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(54) **DAMAGE RESISTANT CONTAINER AND  
LOCKING FEATURE**

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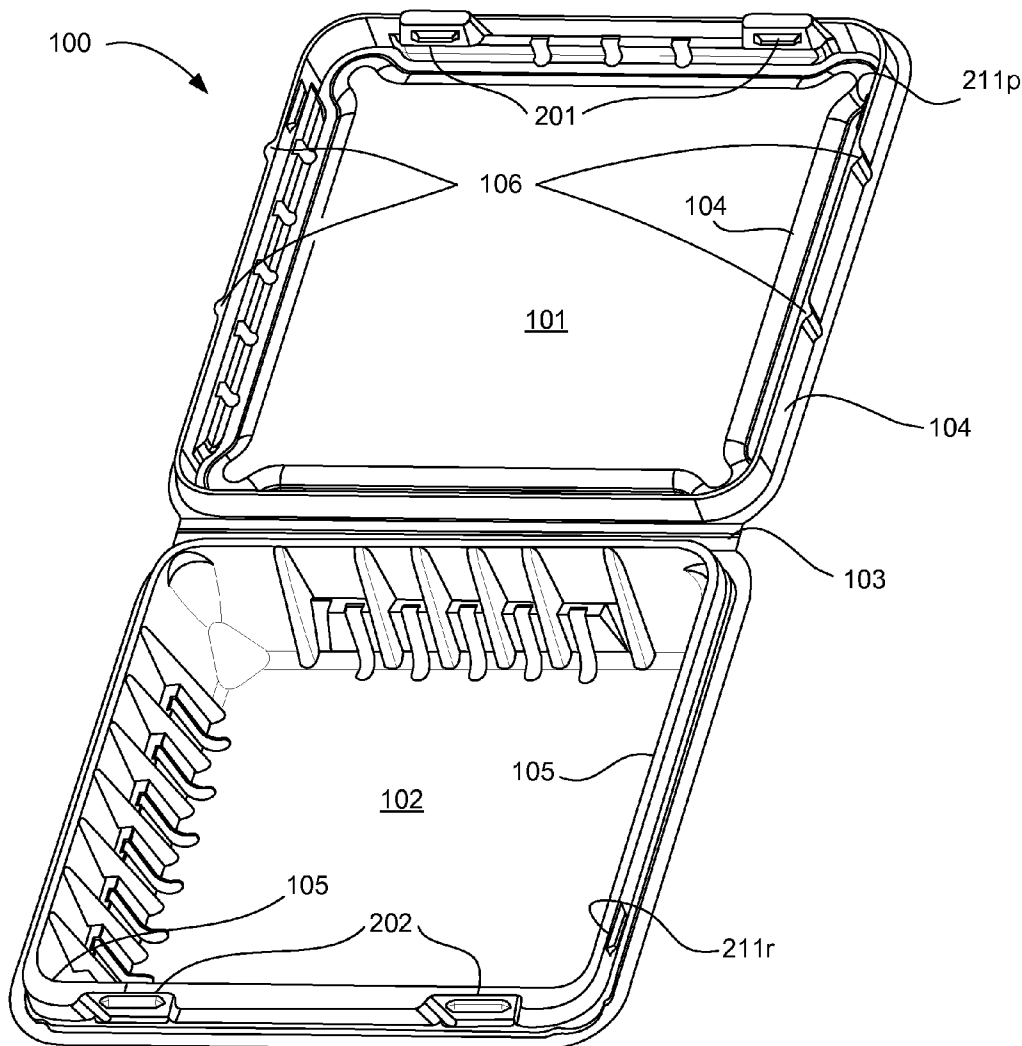
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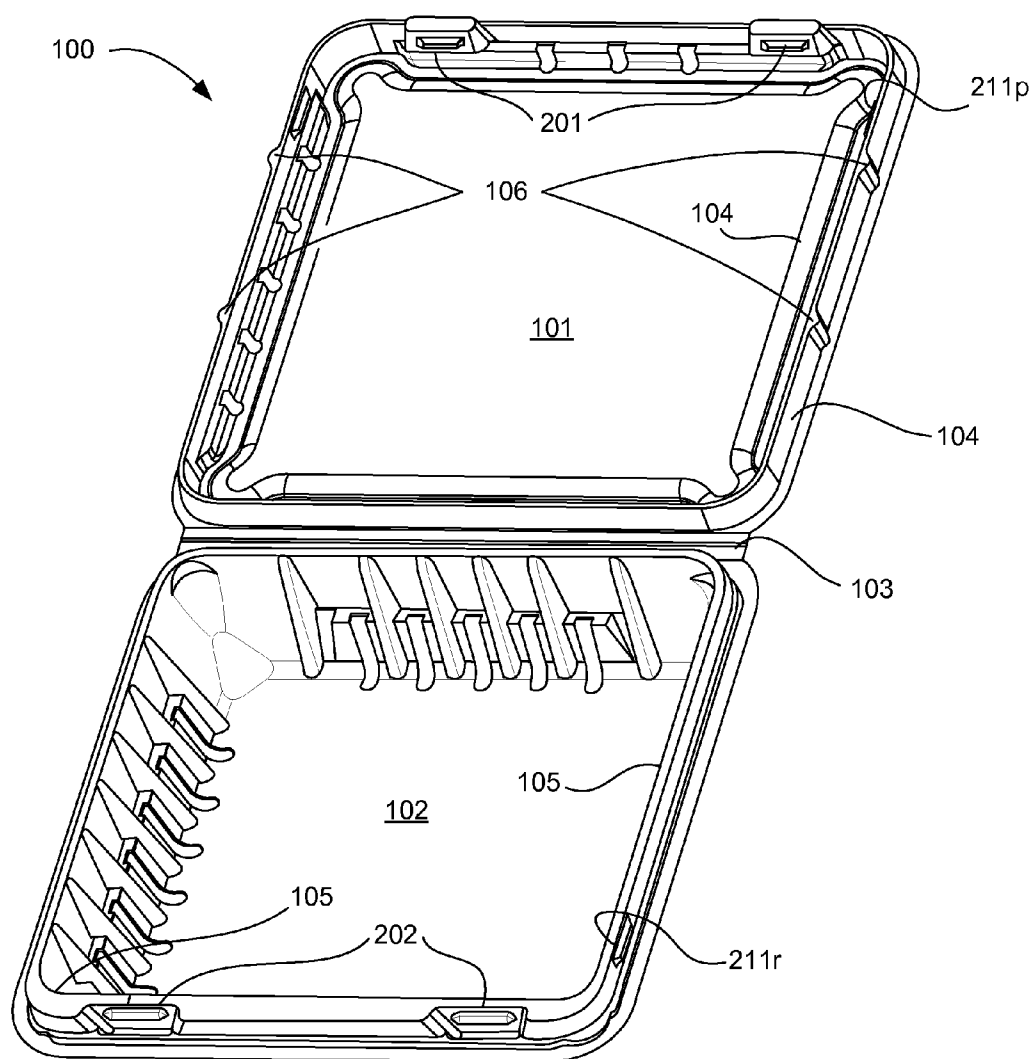
(57) **ABSTRACT**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

