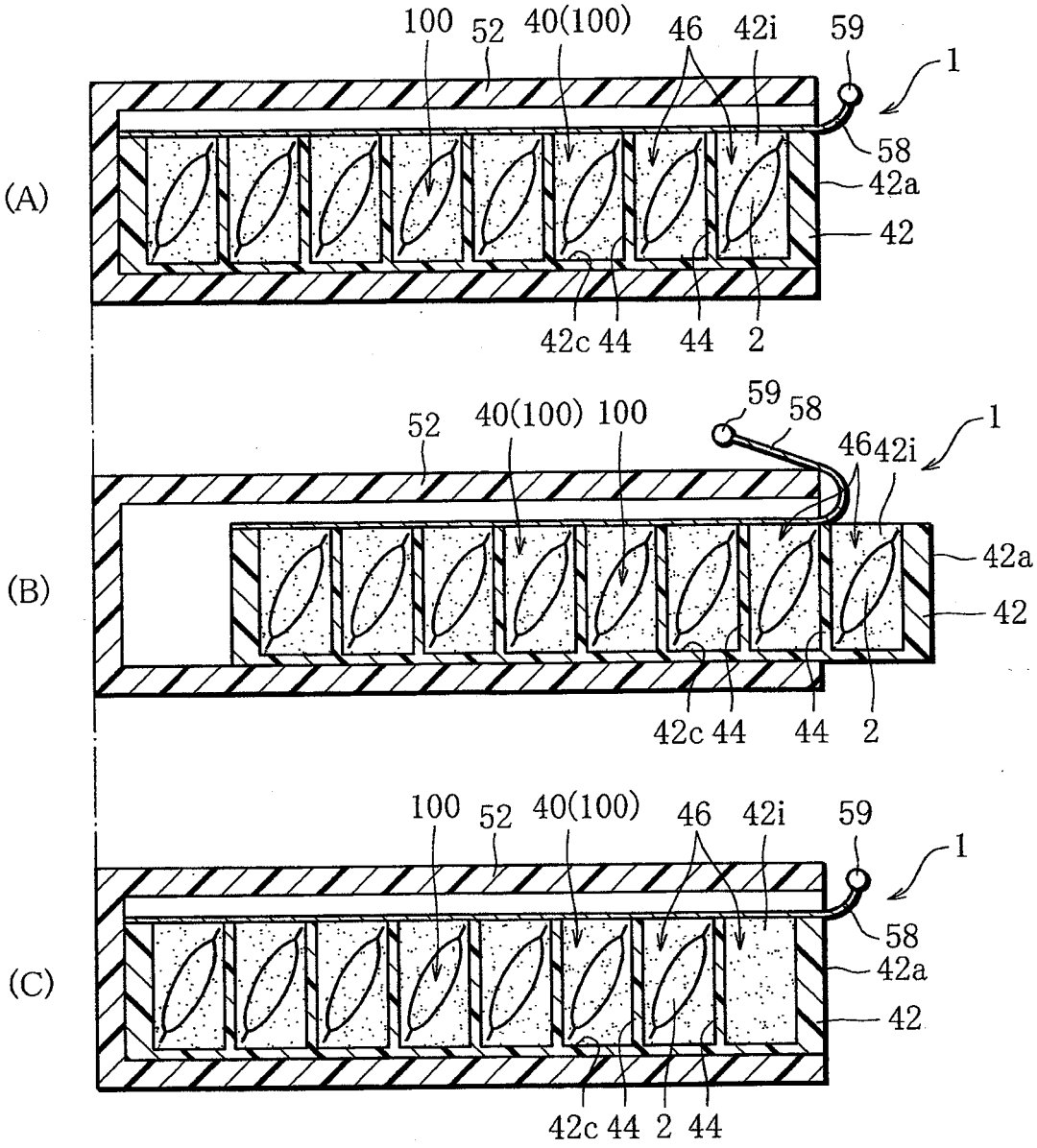

(A)
100
52
40(100)
46
42i
59
1
58
42a
42
42c
44
44
2
(B)
59
58
52
40(100)
100
46
42i
1
42a
42
42c
44
44
2
(C)
100
52
40(100)
46
42i
59
1
58
42a
42
42c
44
2
44

