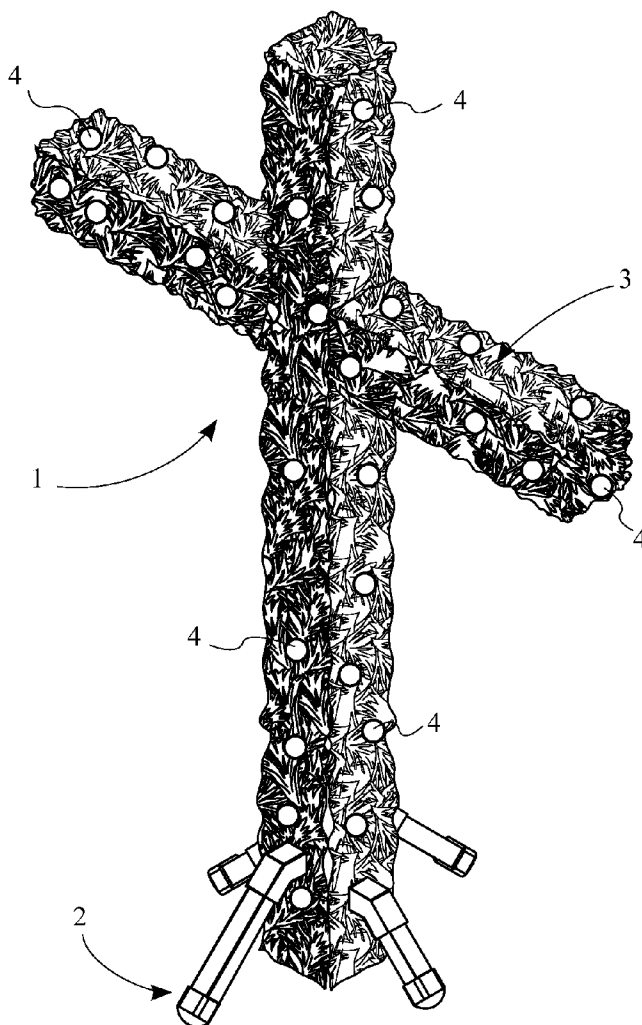




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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
HOWARD(10) **Pub. No.: US 2014/0154430 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 5, 2014**(54) **CROSS SHAPED CHRISTMAS DECORATION**(71) Applicant: **Darren Ray HOWARD**, Portage, MI
(US)(72) Inventor: **Darren Ray HOWARD**, Portage, MI
(US)(21) Appl. No.: **13/901,305**(22) Filed: **May 23, 2013****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 61/732,770, filed on Dec.
3, 2012.**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
A47G 33/06 (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**CPC **A47G 33/06** (2013.01)USPC **428/8; 428/7**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A cross shaped Christmas decoration has a modular frame in the shape of a Christian cross, a garland, a plurality of lights, and a base. The garland covers the frame to imitate the appearance of a coniferous evergreen tree. The plurality of lights is positioned around the frame and supported by the frame to enhance the surface appearance of a typical Christmas tree. The base is positioned near the bottom of the frame to support the frame in an upright orientation. The arms of the cross may be detached from a central beam of the frame for convenient storage. The base uses a plurality of legs and leg connectors to hold the frame in an upright position, and may be disassembled.