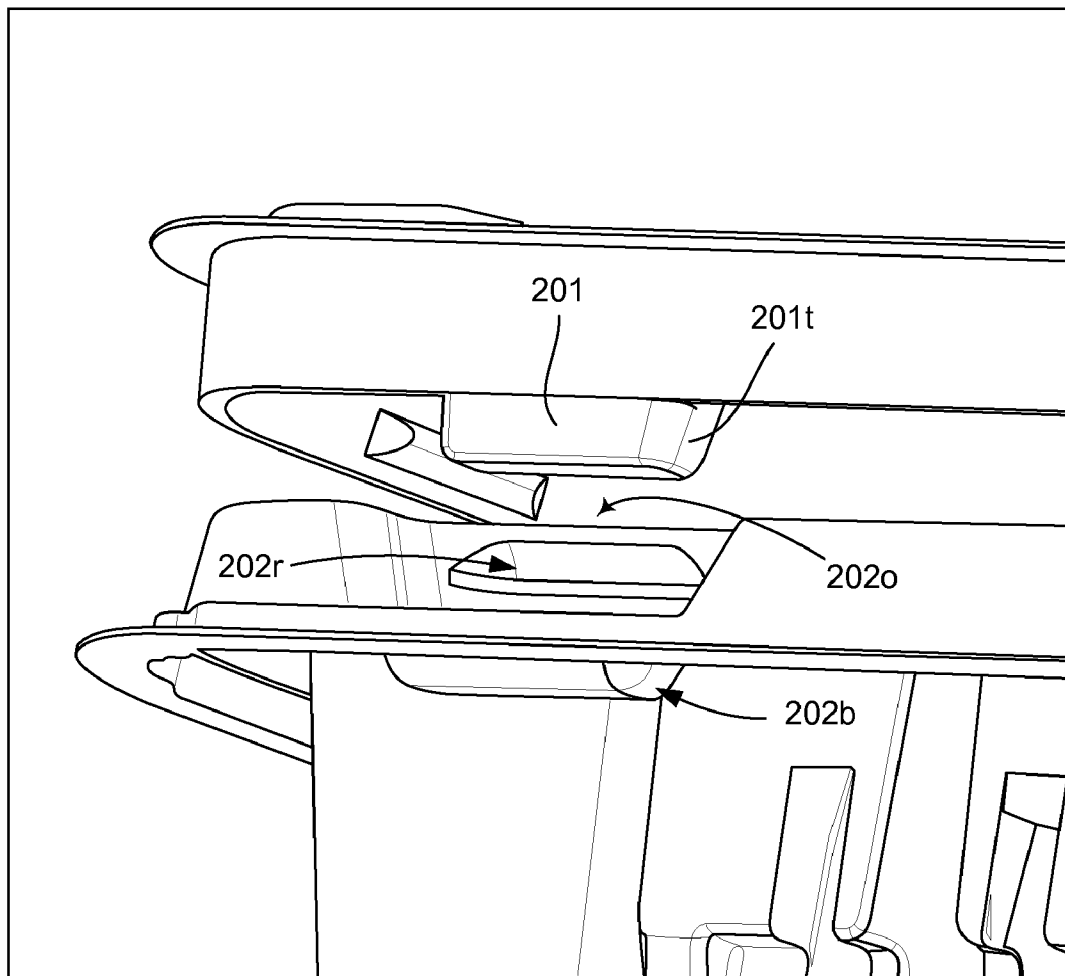
(60) Provisional application No. 61/370,751, filed on Aug.  
4, 2010.

The invention encompasses packaging containers and locking features enabling damage resistant closed containers that are suitable for mechanized and automated closing and loading operations.