FIG. 18

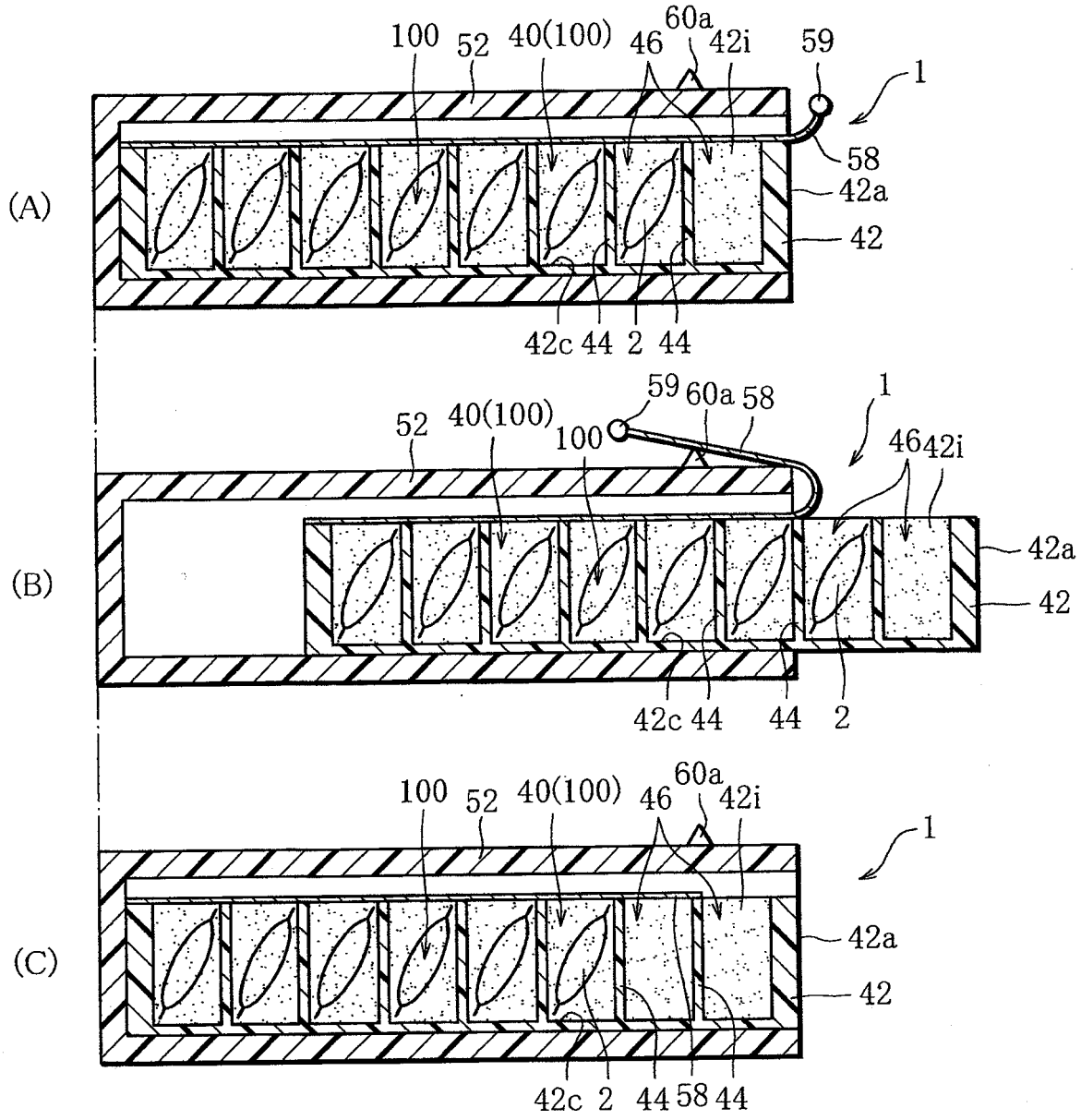

(A)
100
52
40(100)
46
60a
42i
59
1
58
42a
42
42c
44
2
44
(B)
59
60a
58
1
52
40(100)
100
46
42i
42a
42
42c
44
44
2
(C)
100
52
40(100)
46
60a
42i
1
42a
42
42c
2
44
58
44

