June 20, 1972 W. S. C. CHIN ET AL 3,671,367

ELONGATED DECORATIVE PLASTIC STRIP HAVING A GREENERY TOPPING SIMULATING FOLIAGE

Filed June 12, 1970 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1

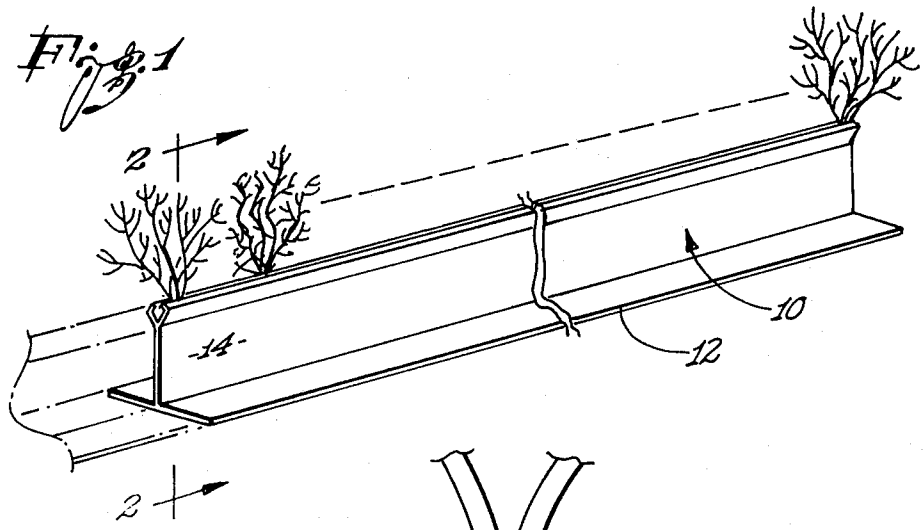


Fig. 2

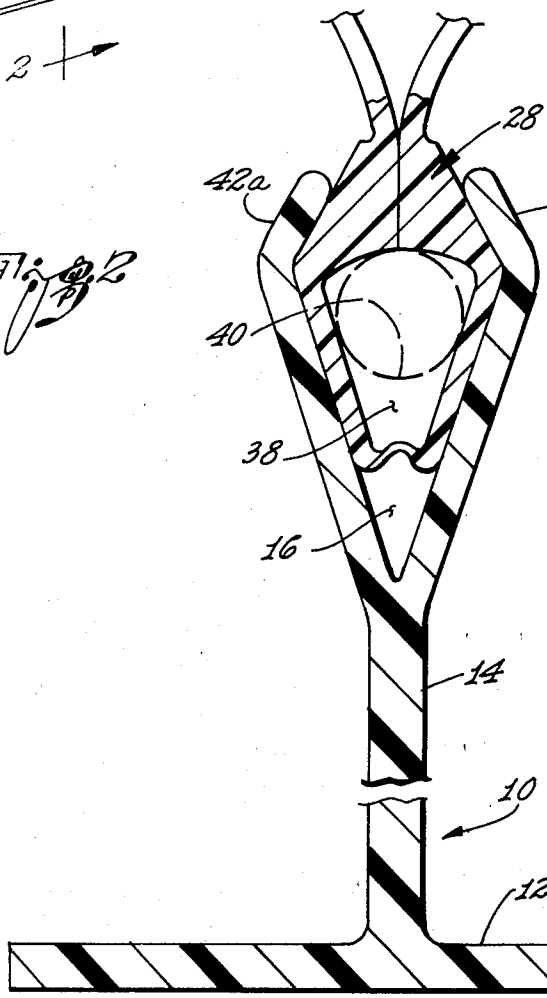
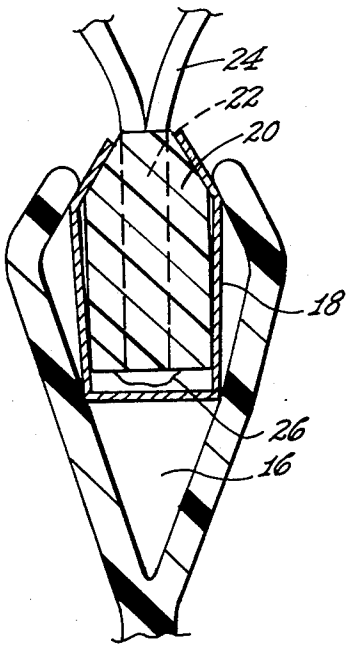


Fig. 2a (Prior Art)