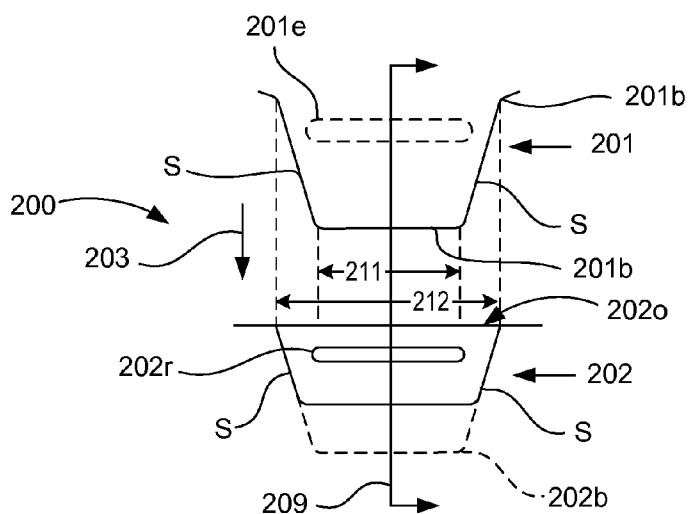




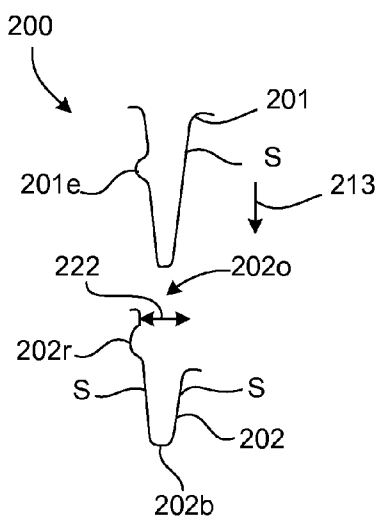
**FIG. 1**



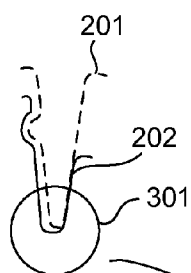
**FIG. 2**



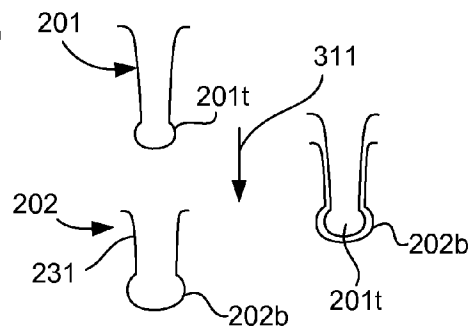
**FIG. 3(a)**



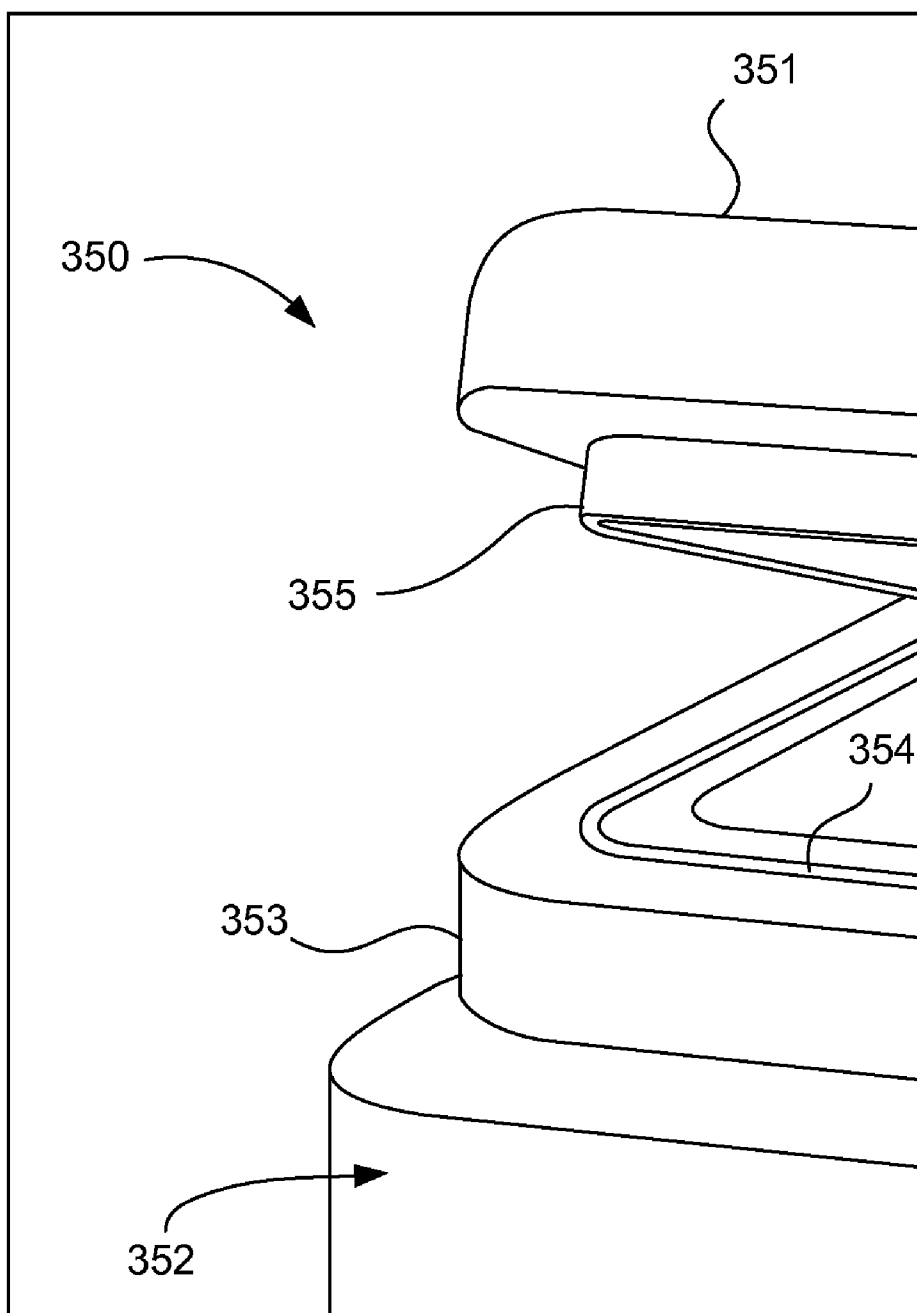
**FIG. 3(b)**



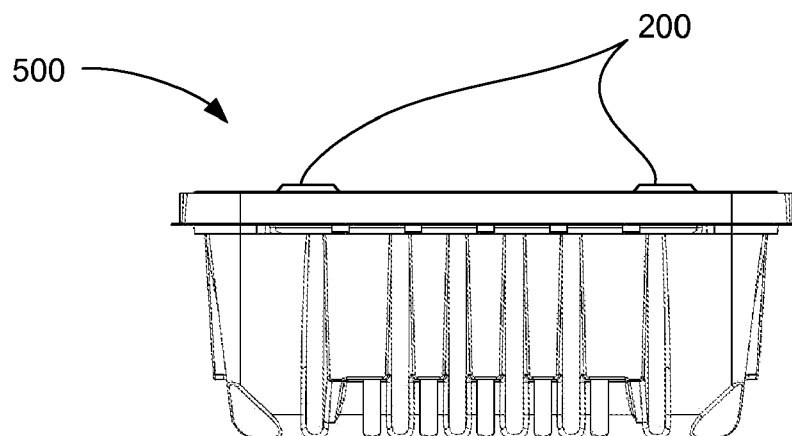
**FIG. 3(c)**



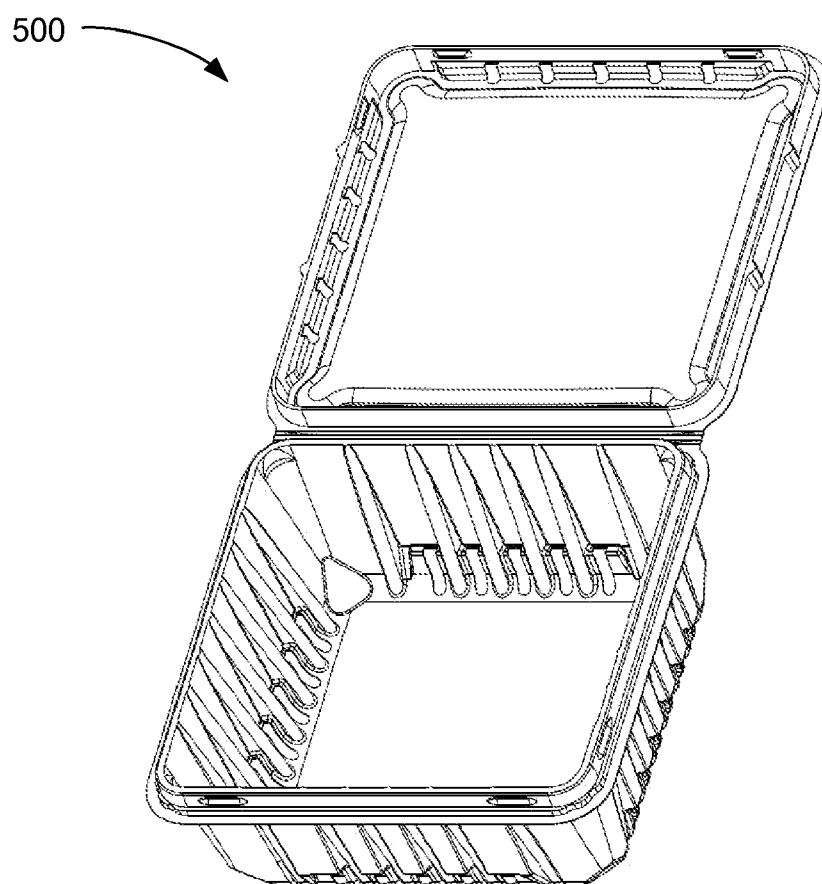
**FIG. 4**



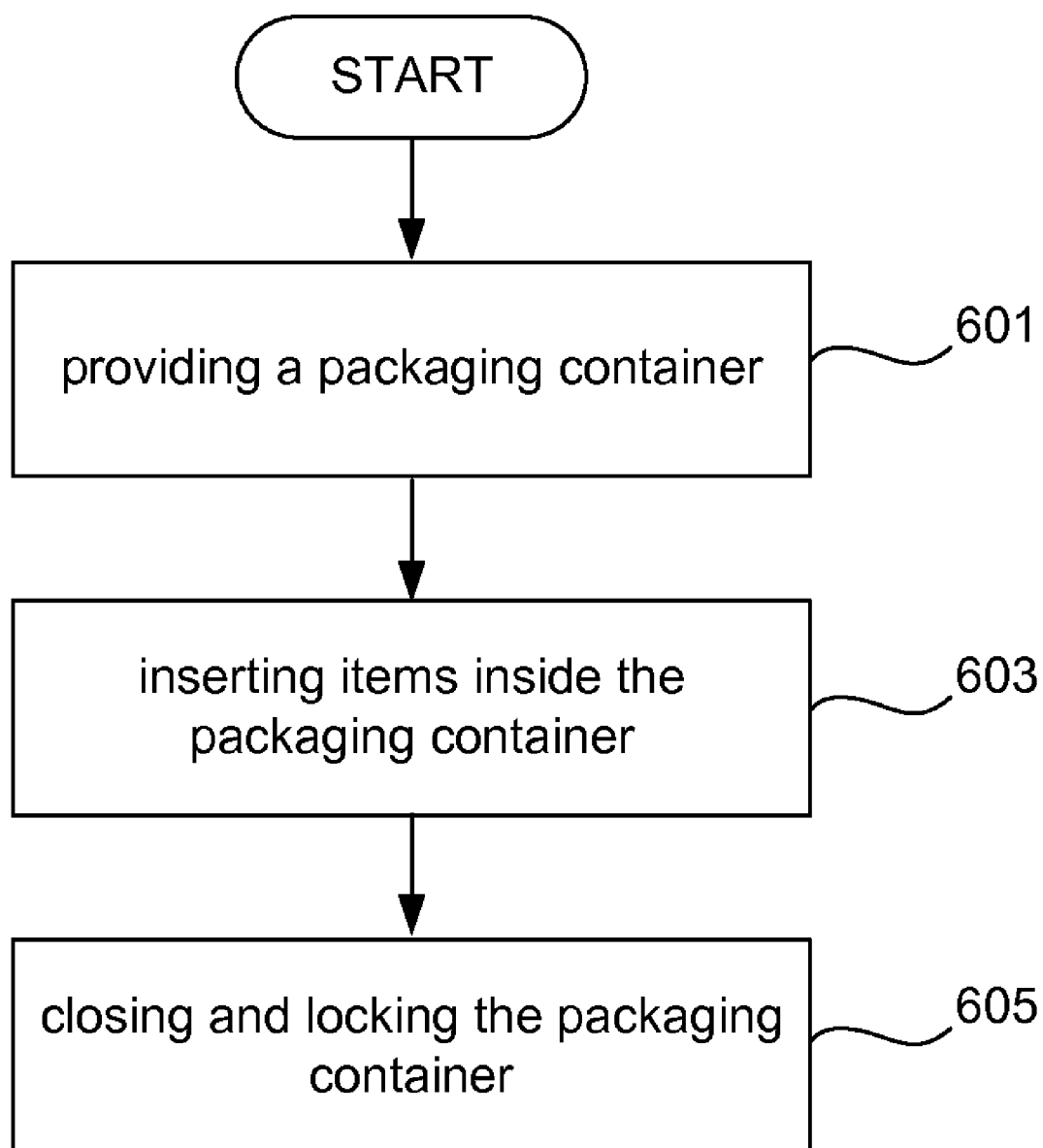
**FIG. 3(d)**



**FIG. 5(a)**



**FIG. 5(b)**

**FIG. 6**

## DAMAGE RESISTANT CONTAINER AND LOCKING FEATURE

### CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/370,751 filed Aug. 4, 2010 which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

### TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to an improved method and produce packaging configuration enabling the improved packing, storage, and shipping of produce and other items. More particularly, the present invention has improved resilience to damage during shipping and display. In particular the package has improved resistance to damage induced by consumer mishandling and dropping of the package while full of produce product.