FIG. 19

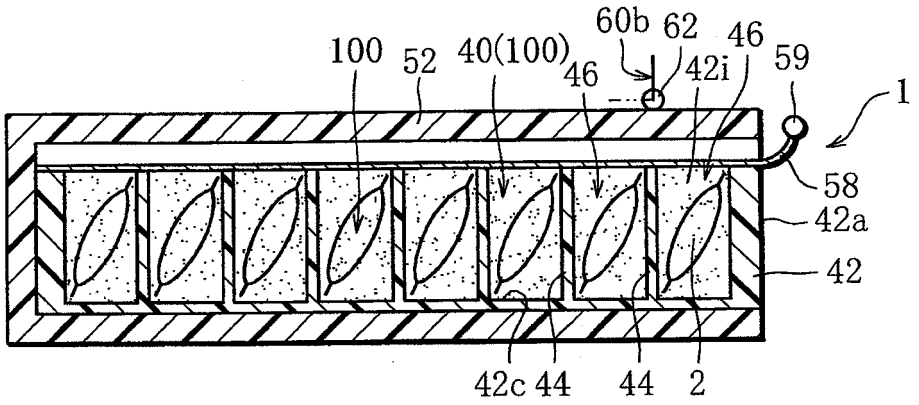

100
52
40(100)
46
60b
62
42i
46
59
1
58
42a
42
42c
44
44
2

FIG. 20

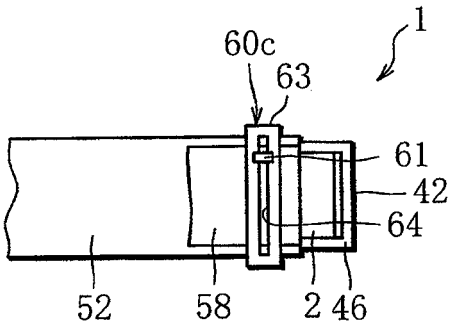

1
60c
63
61
42
64
52
58
2
46

FIG. 21

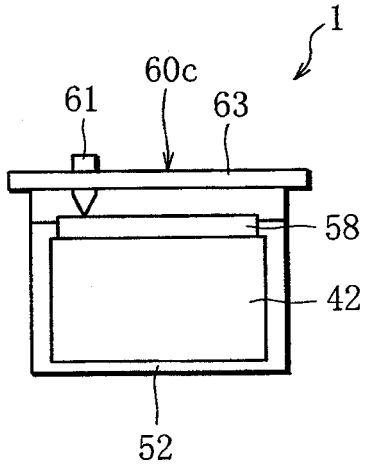

1
60c
61
63
58
42
52