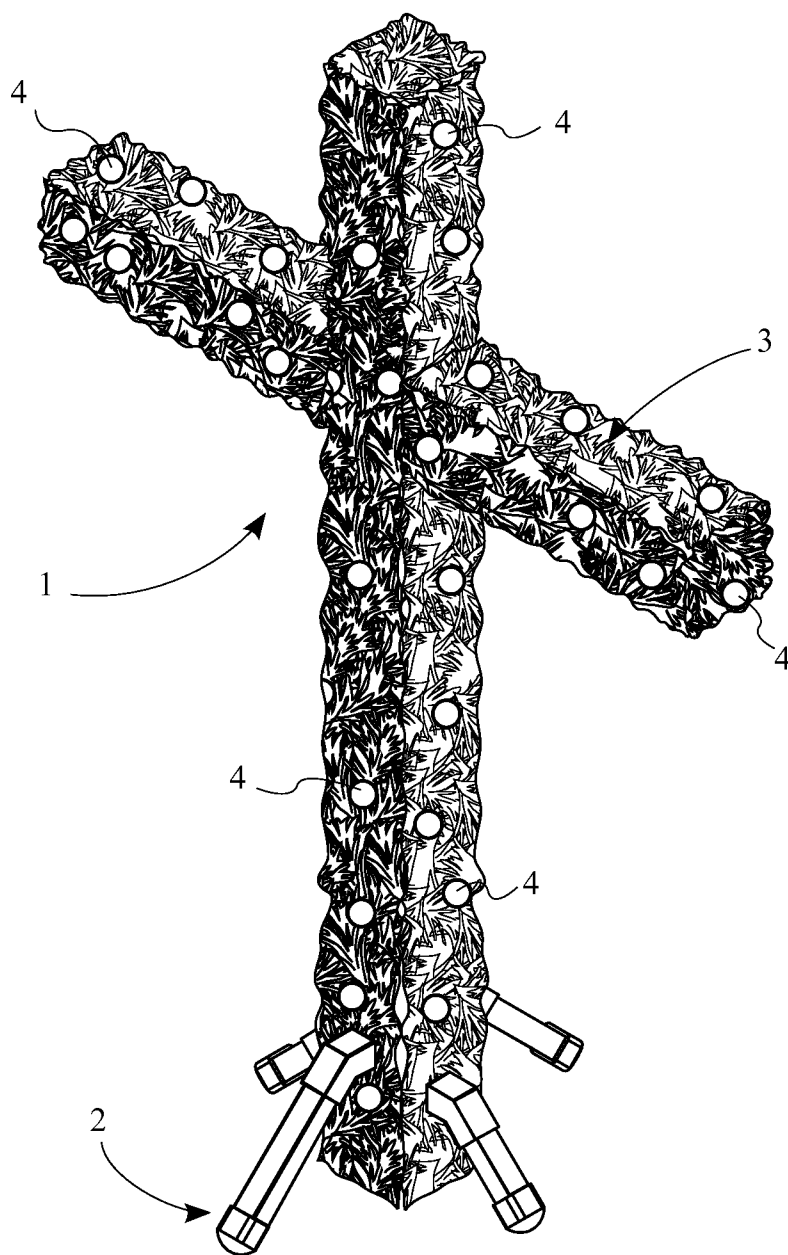


FIG. 1

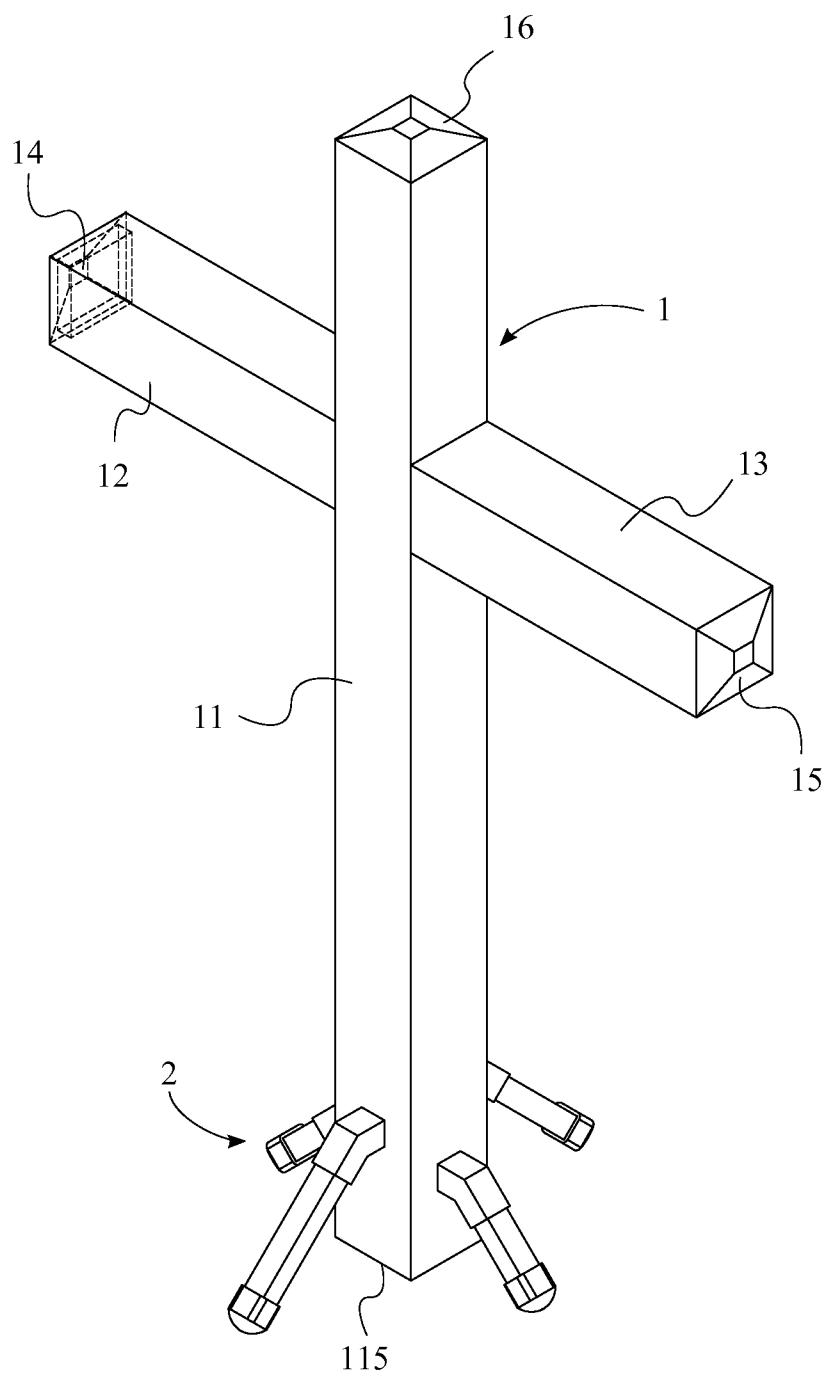
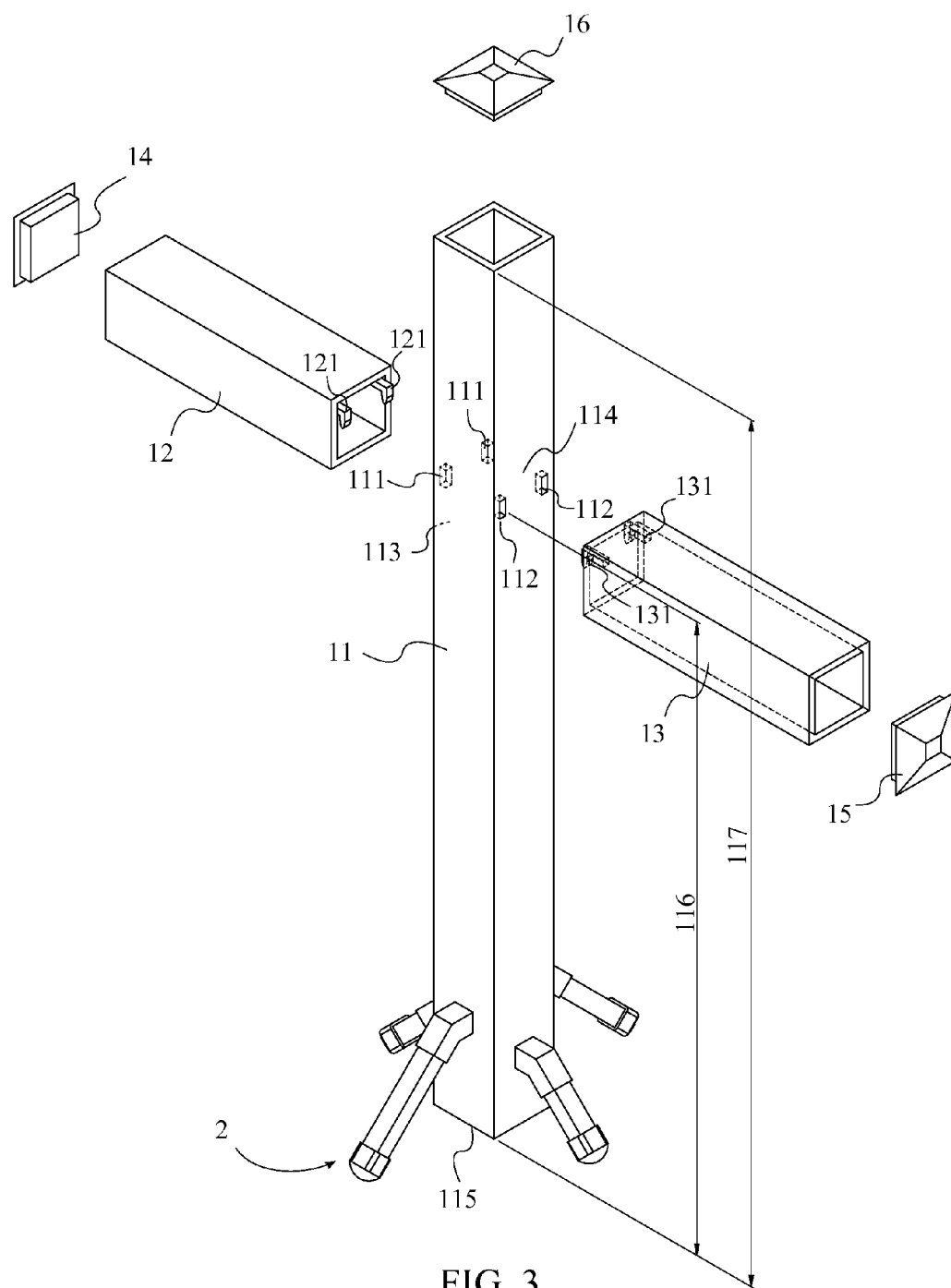