### BACKGROUND

[0003] When displayed in stores or when moved through distribution channels packages can be mishandled, dropped, or otherwise subject to breakage. In the ordinary course of use, a broken container can spill produce contained within the container throughout the immediate area. This spillage can dirty floors and also pose a slipping and tripping risk to people and machines near the spilled product. This poses particular risks to retailers when such containers are dropped and spill throughout crowded customer environments. This is problematic for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the substantial litigation risks imposed upon a retailer when spilled and frequently slippery produce products spill over consumer areas. Moreover, such risks and problems are compounded when delicate contents such as produce items are mishandled. It would be helpful to have resilient and yet low cost containers to prevent the spillage of produce.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In accordance with the principles of the present invention, an improved apparatus and method for packaging, transporting, and storing items in a resilient container is disclosed.

[0005] In general, the present invention is directed toward methods and produce packaging configurations that are low cost, easily manufacturable, easy to use, and relatively robust providing increased protection from mishaps caused by mishandling of the containers. increase

[0006] One embodiment of the invention comprises a produce package a packaging container with a lid and a basket, both engageable to form a closed package. Particular utility is achieved using hinged containers but the invention is not limited to such. The lid and basket each include a portion of an engageable locking feature configured to enable secure closure of the container. The locking feature comprises a receiving feature and a complementary engagement member each arranged at the other of the lid or the basket and configured such that when the lid is closed the engagement member engages with the receiving feature reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration. The receiving feature further includes a guide feature and a lock. The complementary lock engagement member includes a protrusion that is configured to mate with the receiving feature and engage with

the lock to reversibly lock the container when closed. The operation of the protrusion with the guide feature is particularly helpful in assisting in the closure of the container. In particular, this is useful during a loading operation where items are placed in the container which is then closed. Such a container is of particular utility when used in automated loading processes.

[0007] In another aspect, the invention discloses a method using at least the following operation. A packaging container with a lid attached to a basket with a hinge is provided. This operation can be preceded by a loading step when contents are introduced into the opened container. The container itself is configured to comprise a lid and basket each including a portion of a locking feature configured such that each portion of the locking feature can be engaged together to enable secure closure of the container. The locking feature comprising a receptacle arranged at one of the lid or the basket and a complementary projection arranged at the other of the lid or the basket. The lid is then closed such that the operation of closing the lid comprises guiding the projection into position using a guide feature of the receptacle such that projection engages with the receptacle reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration.

[0008] Other aspects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description and accompanying drawings which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The following detailed description will be more readily understood in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0010] FIG. 1 is a simplified perspective view of a robust packaging container in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a simplified close up perspective view of a container showing a locking feature of a packaging container in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 3(a) is a simplified isolated close up section view of a locking feature of a packaging container in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIGS. 3(b) and 3(c) are simplified isolated close up section views of a locking feature such as shown in FIG. 3(a) the view depicted is along a section axis that is 90° rotated relative to the view of FIG. 3(a).

[0014] FIG. 3(d) is a simplified perspective view a portion of a container showing an extension and associated engagement groove in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a section view of another embodiment of a locking feature of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 5 provides a number of views of an example package in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of the present invention.

[0018] It is to be understood that in the drawings like reference numerals designate like structural elements. Also, it is understood that the depictions in the Figures are not necessarily to scale.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0019] The present invention has been particularly shown and described with respect to certain embodiments and spe-



cific features thereof. The embodiments set forth hereinbelow are to be taken as illustrative rather than limiting. It should be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that various changes and modifications in form and detail may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

[0020] Generally, the principles of the invention encompass robust packaging devices and containers as well as an associated mode of packing such containers.

[0021] One approach to the problem of relatively delicate containers is problem is to provide an improved container. In particular the container is enhanced by the use of improved locking features that are also suited to automated loading and closure.

[0022] To that end, an improved packaging container for the packaging of produce and other items is disclosed.

[0023] Having reference to FIG. 1, a first preferred embodiment of the produce basket 100 of the present invention is shown. Produce basket 100 is a one-piece structure incorporating both basket body 102 and lid 101. That portion of produce basket 100 joining basket body 102 and lid 101 is formed as a hinge, 103. While a first preferred embodiment is a vacuum formed plastic structure, the principles of the present invention are equally applicable to alternative materials and manufacturing technologies. In a first preferred embodiment of the present invention, the basket is formed of Kodapak® PET Copolyester 9921, available from Eastman Kodak. Alternative materials include, but are not limited to various polymeric and monomeric plastics including but not limited to styrenes, polyethylenes including HDPE and LPDE, polyesters and polyurethanes; metals and foils thereof; paper products including chipboard, pressboard, and flakeboard; wood and combinations of the foregoing. Alternative manufacturing technologies include, but are again not limited to thermocasting; casting, including die-casting; thermosetting; extrusion; sintering; lamination; the use of built-up structures and other processes well known to those of ordinary skill in the art.

[0024] The container 100 embodiment of FIG. 1 has a lid 101 and a body 102 arranged in a closable package. As shown here, the lid 101 includes raised circumferential ridge 104 that is mated to engage a raised circumferential ridge 105 of the body 102. The locking of the two ridges 104, 105 can be enhanced with the sidewall locking bumps 106 shown here on the lid ridge 104. It is pointed out that while disclosed here as a contiguous raised ridge, the ridges can include a recessed feature as well. Additionally, not all embodiments require that a ridge be contiguous. Other embodiments can use a plurality of shorter ridges arranged around the outer circumference of the lid and basket. In particular embodiments, such ridges can be those located at the corners. The bumps 106 of one ridge (i.e., the lid ridge 104) can be sized and arranged to press fit against the other ridge (i.e., basket ridge 105). In one case, where a first ridge circumscribes a greater "diameter" than the inner ridge, bumps arranged on an outer surface of inner ridge can be press fit against an inner surface of the inner ridge. Also, the position of the bumps can be placed on an outer surface of the inner ridge or a combination of inner and outer surface to enable the press fit.