FIG. 22

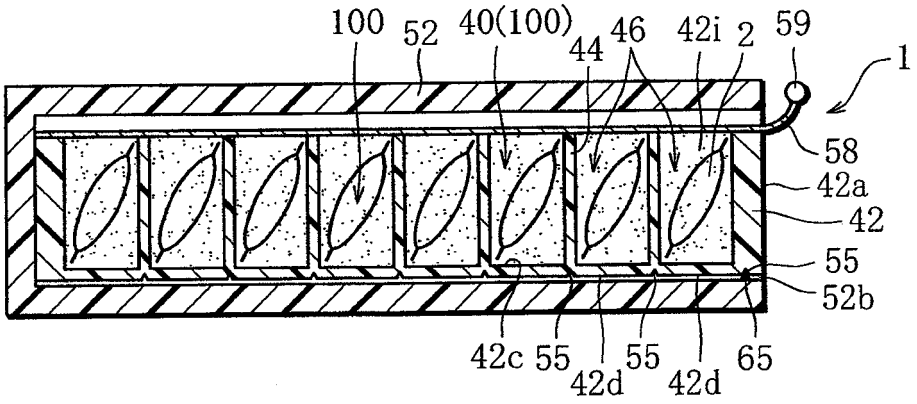

100
52
40(100)
44
46
42i
2
59
1
58
42a
42
55
52b
42c
55
42d
55
42d
65

FIG. 23

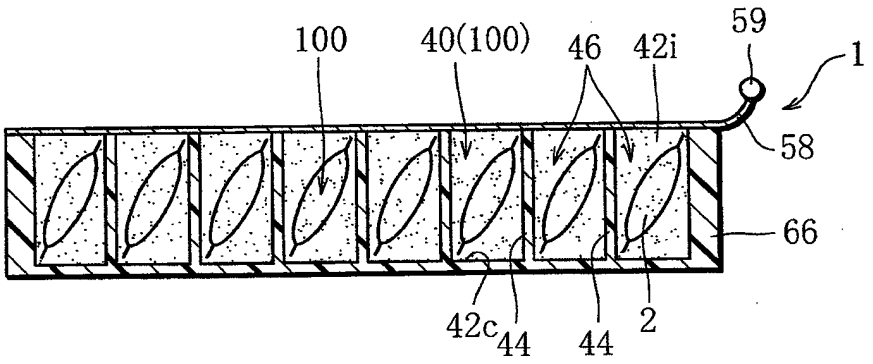

100
40(100)
46
42i
59
1
58
66
42c
44
44
2

FIG. 24

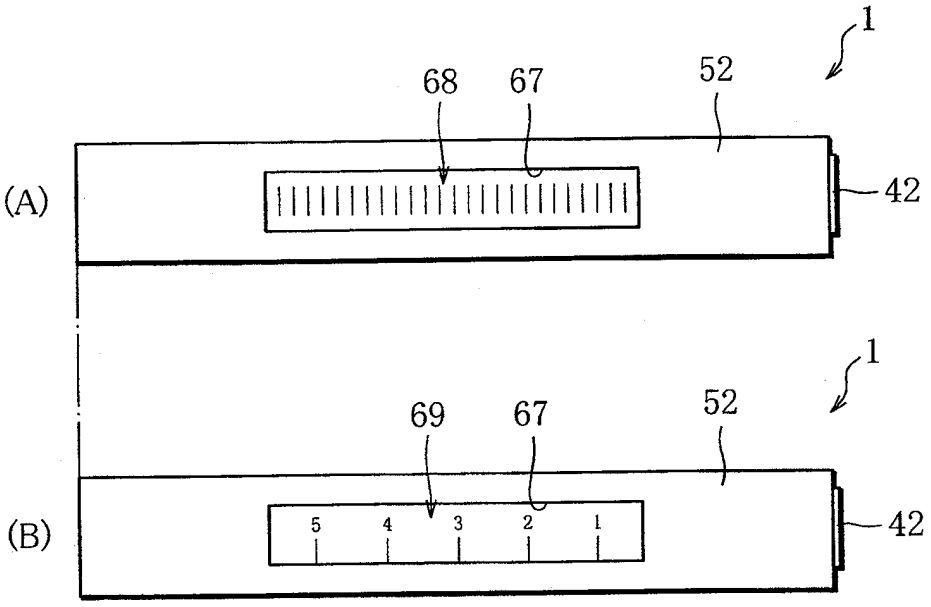

(A)