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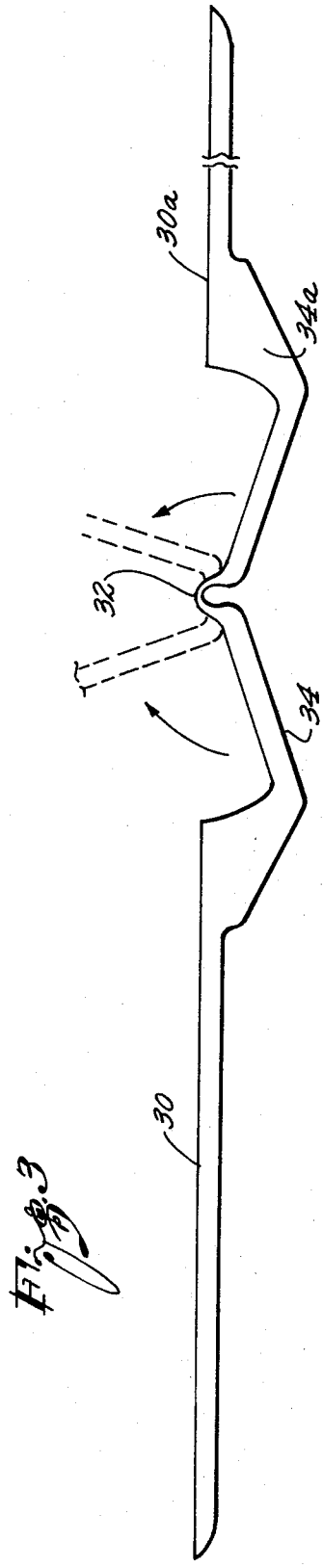