[0025] Importantly, one or more locking features 200 are arranged in the sidewall portions of the lid 101 and body 102. Each locking feature 200 includes a locking member 201 for engagement with a locking receptacle 202. In this embodiment the locking member 201 is part of the lid 101 and the

locking receptacle 202 is formed in the body 102. When engaged they lock the lid and body tightly together. It should be pointed out that the position of the locking member and the locking receptacle can be reverse (i.e., member 201 on the basket 102).

[0026] It is specifically pointed out that although disclosed as a pair of mated ridge elements 104, 105, the packaging container need not have ridges and the described features can be formed in the associated lid and basket of the container.

[0027] FIG. 2 provides a closer view of the locking feature 200. Here, the locking member 201 comprises a protrusion that is configured to engage the receptacle 202 by insertion of the member 201 into the locking receptacle 202.

[0028] Importantly, in many embodiments, the tip 201t of the member is intended to have a narrower dimension than the base (not shown in this view) of the member. This generates a member that becomes narrower (in at least one dimension) as it extends toward the tip 201t. Additionally, the opening 202o of the receptacle 202 wider than the tip 201t of the member. And also wider than the bottom 202b of the receptacle 202. This is helpful in that the small tip 201t can easily fit into the much larger opening 202o enabling a machine to easily fit the two components together during a mechanized closing operation. Smooth sidewalls of the member 201 and receptacle 202 will enable an easier engagement of the member 201 with receptacle 202 during automated processing. Thus, the receptacle uses the tapered smooth walls as a guide feature that easier closure of the container during processing and closing.

[0029] As an added securement feature the member 201 has an engagement tab (not shown in the view) that is sized to engage with a mated lock catch, depicted here as recess feature 202r located inside the receptacle 202. Upon closing, the catch and tab engage to further lock the locking feature 201/202 together.

[0030] It is also to be pointed out that further locking aspects can be included. For example, here another protuberance 211p can be arranged on the one or another of the ridges (here, ridge 104) such that when closed the protuberance engages with a complementary recess 211r on the other ridge (here, ridge 105).

[0031] Importantly, in one embodiment of the invention, the inside walls of the receptacle 202 are sized such that when the member 201 is inserted into the receptacle 202, the walls of the receptacle 202 engage outer walls of the member 201 to establish a first lock as the receptacle walls are press fitted against the outer walls of the member. In particular, the tip region 201t of the member is sized such that it engages in a press fit with a bottom portion 202b of the receptacle 202 to form the first lock. This first lock can be replaced by a bulbous locking feature such as discussed with respect to FIG. 4. Alternatively, both the press fit and the feature of FIG. 4 can be used together to enhance the locking of the container. To establish an even more robust lock the receptacle 202 and member 201 include an engagement bump 201e configured to engage a recess feature 202r in the receptacle 202 forming a second lock. It should be pointed out that one particularly useful implementation uses the press fit first lock together with the second lock of 201e/202r to establish an embodiment using two locks. This two lock (or more) implementation is more robust than containers currently in the market.

[0032] Further reference is made to FIG. 3(a) which is a different view of the locking feature 200 and also FIG. 3(b)

which is a simplified diagrammatic side section view of embodiments of the locking feature **200**.

**[0033]** FIG. 3(a) shows the narrower dimensions of the tip **201t** of the locking feature member **201** relative to the wider base portion **201b**. Also, shown is the wider dimension **212** of the receptacle opening **202o**. The dimension **212** is wider in at least one dimension as compared with both the receptacle “bottom” **202b** and the member tip **201t** (e.g., dimension **211**). Also, shown are some added securement feature components. For example, one embodiment of tab **201e** of the member **201** sized to engage the mated recess feature **202r** of the receptacle **202**. Also shown are the smooth sidewalls **S** of the member **201** and receptacle **202**. As is shown by arrow **203**, the member **201** is pushed into the receptacle **202** to engage and lock the feature **200** together. The wider upper opening **202o** and smooth sidewalls **S** ease the insertion of member **301** into the receptacle **201**. The wider opening **202o** can account for misalignments and other difficulties in automated closing processes. The smaller dimension **211** of the member tip **201t** enable easy engagement of the narrower member tip **201t** with the wider **212** opening **202o** of the receptacle **202**. Thus, the tapered aspect of the engagement feature **200** enables easy engagement of the member **201** with the mated receptacle **202**. The smooth sidewalls **S** can enable easier seating of the member **201** into the receptacle **202** during closure as well.

**[0034]** FIG. 3(b) is a side section view of a locking feature embodiment **200**. The view can be taken, for example, along the section **209** of FIG. 3(a). This view shows another optional aspect with a taper in a second axis as shown. Thus, if FIG. 3(a) shows a side-to-side arrangement of a feature **200**, then FIG. 3(b) shows a “front-to-back” arrangement of a similar feature. In this view, similar tapering dimensions can be included in some embodiments. For example, the wider base **201b** can also taper into the narrower dimensions of the tip **201t** in this axis. Also, the dimension **222** of the receptacle opening **202o** is generally wider than that of the bottom **202b**. Also shown is the added securement feature components including the engagement bump (e.g., tab **201e**) of the member **201** sized to engage the mated recess feature (e.g., catch **202r**) of the receptacle **202**. Also shown are further smooth sidewalls **S** of the member **201** and receptacle **202**. As is shown by arrow **213**, the member **201** is pushed into the receptacle **202** to engage and lock the feature **200** together as shown in the embodiment of FIG. 3(c) which is a closed feature. As shown, the member **201** is seated and locked in position inside the receptacle **202**. The engagement bump **201e** of the member **201** is shown engaged with the mated recess feature **202r** of the receptacle **202**.

**[0035]** With reference to circle **301** of the closed feature **200** shown in FIG. 3(c), a bottom portion of one possible embodiment of a locking feature **200** is shown.