68
67
52
1
42
(B)
69
67
52
1
42
5
4
3
2
1

FIG. 25

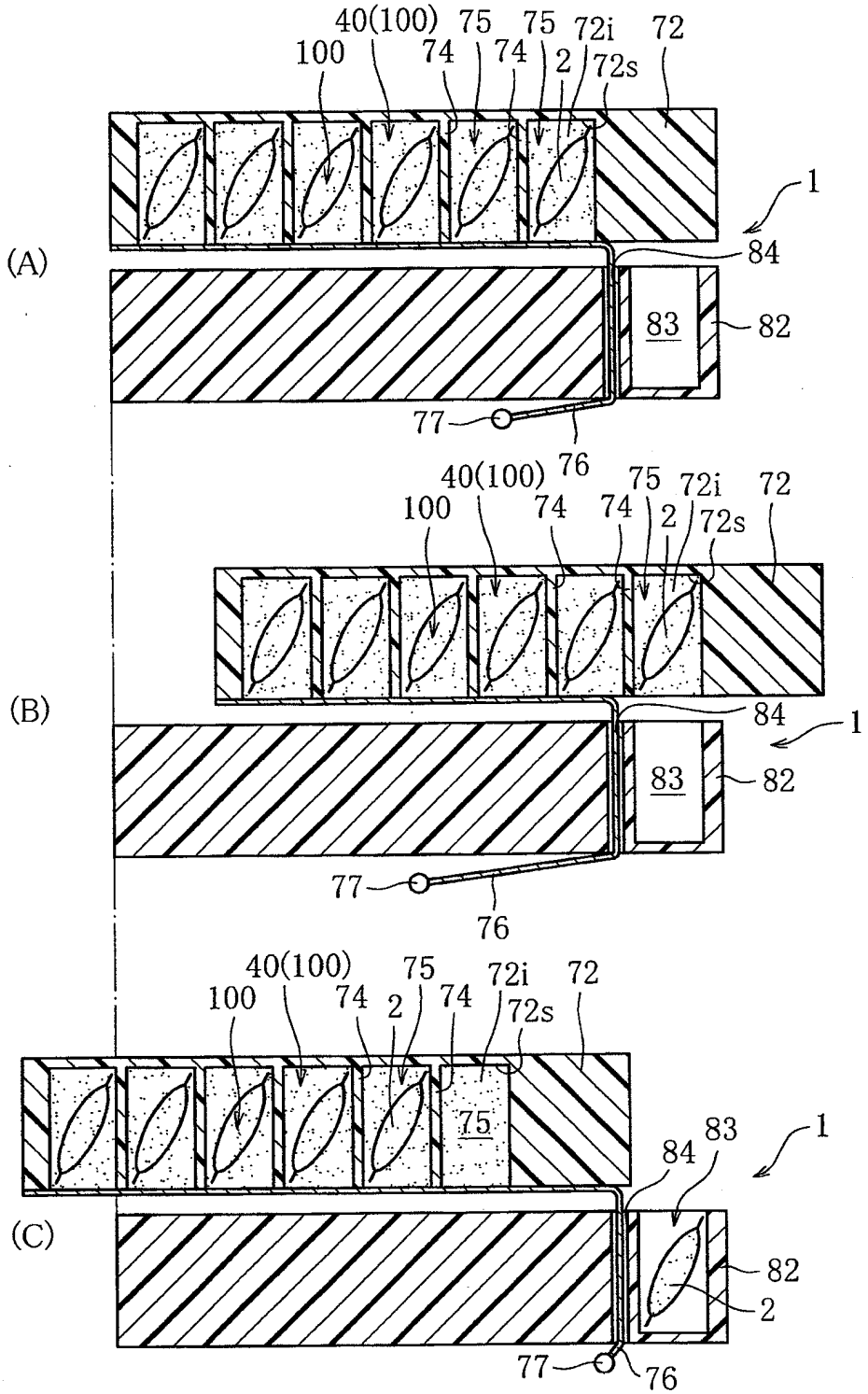

(A)
40(100)
75
75
72i
72
100
74
74
2
72s
1
84
83
82
77
76
(B)
40(100)
75
72i
72
100
74
74
2
72s
84
1
83
82
77
76
(C)
40(100)
75
72i
72
100
74
2
74
72s
75
84
83
1
82
2
77
76