FIG. 2



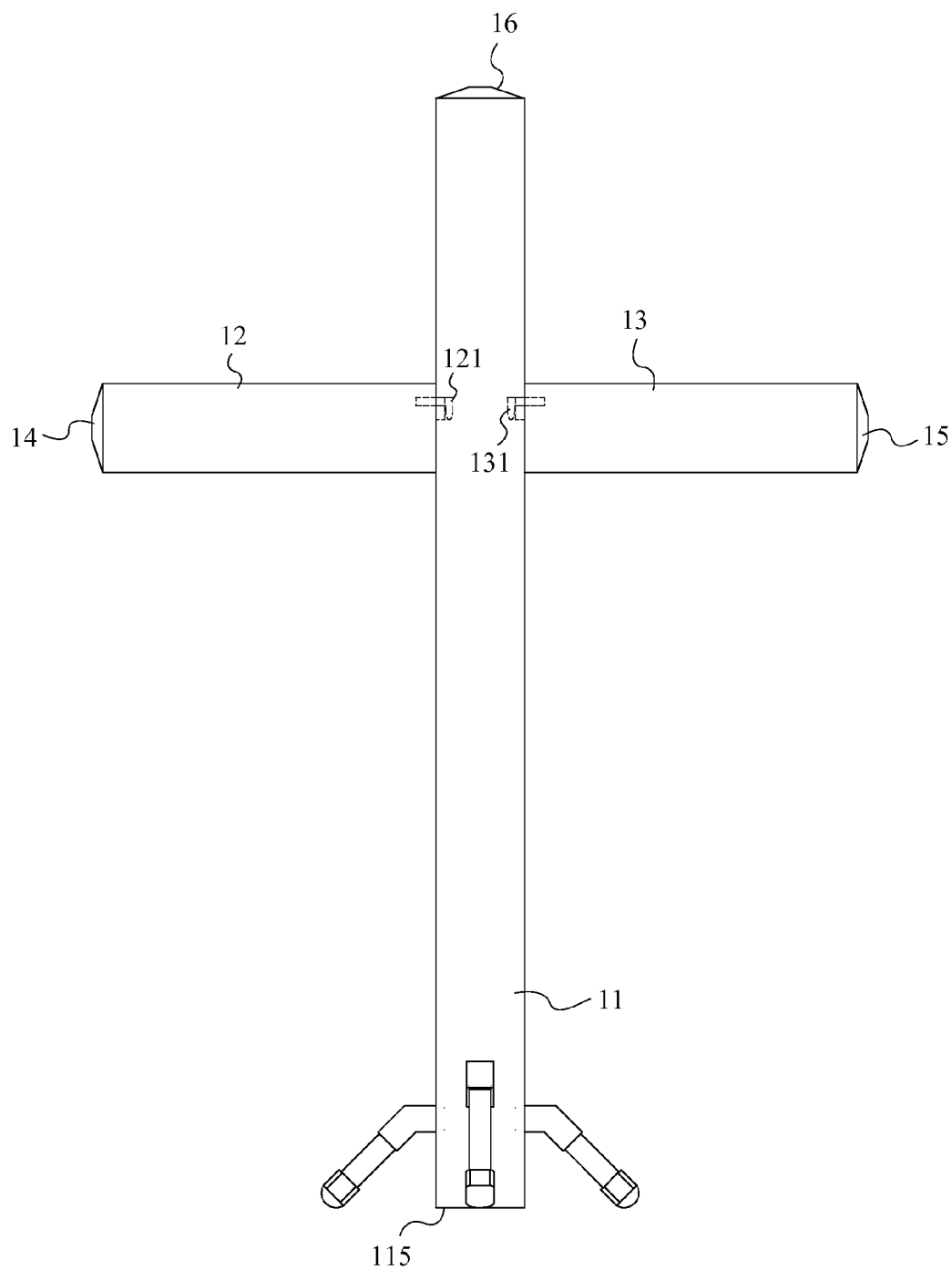


FIG. 4

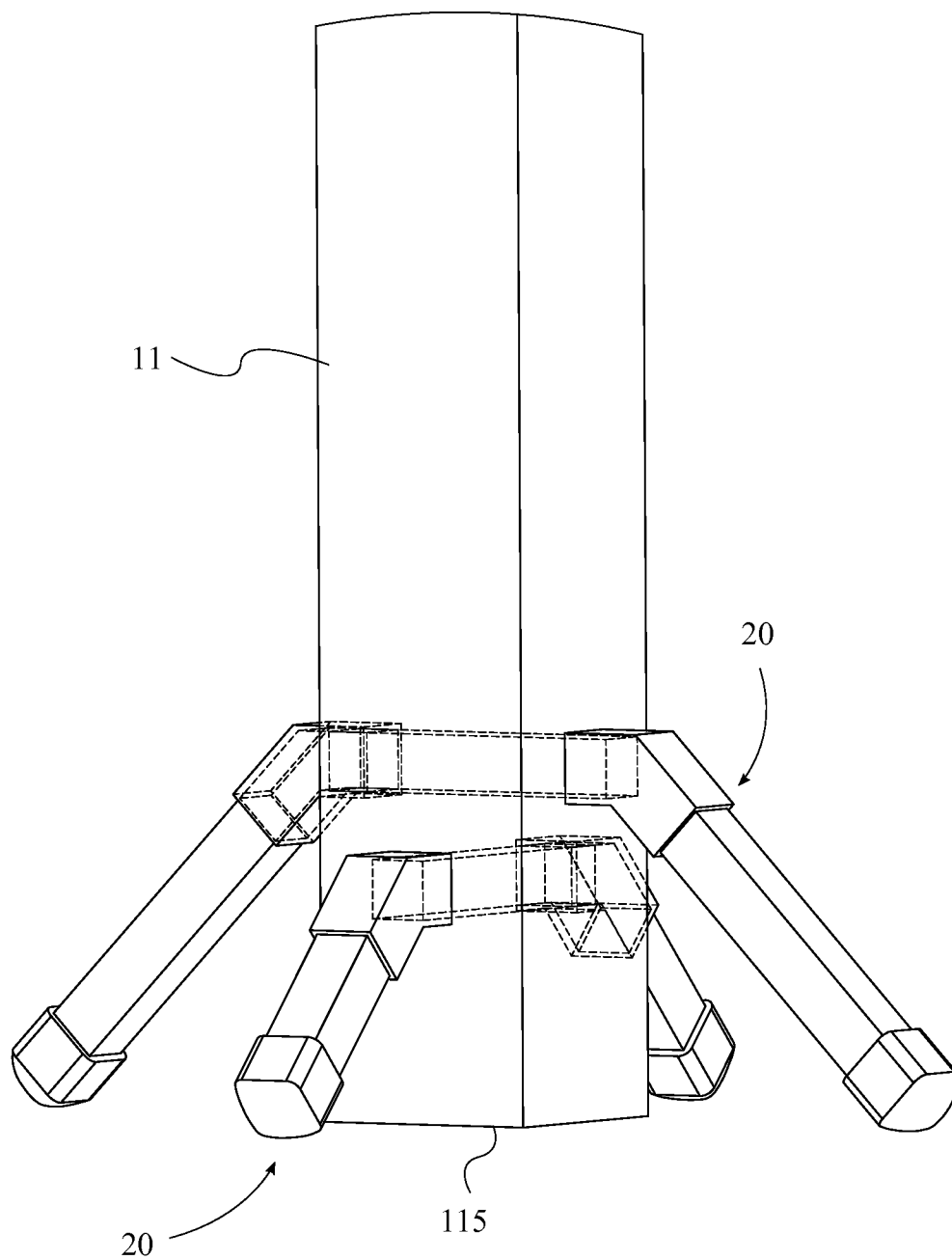


FIG. 5

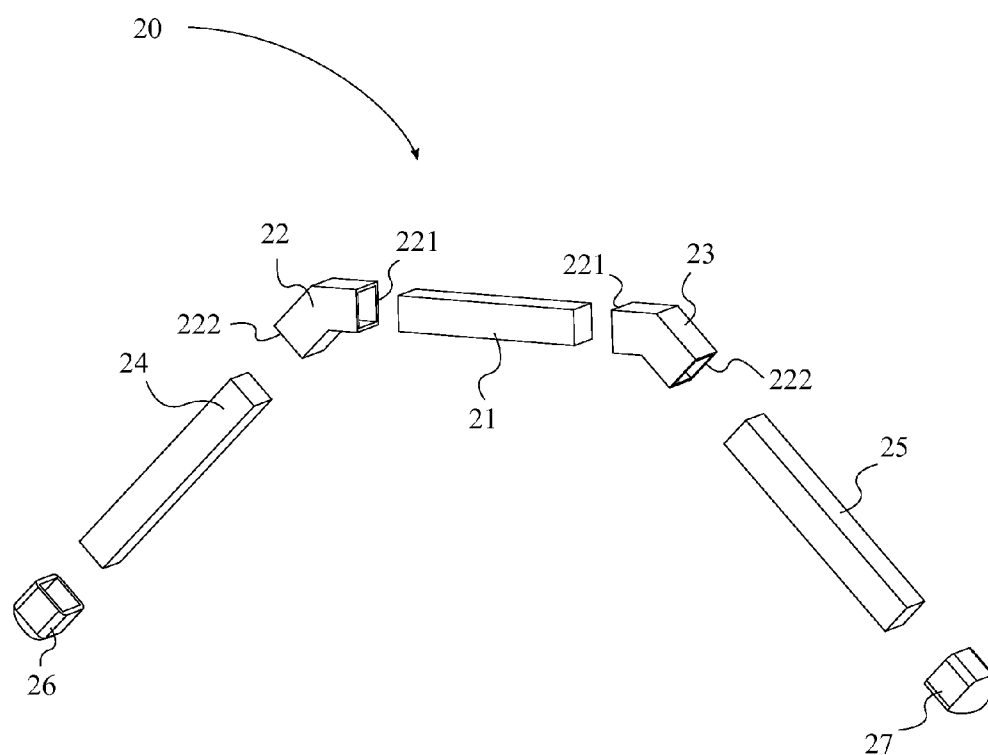


FIG. 6

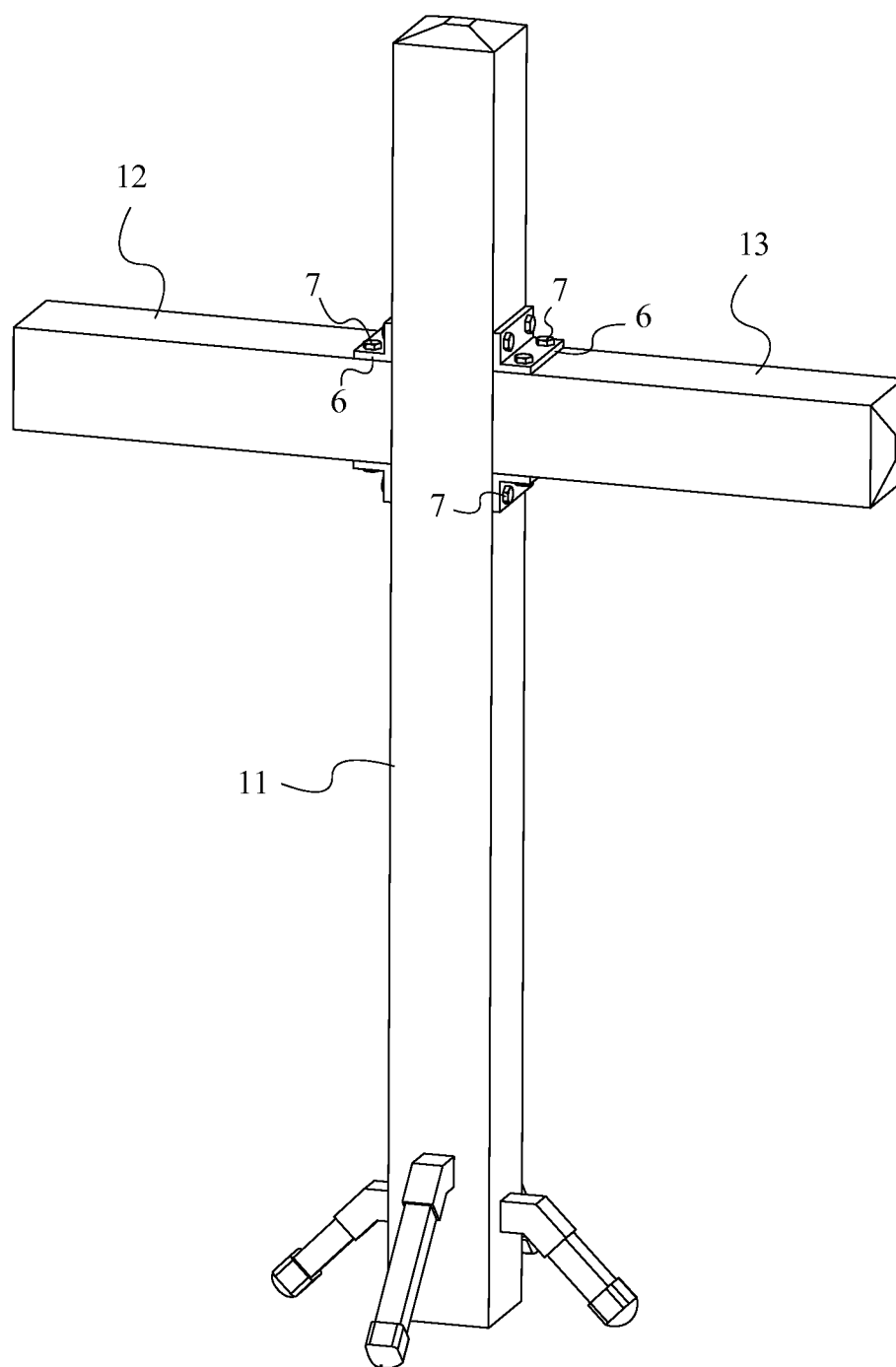


FIG. 7

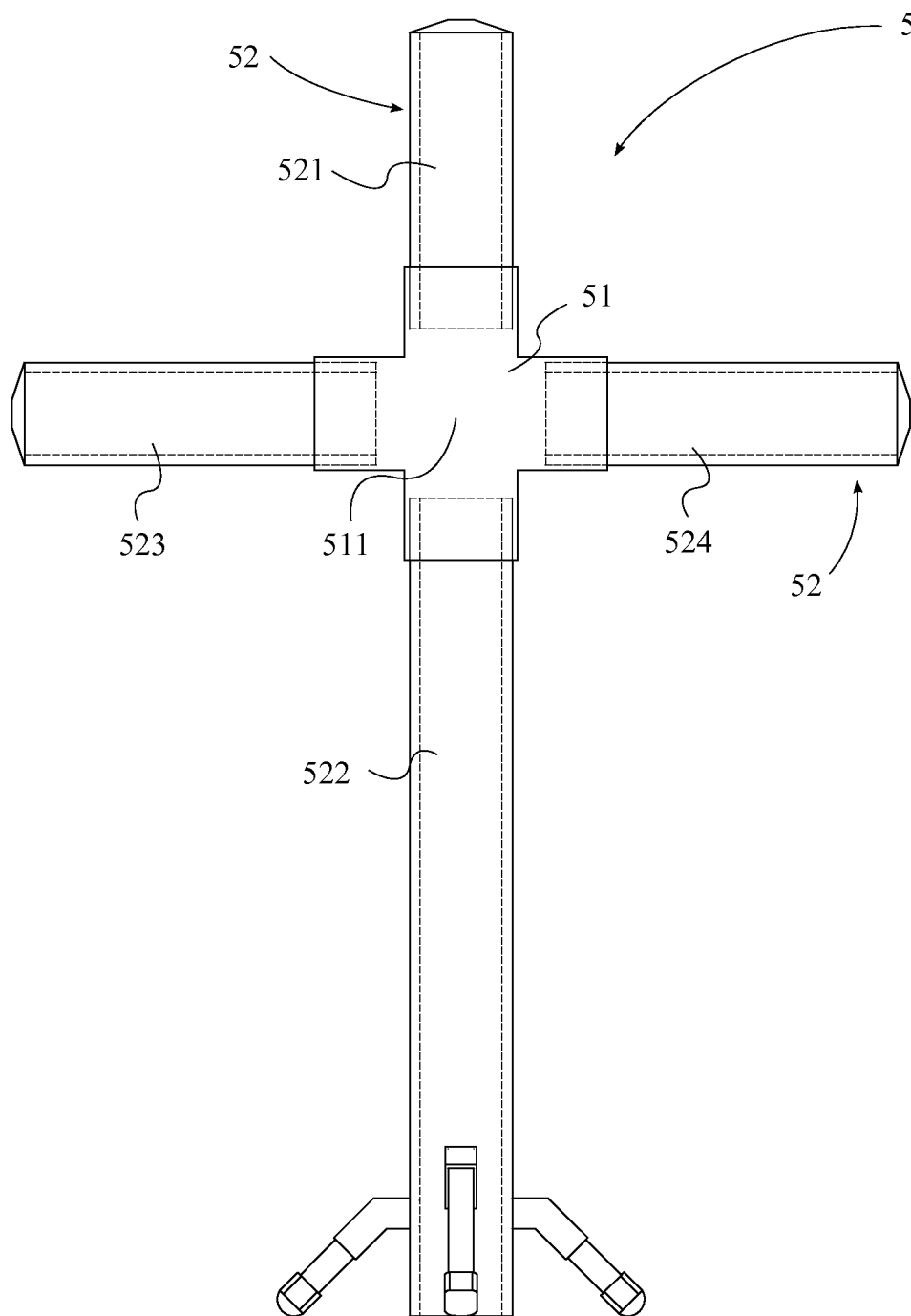


FIG. 8

CROSS SHAPED CHRISTMAS DECORATION

[0001] The current application claims a priority to the U.S. Provisional Patent application Ser. No. 61/732,770 filed on Dec. 3, 2012.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to decorations. More particularly, the present invention relates to a cross shaped Christmas decoration.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Christianity is a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in canonical gospels and other New Testament writings of the Bible, as well as the Old Testament. Most adherents of the Christian faith, known as Christians, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, fully divine and fully human and the savior of humanity prophesied in the Old Testament. Christianity is the world's largest religion, with approximately 2.2 billion adherents worldwide. The Christian cross, is a representation of the crucifixion of Jesus, is the best-known religious symbol of Christianity, being displayed prominently in nearly every church, in homes and worn as a necklace. The cross serves as a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice of himself to shoulder the sins of everyone in the world.