**[0036]** In one embodiment, the packaging container can comprise a ridge, but also a mated groove sized to receive the ridge. One simplified example of such an embodiment is shown and described with respect to FIG. 3(d). For example, a corner portion of one embodiment is depicted. The basket **352** and lid **351** are arranged to be closed. Here, the basket **352** can include a ridge feature **353** having a groove **354** formed therein. It is the pointed out that the ridge is not required. Instead the groove **354** can be formed in an upper portion of the basket without a deliberately formed ridge. In any case, the groove is adapted to receive an extension **355** sized to engage the groove **354**.

**[0037]** To continue with the discussion of FIG. 3(d), in this embodiment, a package **350** having a lid **351** and a basket **352** can be used to secure the container in a closed configuration. The basket **352** and lid **351** are arranged to be closed. Although disclosed here as having a groove **354** formed in a ridge feature **353** it is the pointed out that the ridge **353** is not required to practice the invention. Instead the groove **354** can be formed in an upper portion of the basket **352** without a deliberately formed ridge.

**[0038]** In any case, the groove **354** can operate as an engagement feature suitable for engaging a complementary extension **355** in one of the lid or basket. The extension being in one of the lid or basket and the groove being in the other (here, in the lid **351**). The groove **354** is sized to engage the sized to engage the extension **355**. As with the ridges previously described, the groove can extend around the full circumference of the container or only a portion of as desired by the designer. The groove **354** and extension **355** can both comprise tapered sidewalls configured to improve engagement and machine operation and can also include locking features as with the previous embodiments. For example, the extension **355** can have a cross section similar to that of **201** as shown in FIGS. 3(a), 3(b) and **4** thereby optionally including locking features (**201e**, **202r**, **201t**, **202b**, etc.) designed to assist in securing the container in a closed configuration. Additionally, the separate locking features shown in FIG. 2 can be used in addition to those of the groove an extension of FIG. 3(d).

**[0039]** FIG. 4 can be used to illustrate another optional aspect of a locking mechanism as illustrated expanded view **301**. The receptacle **202** is again shown with a receptacle bottom **202b** and the member **201** with a tip **201t**. Here the receptacle **202** has an inner sidewall having a neck **231** that is sized to be narrower in at least one dimension than a bulge portion of the bottom **202** which opened up to an expanded size. Additionally, the member includes a sidewall **232** that tapers as it extends toward a flared distal to tip **201t**. It is pointed out that the flared tip **201t** is slightly wider than the neck **231** of the receptacle **202**. Additionally, the tip flare **201t** of the member **201** has a size and dimension that is generally closer to that of the bulge **202b** than it is to that of the neck **232**. The idea being that the neck **231** is narrower than the flared tip **201t** thus, when closed, the tip **201t** is pressed through the tight neck **231** until it is seated in the expanded region on the other side of the neck (here depicted as the bulge portion **202b** arranged at a bottom portion of the receptacle **202**).

**[0040]** Also, in another embodiment a portion of the member **201** has a somewhat larger dimension than a complementary portion of the receptacle **202**. The difference in sizes enables a reversible lock of the lid to the basket. In such a case, the member **201** is simply larger in one or more of the dimensions than the similar dimension of a mated portion of the receptacle. By press fitting the two elements together a tight fit at the bottommost portion of the receptacle can assist in forming a resiliently closed locking feature.

**[0041]** In one application, the container can include a number of these features suitable for locking a container together in a durable closure. In one approach, the container can be filled with one or two pound of product (e.g., strawberries) and rugged enough to be dropped from 4 feet to a floor without the lid opening. This will enable the contents to not scatter and create a hazard in the immediately surrounding

area. This design enables a rugged container while still providing an automation friendly container suitable for machine closing processes.

[0042] FIG. 5 is a generalized example of one possible embodiment of a container 500 in many views. In this embodiment, the container 500 can have two locking features 200 along one of the sidewalls. Even this level of locking features achieves excellent results. Here, an example feature 200 can be 1-1.5 inches long; 0.5-1.5 inches deep, and 0.4-1.0 inches deep to achieve excellent results. However, it is pointed out that there can be as few as one locking feature per container and can also be many such features. The features can be present on 1, 2, 3, or all side walls depending on container shape and the needs of the user/manufacture.

[0043] FIG. 6 is a generalized flow diagram illustrating aspects of a method aspect of the invention. To begin, a container of the type described herein is provided (Step 601). The desired articles are inserted into the basket of the open container (Step 603). This can be done in an automated matter or by hand depending on the need of the user. Once, filled the containers are then closed, typically using an automated manufacturing machine. The guide features of the container guide the engagement members into the receiving members enabling a reversible lock to be established.

[0044] Aspects of this invention have been particularly shown and described with respect to certain selected embodiments and specific features thereof. However, it should be noted that the above-described embodiments are intended to describe the principles of the invention, not limit its scope. Therefore, as is readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, various changes and modifications in form and detail may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims. In particular, specific dimensions are subject to a wide range of flexibility in accordance with the principles of the present invention. Moreover, the number and shape of the locking feature are also subject to a great degree of flexibility in accordance with the principles of the present invention. Other embodiments and variations to the depicted embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art and may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims. Although only a few specific configurations are expressly disclosed herein, it should be appreciated by anyone having ordinary skill in the art that, using the teachings disclosed herein, many different packaging configurations can be implemented and still fall within the scope of the claims. Further, reference in the claims to an element in the singular is not intended to mean "one and only one" unless explicitly stated, but rather, "one or more". Furthermore, the embodiments illustratively disclosed herein can be practiced without any element which is not specifically disclosed herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A produce package comprising:

a packaging container with a lid and a basket, both engageable to form a closed package;

the lid and basket each include a portion of a locking feature configured such that each portion of the locking feature can be engaged together to enable secure closure of the container; and

the locking feature comprising a receiving feature arranged at one of the lid or the basket and a complementary engagement member arranged at the other of the lid or the basket, such that when the lid is closed the engage-

ment member engages with the receiving feature reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration,

the package configured such that,

the receiving feature includes a guide feature and a lock; and

the complementary lock engagement member includes a protrusion that is configured to mate with the receiving feature and engage with the lock to reversibly lock the container when closed.

2. The produce package recited in claim 1, wherein,

the locking feature includes a receiving feature and complementary lock engagement member;

the receiving feature comprises a recess arranged on the lid;

the complementary lock engagement member is arranged at upper portion of the basket and includes a protrusion that is configured to mate with and engage the recess in the lid to reversibly lock the container when closed.