FIG. 26

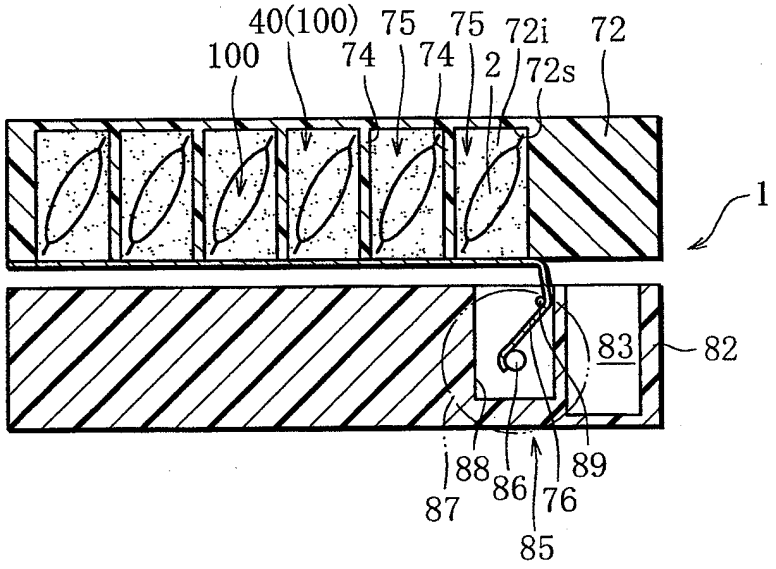

40(100)
75
75
72i
72
100
74
74
2
72s
1
83
82
88
86
89
87
76
85

FIG. 27

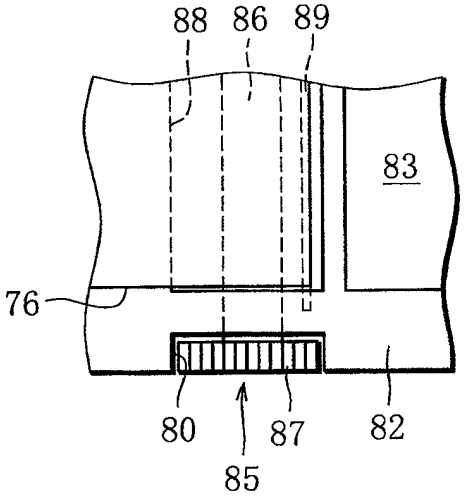

88
86
89
83
76
80
87
82
85

FIG. 28

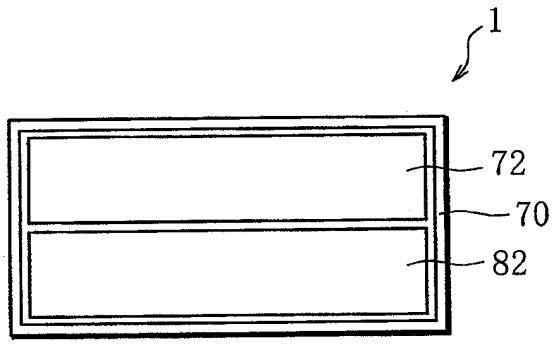


FIG. 29

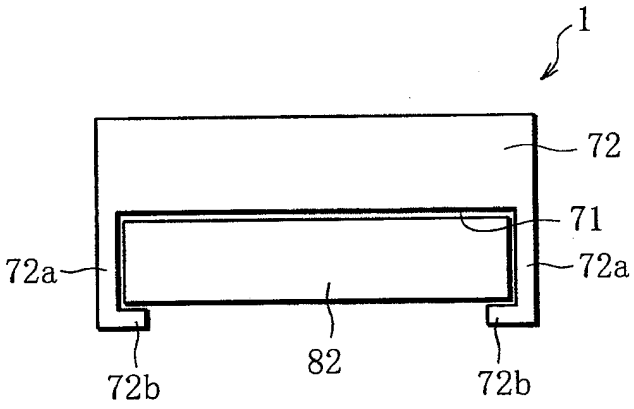


FIG. 30

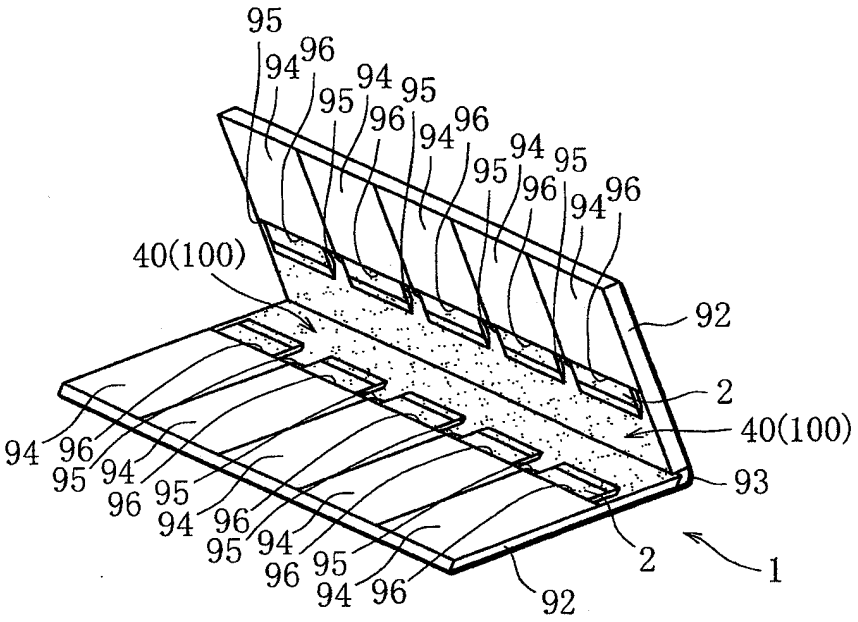

95
94
96
95
94
95
96
94
96
95
94
95
96
94
96
40(100)
92
2
40(100)
93
2
1
92
94
96
95
94
96
95
94
96
95
94
96
95
94
96
95
94
96