Fig. 3

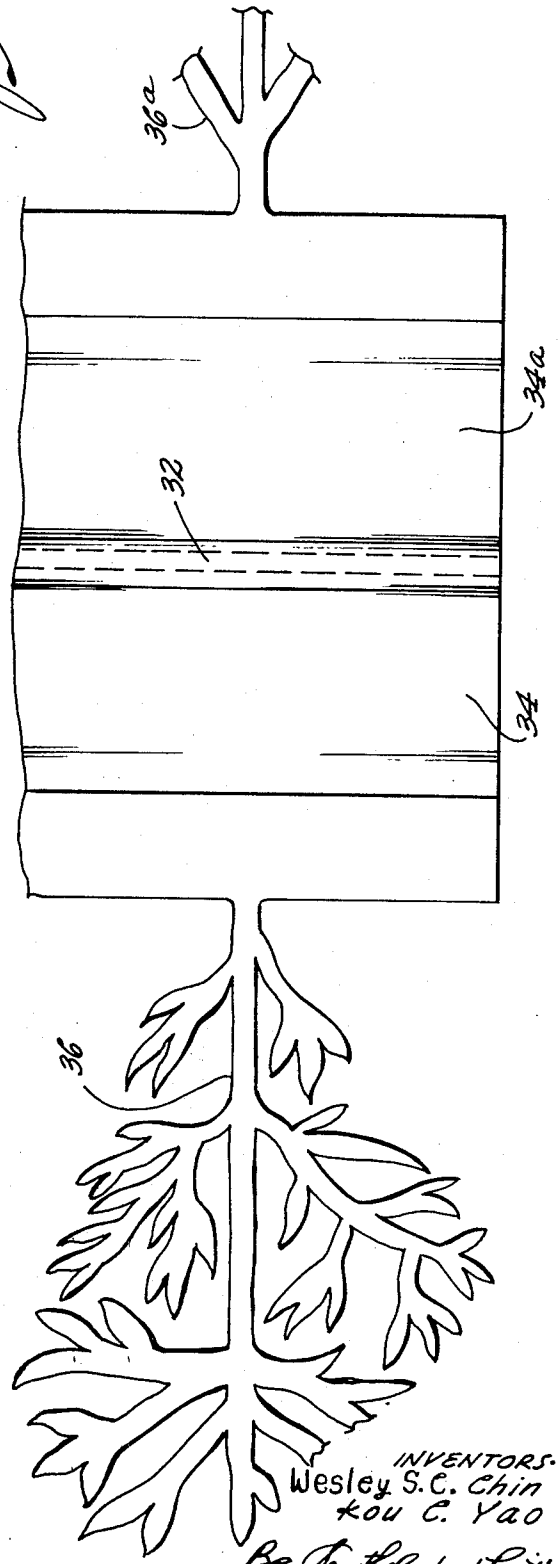

Fig. 4

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ELONGATED DECORATIVE PLASTIC STRIP HAVING A GREENERY TOPPING SIMULATING FOLIAGE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An integrally molded leaf-like decorative strip is provided for insertion in a U-shaped channel member. This strip is molded integrally in the form of a pair of half-base members joined together along a common edge by a living hinge about which said members may be folded. Further, integrally molded with at least one of said half-base members along an edge remote from the common hinged edge is a series of leaf-like protrusions extending away from the half-base member. When the two halves are folded about the living hinge and brought into abutment a decorative strip is formed which may be inserted in a supported upwardly facing U-shaped channel member, or otherwise utilized.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(1) Field of the invention

This invention relates to the art of molding plastics in general, but has its specific application to providing decorative strips, which may provide greenery, to circumscribe and trim areas in which produce, meats, fish and other items are placed on display.

(2) Description of the prior art

Decorative greenery strips molded of plastic have been made, sold and rented to grocery and other stores for a number of years. A commonly used strip of this type has been one made of a molded bar of rectangular cross-section which is provided with a series of vertical holes through the bar. The stems of a plurality of separately molded plastic sprigs are individually passed through the holes in the bar and the stem ends are heat-sealed or otherwise secured to the bar to prevent withdrawal therefrom.

Heretofore, such strips have been molded of a flexible polyethylene and, in use, have been clamped into a rigid aluminum U-shaped channel member. This assembly is then slipped into another U-shaped channel provided in the upper edge of a rigid plastic I-member which serves as the support for the greenery strip. The combination is then utilized as the border for a food or other display area.

This popular prior art greenery strip, as used, however, has presented several problems:

In the first place, it is expensive to make and assemble since, in addition to molding the plastic components separately, it has been necessary to thread each sprig stem by hand into the holes in the base bar, and then heat-seal it to prevent the sprig from being pulled out of the bar. Moreover, the aluminum channel member is relatively costly and the completed strips must then undergo a further hand operation to have them inserted into the aluminum channel, before the latter, with the inserted strips, may then be disposed in the U-shaped channel of the I-member.

Secondly, the plastic greenery strips must be cleaned periodically. This cleaning has heretofore been accomplished by removing the aluminum channel member with its plastic foliage from the I-member channel and putting it into a tumbling or other type of steam cleaner. This is not a gentle operation so that frequently the individual sprig stems become twisted in the holes in the bar, thereby disorienting the leaf portions of the sprigs. When too much disorientation occurs, the strip loses its aesthetic appearance and must be thrown away.

In addition, as a result of the cleaning process, small amounts of moisture often become trapped between the aluminum channel member and the plastic strip base inserted in the channel. Under certain conditions this moisture can develop mold cultures which should not be brought into proximity with any food products.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention avoids the above described disadvantages of prior art greenery strips by being so structured that each strip may be integrally molded in one operation with the only hand step required being one to accomplish folding of the two halves of the base strip about their common living hinge, whereupon all of the foliage will be found to be properly oriented and the strip may be slipped directly into the channel of the I-member without having to be first clamped into an aluminum channel member. This channel member may not be required because when the two halves of the base strip are brought together, the resulting base will be found to be sufficiently rigid and wide enough to fill the channel in the I-member. However, should additional stiffening of the base of the strip be desired, such stiffening could readily be accomplished by inserting a wire or tube through the hollow center formed when the two halves have been brought together.

By providing a wide die with a cavity to mold the strip integrally in two halves, with the outer edges of each half including foliage sprigs, the prior art steps of inserting sprig stems in a bar and heat-sealing them are eliminated.

Further, in dispensing with the aluminum channel member not only is the cost of such member and of the hand step of clamping it into the prior art strip avoided, but when the strip of the present invention is cleaned, no moisture may become entrapped since the strip is opened up and all parts are exposed to drying air.

Lastly, since the sprigs may be integrally molded without stems, the foliage will not tend to become disoriented as much or as easily as it does with prior art strips.

In a number of important respects, therefore, the present invention obviates problems inherent in prior art greenery strips.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings,

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the plastic greenery strip constructed and assembled in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged section taken on the line 2—2 of FIG. 1.

FIG. 2*a* is a partial section comparable to FIG. 2, showing the construction of a prior art greenery strip assembly.

FIG. 3 is section of a strip molded in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a plan view of the strip shown in FIG. 3.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The greenery strip of the present invention may be mounted for support as in prior art strips, in an I-channel member **10**. The base **12** of this member **10** rests on any counter or other horizontal surface (not shown), and from this base extends upwardly a horizontal web **14**,

the upper edge of which is formed to provide a U-shaped channel **16**.