3. The produce package recited in claim 1, wherein the receiving feature is arranged at upper portion of the basket and includes a guide feature and the lock;

the complementary lock engagement member is arranged on the lid and includes a protrusion that is configured to mate with the receiving feature and engage with the lock to reversibly lock the container when closed.

4. The produce package recited in claim 3, wherein an upper portion of the basket comprises a substantially circumferential ridge feature and a lower portion of the lid comprises a substantially circumferential ridge feature, wherein the two ridge features are configured to engage one another when the container is closed and wherein said closing is assisted by the guiding of the complementary lock engagement member into position to engage the receiving feature and lock.

5. The produce package recited in claim 4, wherein the guide feature is arranged in the inner sidewall of the first ridge.

6. The produce package recited in claim 3, wherein the protrusion has a shaft portion that extends toward a tip arranged at a distal end of the protrusion, said tip including a flared portion that is wider than the shaft in at least one dimension; and

wherein the guide feature comprises a pocket comprising a pocket sidewall that extends downward to a bottom of the pocket, the inside of the pocket having a neck and the lock comprises a bulge near the bottom of the pocket, the bulge being wider than the neck in at least one dimension and operating as the lock; and

and wherein the flared portion of the protrusion is wider than the neck in at least one dimension thereby functioning as the lock, such that when the container is closed the protrusion is guided into position by the guide feature of the of the receiving feature and the flared portion engages with the bulge reversibly locking the closed container.

7. The produce package recited in claim 3, wherein the protrusion has a first width and wherein the lock comprises an orifice arranged to receive the protrusion and orifice is sized smaller than the protrusion in at least one dimension such that when the container is closed the protrusion reversibly engages the orifice in a press fit to reversibly lock the container in a closed configuration.

8. The produce package recited in claim 3, wherein the receiving feature comprises a groove arranged at and extending around a substantial portion of the upper portion of the basket; and

the protrusion of the complementary lock engagement member is arranged at and extending around a substantial portion of the lid and is configured to engage with the groove of the basket.

9. The produce package recited in claim 8, wherein the guide feature of the receiving feature comprises at least one tapered sidewall of the groove arranged to enable ease of engagement with the protrusion of the lid;

the protrusion having at least one tapered sidewall having a taper that is generally complementary to the taper of the groove sidewall and includes a locking tab suitable for engaging lock catch of the groove when the container is closed.

10. The produce package recited in claim 3, wherein the guide feature of the receiving feature comprises at least one tapered sidewall; and

the protrusion further comprises at least one tapered sidewall having a taper that is generally complementary to the taper of the guide feature and includes a locking tab suitable for engaging a locking catch of the receiving feature when the container is closed.

11. The produce package recited in claim 10 wherein the locking tab of the protrusion comprises a portion of a protrusion sidewall and is arranged to engage the catch when the container is closed.

12. The produce package recited in claim 11, wherein the guide of the receiving feature comprises a plurality of tapered sidewalls; and

the protrusion further comprises a plurality of tapered sidewalls; and

the locking tab of the protrusion comprises a portion of at least one of the plurality of sidewalls if the protrusion.

13. A produce package comprising:

a packaging container comprising a lid operatively attached with a basket with a hinge, both engageable to form a closed package;

the lid and basket each include a portion of a locking feature configured such that each portion of the locking feature can be engaged together to enable secure closure of the container; and

the locking feature comprising a receptacle arranged at one of the lid or the basket and a complementary projection arranged at the other of the lid or the basket, such that when the lid is closed the projection engages with the receptacle reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration.

14. The produce package recited in claim 13, wherein the receptacle of the locking feature comprises a slot having an opening having a sidewall extending down to a bottom of the slot such that the sidewall tapers down from a wider opening to a narrower bottom portion and the projection having a wider base portion tapering down to distal tip portion wherein the tip portion is narrower than the opening in at least one dimension and wherein the projection is inserted into the receptacle to engage the feature.

15. The produce package recited in claim 14, wherein the projection includes a sidewall that includes a locking tab and

the slot sidewall includes a recess sized to engage the tab enabling securement of the locking feature when the container is closed.

16. The produce package recited in claim 15, wherein the projection a flared out portion near the tip of the projection and the receptacle has a neck portion and an expanded bulge portion near a bottom of the receptacle the bulge being wider than the neck in at least one dimension, the flared out portion being wider than the neck enabling the flared out portion to engage the bulge one the flared out portion is moved past the neck further enabling further securement of the locking feature when the container is closed.

17. The produce package recited in claim 13, wherein the receptacle has a guide feature than enables the complementary projection to be guided into position as the container is closed.

18. The produce package recited in claim 13, wherein the projection includes a tip portion at an end of the projection configured such that the tip portion includes a flared end that is larger than a portion of the projection proximal to the tip portion,

the receptacle includes an end portion at a bottom of the receptacle configured such that the end portion includes a narrow neck portion expanding into a bulge that is wider than the neck at a portion of the receptacle closer to the bottom than the neck and wherein said neck is narrower in at least one dimension that the flared end of the projection; and

the locking feature is configured such that when the container is closed the flared end of the protrusion engages the bulge in the receptacle to lock the locking feature.

19. The produce package recited in claim 13, wherein the projection includes a tip portion at a distal end of the projection,

the receptacle includes a neck portion proximal to a bottom of the receptacle, the neck sized such that when the projection and receptacle are engaged when the container is closed a press fit between the neck and the tip portion locking feature is engaged locking the container closed.

20. A method of closing a produce packaging container, the method comprising:

having a packaging container with a lid attached to a basket with a hinge, the lid and basket each include a portion of a locking feature configured such that each portion of the locking feature can be engaged together to enable secure closure of the container, the locking feature comprising a receptacle arranged at one of the lid or the basket and a complementary projection arranged at the other of the lid or the basket, such that when the lid is closed the projection engages with the receptacle reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration;

closing the lid onto the basket such that the operation of closing the lid comprises guiding the projection into position using a guide feature of the receptacle; and

reversibly locking the container in a closed configuration by engaging the complementary projection with the receptacle.

\* \* \* \* \*