FIG. 31

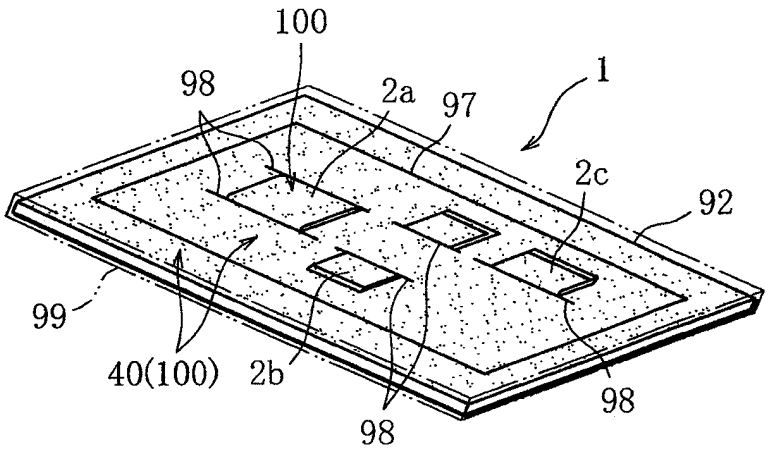

100
98
2a
97
1
2c
92
99
40(100)
2b
98
98

FIG. 32

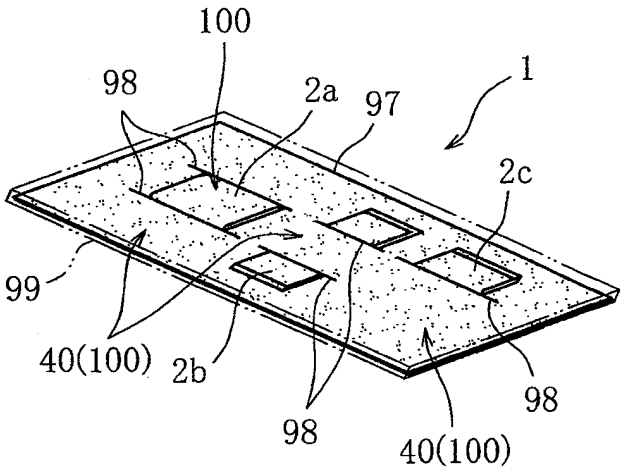
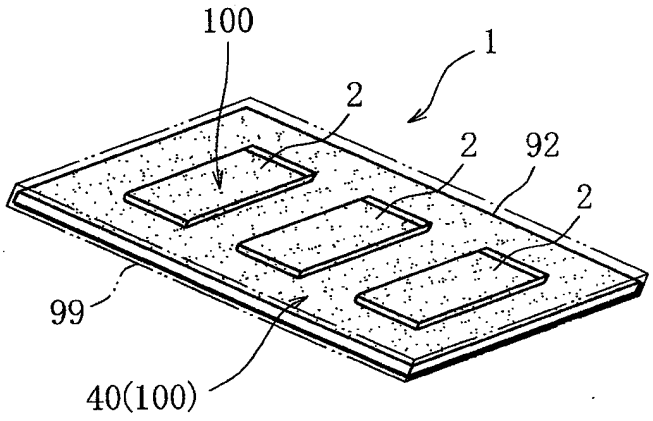

100
98
2a
97
1
2c
99
40(100)
2b
98
98
40(100)

FIG. 33



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/JP2011/053681

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
B65D83/00(2006.01)i, *B65D83/04*(2006.01)i

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D83/00, B65D83/04

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1922-1996	Jitsuyo Shinan Toroku Koho	1996-2011
Kokai Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1971-2011	Toroku Jitsuyo Shinan Koho	1994-2011

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y A	JP 08-244783 A (Seiji KAGAMI), 24 September 1996 (24.09.1996), entire text; all drawings (Family: none)	1-15,19,20 16-18
Y	Microfilm of the specification and drawings annexed to the request of Japanese Utility Model Application No. 406480/1990(Laid-open No. 093018/1992) (Key Trading Co., Ltd.), 13 August 1992 (13.08.1992), entire text; all drawings (Family: none)	1-5,19,20

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed
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"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
13 May, 2011 (13.05.11)	24 May, 2011 (24.05.11)
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ Japanese Patent Office Facsimile No.	Authorized officer Telephone No.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/JP2011/053681

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	JP 2001-192073 A (Yoshino Kogyosho Co., Ltd.), 17 July 2001 (17.07.2001), entire text; all drawings (Family: none)	1-15,19,20

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REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- JP 2007238128 A **[0006]**
- WO 2008066450 A1 **[0006]**
- US 20100018883 A1 **[0006]**