[0004] One of the most important Christian holidays is Christmas. Christmas is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ according to the Christian tradition, and is a widely observed holiday, generally celebrated on December 25 by millions of people around the world. Christmas is a feast central to the Christian liturgical year, as it closes the season of Advent and initiates the twelve days of Christmastide. In addition to being a religious holiday, Christmas is also a civil holiday in many of the world's nations and is celebrated by an increasing number of non-Christians. In the general culture, Christmas is a holiday outwardly marked most substantially by gift giving, family and other social gatherings, and symbolic decorating, among other traditions such as caroling, exchanging Christmas cards and displaying various decorations, many of which are evergreen plants such as holly, mistletoe, and evergreen conifers which are decorated as Christmas trees. Symbolically, in addition to celebrating the birth of Jesus, Christmas is regarded as an uplifting, joyful time of year, focusing on and promoting feelings of peace, good will and generosity toward others, and cheerfulness in general.

[0005] Arguably the most prominent outward symbol of Christmas is a Christmas tree, which is usually an evergreen conifer such as spruce, pine or fir that is typically adorned with decorations such as garlands, strings of colorful lights, assortments of ornaments, baubles and other visually appealing elements including a tree topper such as an angel figurine or a star. Traditionally, a Christmas tree is a live tree that has been cut down and transported to a family home or public space, and must be supplied with water to survive until the Christmas season is over. There are disadvantages to using a real tree, one of which being that the tree will eventually die and must be disposed of. Another disadvantage is that real Christmas trees are prone to shedding their leaves, which are typically small, sharp, needlelike objects that can become lodged in clothes and other inconvenient places and prick the skin, as well as being numerous and inconvenient to clean up.

Additionally, a user cannot change the shape of a real tree to any appreciable degree aside from removing branches.

[0006] To address these disadvantages, synthetic Christmas trees have been developed and have grown increasingly popular during the late 20th century. Users of artificial Christmas trees assert that they are more convenient and, because they are reusable, much cheaper than their natural alternative. Artificial trees are also more convenient to set up and take down, as well as lacking any need to clean up dropped pine needles or dispose of the tree once the Christmas season is over. Synthetic Christmas trees can also adopt different colors and even shapes, if so desired by consumers.

[0007] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a cross-shaped Christmas decoration that is covered with garland and lights, to imitate the function of a Christmas tree but to serve as a visual reminder to Christians to keep a Christ-centered perspective during Christmas.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the present invention fully assembled, showing the frame covered with the garland and the plurality of lights.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the present invention without the garland and the plurality of lights.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a perspective exploded view of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a front view of the present invention with dashed lines showing the hidden plurality of hooks that allow the lateral beams to be connected to the central vertical beam.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a detail view of the base attached to the central vertical beam with hidden lines of the base being shown as dashed lines.

[0013] FIG. 6 is an exploded view of the one of the plurality of supporting members.

[0014] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the bracket alternative embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 8 is a front view of the junction alternative embodiment of the present invention, with hidden lines of the plurality of junction arms shown.

DETAIL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INVENTION

[0016] All illustrations of the drawings are for the purpose of describing selected versions of the present invention and are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

[0017] The present invention is a cross-shaped decoration which has a similar surface appearance to a Christmas tree, being covered with garland that mimics the appearance of coniferous evergreen leaves and having a frame structure that forms the shape of a Christian cross. The present invention generally comprises a frame 1, a base 2, a garland 3, and a plurality of lights 4.

[0018] Referring to FIGS. 1-2, the frame 1 is the substantial structure of the present invention, forming a cross shape and supporting the garland 3 and the plurality of lights 4. The frame 1 is modular, and is able to be disassembled for convenient storage. The base 2 is a supporting structure connected to the frame 1 near a lower extremity 115 of the frame 1 that stabilizes the frame 1 in a vertical orientation. The garland 3 is a decorative wreath covering the frame 1. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the garland 3 comprises a long string of artificial needles and branches that mimic the appearance of a coniferous evergreen tree. In alternate embodiments of the present invention, the garland 3 may

take a different appearance, such as, but not limited to, silver garland, gold garland, or other colors or comprising additional elements such as artificial berries or pinecones, or different shapes and sizes for the artificial needles and branches. In further alternate embodiments of the present invention, the garland 3 is not a continuous strand, but comprises a plurality of artificial tree branch inserts or wiring connected to the frame 1 in various locations, spaced closely together to give adequate coverage of the frame 1. The garland 3 is positioned around the frame 1 and is attached to the frame 1 so that the entire surface of the frame 1 is covered by the garland 3 except for the lower extremity 115, which rests on the ground while in use. The plurality of lights 4 is also positioned around the frame 1 and is preferably one or more continuous strands of small or medium sized light bulbs connected in series, in parallel or both that are commonly known as Christmas lights, and may take any appropriate color, shape, or size. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, the plurality of lights 4 is not included, and it is up to the user to place their own lights on the present invention if so desired.

[0019] In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the frame 1 is colored brown. Although the frame 1 is meant to be completely covered by the garland 3, it is possible that small sections of the frame 1 may still be visible through the garland 3; the brown shade of paint helps to add to the aesthetic appeal of the present invention by simulating a tree trunk. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, the frame 1 is colored green. In further alternate embodiments, the frame 1 may have other colors. The frame 1 is rigid and light, being made from injection molded plastic, wood, light metal or any other appropriate materials. Referring to FIGS. 2-3, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the frame 1 comprises a central vertical beam 11, a first lateral beam 12, a second lateral beam 13, a first end cap 14, a second end cap 15 and an upper end cap 16. The central vertical beam 11, the first lateral beam 12, and the second lateral beam 13 have an elongated, hollow tubular shape with a square cross section. The first end cap 14, the second end cap 15 and the upper end cap 16 are dimensioned properly in order to be removably inserted within the first lateral beam 12, the second lateral beam 13 and the central vertical beam 11, respectively. The central vertical beam 11, the first lateral beam 12, the second lateral beam 13, the first end cap 14, the second end cap 15 and the upper end cap 16 are preferably made of the same material, although various components of the frame 1 may be made of differing materials as is appropriate or useful in the manufacture or use of the present invention.