In prior art devices, as shown in FIG. 2*a*, this channel **16** has received a strip assembly comprising a U-shaped aluminum clamping member **18**, and an orificed bar **20** through which stems **22** of separately molded sprigs **24** have been passed and heat sealed as at **26**.

With the present invention, the base **28** of the greenery strip is inserted directly into the channel **16**. As may be seen from FIGS. 3 and 4, this is made possible by molding the entire strip in two halves **30**, **30***a* joined together by a living hinge **32**. At least one of the halves **30**, **30***a*, and preferably both, includes not only a half of a base **34**, **34***a* respectively, but also a foliage half **36**, **36***a*. Although the bases **28** could be molded to form a half of a solid bar, such as **20** in the prior art device of FIG. 2*a*, it is preferable to mold them as a pair of arcuate members **34**, **34***a*, as shown in FIG. 3, so that when joined they provide a hollow cavity **38**. This not only saves plastic material, but enables the base **28** to be stiffened by passing a wire or tube **40** through the cavity **38**.

In use, the entire integrally molded strip, best shown in FIGS. 3 and 4 is simply folded about the hinge **32** to appear as **28** in FIG. 2. A person then simply grasps the base **28** and snaps it in between the sides **42***a* and **42***b* forming the channel **16** on the upper edge of the web **14**. This will result then in the strip being mounted and appearing as shown in FIG. 1.

What is claimed is:

1. A decorative strip combination having a greenery topping simulating foliage for garnishing the edges of a predetermined display area, said combination comprising:

(a) a vertical longitudinally extending supporting element, said element,

(i) being provided with base means whereby said element may be supported in a substantially vertical position to present an upper edge, and

(ii) having a U-shaped channel extending along its said upwardly presented edge, with the open portion of said channel directed upwardly; and

(b) an elongated plastic removable member, a portion of which member is disposed in said channel, said member

(i) including a pair of half-base sections joined together along a common edge by a living hinge about which hinge said sections are folded and brought together to constitute the portion of said member which is disposed in said channel; and

(ii) further having integrally extending from at least one of said half-base sections along an edge remote from said common hinged edge, a series of simulated foliage protrusions extending away from said half-base sections.

2. A decorative strip combination having a greenery topping simulating foliage for garnishing the edges of a predetermined display area, said combination comprising:

(a) a vertical longitudinally extending supporting element, said element

(i) being provided with base means whereby said element may be supported in a substantially vertical position to present an upper edge; and

(ii) having a U-shaped channel extending along its said upwardly presented edge, with the open portion of said channel directed upwardly; and

(b) an elongated hollow plastic removable member, a portion of which is disposed in said channel, said member,

(i) including a pair of arcuate half-base sections joined together along a common edge by a living hinge about which hinge said sections are in folded relation to define a hollow core and constitute the portion of said member which is disposed in said channel; and

(ii) further having integrally extending from at least one of said arcuate half-base sections along an edge remote from said common hinged edge, a series of simulated foliage protrusions extending away from said half-base section.

3. The combination as described in claim **2**, wherein the said supporting element is integral with its base means.

4. The combination as described in claim **2**, wherein a stiffening element is disposed within the hollow core defined by the half base sections.

5. An elongated decorative plastic strip having a greenery topping simulating foilage, said strip comprising:

(i) a pair of half-base members joined together along a common edge by a living hinge about which hinge said members are in folded relationship; and

(ii) a series of integral simulated foliage protrusions extending away from each of said half-base members along an edge remote from said common hinged edge; said half-base members being so folded about their connecting hinge and brought into abutment with each other, thereby forming an elongated base strip from which protrude upwardly two parallel and abutting rows of simulated foliage protrusions.

6. An elongated decorative plastic strip having a greenery topping simulating foliage, said strip comprising:

(i) a pair of arcuate half-base members joined together along a common edge by a living hinge about which hinge said members are in folded relationship; and

(ii) a series of integral simulated foliage protrusions extending away from each of said arcuate half-base members along an edge remote from said common hinged edge; said arcuate half-base members being so folded about their connecting hinge and brought into abutment with each other, thereby forming a hollow elongated base strip from which protrude upwardly two parallel and abutting rows of simulated foliage protrusions.

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PHILIP DIER, Primary Examiner

U.S. Cl. X.R.

47—41.11; 161—31, 100; 248—27.8