[0020] When the present invention is in use for display, the central vertical beam 11 is oriented in a vertical manner, being supported by the base 2 against tipping over. The lower extremity 115 belongs to the central vertical beam 11, and the lower extremity 115 rests on a floor, grass, dirt or other substantially horizontal surface while in use. The first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 are oriented perpendicular to the central vertical beam 11 on either side of the central vertical beam 11. The first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 are oriented parallel to each other, and are concentrically positioned with each other. The first lateral beam 12 is positioned adjacent to the central vertical beam 11. The second lateral beam 13 is positioned adjacent to the central vertical beam 11 opposite the first lateral beam 12, so

that the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 symmetrically form the arms of the cross shape.

[0021] The first lateral beam 12 is removably connected to the central vertical beam 11, and the first end cap 14 is connected to the first lateral beam 12 opposite the central vertical beam 11. The second lateral beam 13 is removably connected to the central vertical beam 11 opposite the first lateral beam 12, and the second end cap 15 is connected to the second lateral beam 13 opposite the central vertical beam 11. The upper end cap is connected atop the central vertical beam 11 opposite the lower extremity 115.

[0022] In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 are removably connected to the central vertical beam 11 by slots and hooks. Referring to FIG. 3, the central vertical beam 11 comprises a first plurality of slots 111 and a second plurality of slots 112. The first plurality of slots 111 and the second plurality of slots 112 are positioned opposite each other on the central vertical beam 11, wherein the first plurality of slots 111 is positioned on a first surface 113 and the second plurality of slots 112 is positioned on a second surface 114. The first surface 113 and the second surface 114 are oriented vertically and parallel to each other, and are positioned opposite each other on the central vertical beam 11. The first plurality of slots 111 and the second plurality of slots 112 are positioned at a proportional cross arm height 116 of approximately two thirds of a total height 117 of the central vertical beam 11, wherein the proportional cross arm height 116 is defined according to correct proportions for a Christian cross.

[0023] Referring to FIGS. 3-4, the first lateral beam 12 comprises a first plurality of hooks 121 and the second lateral beam 13 comprises a second plurality of hooks 131. The first plurality of hooks 121 is attached to the first lateral beam 12 opposite the first end cap 14, and the second plurality of hooks 131 is attached to the second lateral beam 13 opposite the second end cap 15. In order to connect the first lateral beam 12 to the central vertical beam 11, a user inserts the first plurality of hooks 121 into the first plurality of slots 111. In order to connect the second lateral beam 13 to the central vertical beam 11, a user inserts the second plurality of hooks 131 into the second plurality of slots 112. It should be noted that the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 are interchangeable, as the present invention has horizontal symmetry. The first plurality of hooks 121 may be removably inserted into the second plurality of slots 112, and the second plurality of hooks 131 may be removably inserted into the first plurality of slots 111.

[0024] Referring to FIGS. 5-6, the base 2 is connected to the central vertical beam 11, and vertically positioned adjacent to the lower extremity 115. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the base 2 comprises a plurality of supporting members 20. Each of the plurality of supporting members 20 is angularly offset from each other by a horizontal angle. In the preferred embodiment, the horizontal angle is 90 degree, and the plurality of supporting members 20 comprises two supporting members. Preferably, the plurality of supporting members 20 is serially positioned vertically along the central vertical beam 11. Stated differently, each of the plurality of supporting members is connected to the central vertical beam 11 at a different vertical height. Each of the plurality of supporting members 20 comprises a central connector 21, a first angled coupling member 22, a second angled coupling member 23, a first leg 24, a second leg 25, a first leg end cap

26, and a second leg end cap 27. The first angled coupling member 22 is identical to the second angled coupling member 23, the first leg 24 is identical to the second leg 25, and the first leg end cap 26 is identical to the second leg end cap 27. The first end cap 14 and the second end cap 15 are preferably made of non-slip rubber in order to enhance the stability of the present invention. Since each of the plurality of supporting members 20 is positioned at a different vertical height, the first leg 24 and the second leg 25 of each of the plurality of supporting members 20 must have a different length.

[0025] The central connector 21 is an elongated rectangular member that traverses horizontally through the central vertical beam 11, with a length greater than the horizontal dimensions of the central vertical beam 11 so that opposing extremities of the central connector 21 protrude perpendicularly and symmetrically outward from the central vertical beam 11. The first angled coupling member 22 is connected to the central connector 21. The first leg 24 is connected to the first angled coupling member 22 opposite the central connector 21. The first leg end cap 26 is connected to the first leg 24 opposite the first angled coupling member 22. Similarly, the second angled coupling member 23 is connected to the central coupling member opposite the first angled coupling member 22. The second leg 25 is connected to the second angled coupling member 23 opposite the central connector 21, and the second leg end cap 27 is connected to the second leg 25 opposite the second angled coupling member 23.

[0026] Referring to FIG. 6, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the first angled coupling member 22 and the second angled coupling member 23 each have a first coupling end 221 and a second coupling end 222. The first coupling end 221 is positioned opposite the second coupling end 222, and the first coupling end 221 is oriented at an angle relative to the second coupling end 222, such as, but not limited to, 45 degrees. The first coupling end 221 is connected to the central connector 21, and the second coupling end 222 is connected to the first leg 24. The first coupling end 221 is able to be connected to the central connector 21 by having the same cross sectional shape as the central connector 21 but with slightly greater dimensions. The inner dimensions of the first coupling end 221 are approximately the same as the outer dimensions of the central connector 21 with a sufficient tolerance to allow the first coupling end 221 to be slidably engaged with the central connector 21. Similarly, the second coupling end 222 has the same cross sectional shape as the first leg 24 but with slightly greater dimensions, so that the inner dimensions of the second coupling end 222 are approximately the same as the outer dimensions of the first leg 24 with a sufficient tolerance to allow the second coupling end 222 to be slidably engaged to the central connector 21. The first leg end cap 26 is connected to the first leg 24 and the second leg end cap 27 is connected to the second leg 25 in a similar manner. It should be understood that the previous description of the connections between the central connector 21, the first angled coupling member 22, the first leg 24 and the first leg end cap 26 additionally applies to the connections between the central connector 21, the second angled coupling member 23, the second leg 25 and the second leg end cap 27 due to the symmetry of each of the plurality of supporting members 20. It should also be understood that while the preferred embodiment of the plurality of supporting members 20 has been described, other arrangements may be utilized to

achieve the same function of supporting the frame 1 in a vertical orientation by the base 2 with removable components.

[0027] Referring to FIG. 7, in a bracket alternate embodiment of the present invention, the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 are connected to the central vertical beam 11 not by slots and hooks, but by a plurality of brackets 6 and a plurality of bolts 7. The plurality of bolts 7 is connected through the plurality of brackets 6 to the first lateral beam 12, the second lateral beam 13, and the central vertical beam 11, affixing the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 to the central vertical beam 11. The plurality of brackets 6 and the plurality of bolts 7 may also be replaced by other types of fastening hardware which perform the same function of fastening the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 to the central vertical beam 11.

[0028] Referring to FIG. 8, in a junction alternate embodiment of the present invention, an alternate frame 5 comprises a central junction member 51 and a plurality of junction arms 52. The plurality of junction arms 52 comprises an upper central vertical beam 521, a lower central vertical beam 522, a first alternate lateral beam 523 and a second alternate lateral beam 524. Preferably, the first alternate lateral beam 523 and the second alternate lateral beam 524 comprise end caps similar to the first end cap 14 and the second end cap 15 of the preferred embodiment. The central junction member 51 is shaped substantially similar to a plus sign, with four shafts 512 protruding from a central area 511 at 90 degree angles to each other. The four shafts 512 and the plurality of junction arms 52 are elongated tubular members with square or rectangular cross sections. The inner dimensions of the four shafts 512 of the central junction member 51 are approximately the same as the outer dimensions of the plurality of junction arms 52 with sufficient tolerance to allow the plurality of junction arms 52 to be inserted within the four shafts of the central junction member 51.

[0029] The upper central vertical beam 521 is positioned parallel to and concentric with the lower central vertical beam 522. The first alternate lateral beam 523 is positioned parallel to and concentric with the second alternate lateral beam 524. The upper central vertical beam 521 and the lower central vertical beam 522 are oriented perpendicular to the first alternate lateral beam 523 and the second alternate lateral beam 524. The upper central vertical beam 521 is removably connected to the central junction member 51, and the lower central vertical beam 522 is removably connected to the central junction member 51 opposite the upper central vertical beam 521. The first alternate lateral beam 523 and the second alternate lateral beam 524 are positioned between the upper central vertical beam 521 and the lower central vertical beam 522. The first alternate lateral beam 523 is removably connected to the central junction member 51, and the second alternate lateral beam 524 is removably connected to the central junction member 51 opposite the first alternate lateral beam 523. The base 2 is the same in the second alternate embodiment as in the preferred embodiment, with the base 2 being connected to the lower central vertical beam 522.

[0030] In a third alternate embodiment, the first lateral beam 12 and the second lateral beam 13 comprise a plurality of telescoping sections that may be withdrawn into the central vertical beam 11 for storage.

[0031] An alternate base is hereinafter described. Instead of legs and other separable components, the alternate base is a singular piece, pyramidal in shape with a cavity cut centrally

downward into the alternate base into which the central vertical beam **11** may be inserted.

[0032] An additional feature that may be included in the present invention is an electrical socket on the frame **1** to which a strand of Christmas lights may be connected. The electrical socket is electrically connected to a male electrical plug that may be extended from within the frame **1** to a nearby electrical socket in order to provide power to the electrical socket.

[0033] Although the invention has been explained in relation to its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that many other possible modifications and variations can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. A cross shaped Christmas decoration comprises:
 - a frame;
 - a base;
 - a garland;
 - a plurality of lights;
 - the garland and the plurality of lights being positioned around the frame;
 - the garland being attached to the frame;
 - the frame being connected to the base, wherein the base stabilizes the frame in a vertical orientation;
 - the frame comprises a central vertical beam, a first lateral beam, a second lateral beam, a first end cap and a second end cap;
2. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **1** comprises:
 - the first lateral beam and the second lateral beam being oriented parallel to each other;
 - the first lateral beam and the second lateral beam being concentrically positioned with each other;
 - the first lateral beam and the second lateral beam being oriented perpendicular to the central vertical beam;
 - the first lateral beam being positioned adjacent to the central vertical beam;
 - the second lateral beam being positioned adjacent to the central vertical beam opposite the first lateral beam;
 - the base being positioned adjacent to a lower extremity of the central vertical beam;
3. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **1** comprises:
 - the first lateral beam being removably connected to the central vertical beam;
 - the second lateral beam being removably connected to the central vertical beam opposite the first lateral beam;
 - the first end cap being connected to the first lateral beam opposite the central vertical beam;
 - the second end cap being connected to the second lateral beam opposite the central vertical beam;
4. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **3** comprises:
 - the central vertical beam comprises a first plurality of slots and a second plurality of slots;
 - the first plurality of slots and the second plurality of slots being positioned opposite each other on the central vertical beam, wherein the first plurality of slots is positioned on a first surface the second plurality of slots is

positioned on a second surface, and the first surface and the second surface are parallel to each other and positioned opposite each other on the central vertical beam; the first plurality of slots and the second plurality of slots being positioned at a proportional cross arm height, wherein the proportional cross arm height is approximately two thirds of a total height of the central vertical beam;

wherein the proportional cross arm height is defined according to correct proportions for a Christian cross; the first lateral beam comprises a first plurality of hooks; the first plurality of hooks being attached to the first lateral beam opposite the first end cap; the second lateral beam comprises a second plurality of hooks; the second plurality of hooks being attached to the second lateral beam opposite the second end cap; the first plurality of hooks being removably inserted into the first plurality of slots; the second plurality of hooks being removably inserted into the second plurality of slots;

5. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **3** comprises:

the first lateral beam and the second lateral beam being connected to the central vertical beam by a plurality of brackets and a plurality of bolts;

6. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **1** comprises:

the base comprises a plurality of supporting members; each of the plurality of supporting members comprises a central connector, a first angled coupling member, a second angled coupling member, a first leg, a second leg, a first leg end cap, and a second leg end cap;

7. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **6** comprises:

each of the plurality of supporting members being angularly offset from each other by a horizontal angle;

8. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **7**, the plurality of supporting members comprises two supporting members;

the horizontal angle being 90 degrees;

9. The cross shaped Christmas decoration as claimed in claim **6** comprises:

the central connector traversing horizontally through the central vertical beam;

the first angled coupling member being connected to the central connector;

the second angled coupling member being connected to the central connector opposite the first angled coupling member;

the first leg being connected to the first angled coupling member opposite the central connector;

the second leg being connected to the second angled coupling member opposite the central connector;

the first leg end cap being connected to the first leg opposite the first angled coupling member;

the second leg end cap being connected to the second leg opposite the second angled coupling member;

* * * * *