July 8, 1969 D. D. GUNTER 3,453,975

CHARCOAL STARTER

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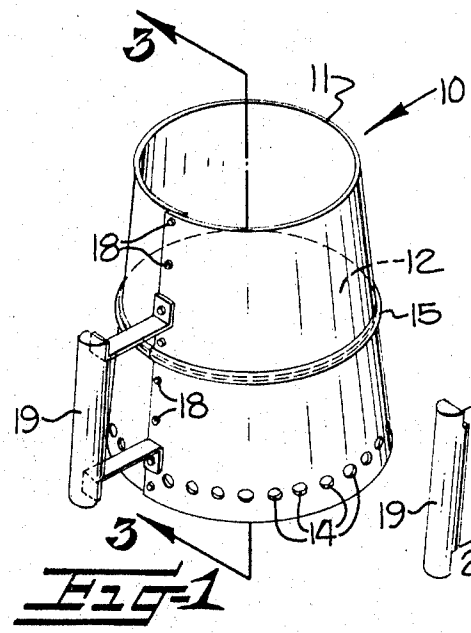


Fig-1

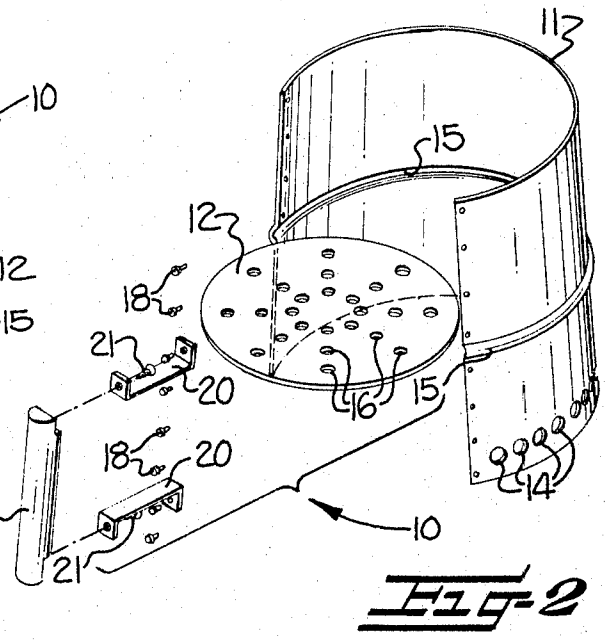


Fig-2

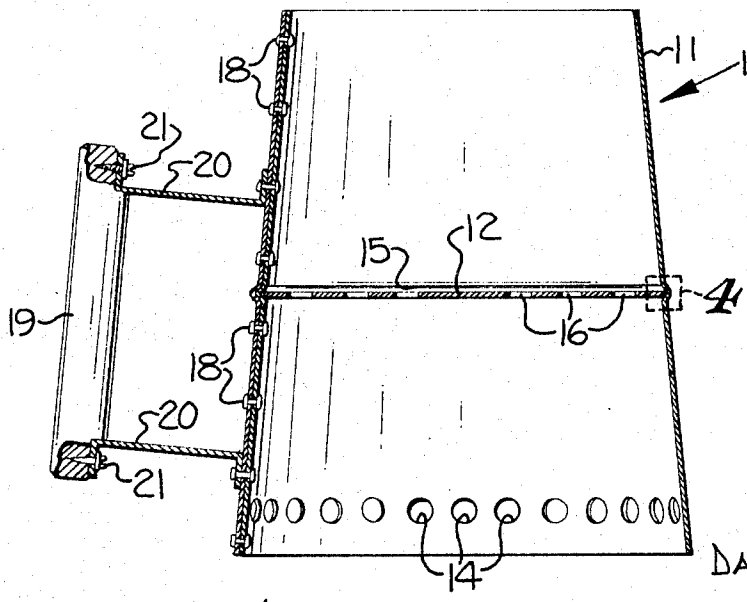


Fig-3

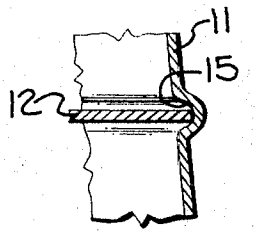


Fig-4

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CHARCOAL STARTER

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A charcoal starter wherein a perforate grate member of predetermined dimensions is secured in position within an open ended tubular housing of predetermined dimensions by engagement of the grate member with an internally concave bead which extends circumferentially of the housing intermediate the two extremities thereof.

Fire starters for charcoal have heretofore been proposed wherein a generally tubular member is superposed on a body of ignitible material, charcoal to be ignited is supported above the ignitible material, and the ignitible material is burned to initiate combustion of the charcoal. Best results with which charcoal starters have been obtained when the charcoal is supported above and out of immediate contact with the ignitible material, so as to permit efficient circulation of air to the ignitible material for proper combustion.

Heretofore, and particularly where provision was made for supporting a body of charcoal above a body of ignitible material, such charcoal starters have frequently been relatively expensive to produce, in that particular materials have been required or relatively complicated manufacturing steps and procedures must be undertaken. For this reason, charcoal starters of the type described have not been as popular with consumers as otherwise would be warranted by the ease with which such starters ignite charcoal.

With the foregoing in mind, it is an object of the present invention to provide a charcoal starter which facilitates the initiation of combustion in a body of charcoal and which is more easily and inexpensively produced and sturdier when assembled. In realizing this object of the present invention, an open ended tubular housing and a grate member are produced by simple straightforward sheet metal operations, such as shearing and punching, and are assembled to securely position the grate member in position to receive and support a body of charcoal above a body of ignitible material.

Some of the objects and advantages of the invention having been stated, others will appear as the description proceeds, when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of the charcoal starter of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is an exploded view of the elements comprising the charcoal starter of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is an enlarged elevation view, in section, through the charcoal starter of FIGURE 1, taken substantially along the line 3—3 in FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 4 is an enlarged detail from the view of FIGURE 3 taken as indicated by the dashed lines in FIGURE 3.

Referring now more particularly to the drawing, the charcoal starter is shown in an overall view in FIGURE 1, and is indicated generally by the numeral **10**. The starter comprises two principal components, namely an open ended tubular housing **11** and a perforate grate member **12** positioned within the housing **11** to partition the volume therewithin.

Preferably, the housing **11** is formed from relatively

thin, incombustible sheet material such as a light gauge of stainless steel, aluminum or other non-corroding material. A non-corroding material is preferable, in order that the charcoal starter **10** may safely be exposed to the weather. The relatively thin sheet of material from which the tubular housing **11** is to be formed is iniatially in planar sheet form, and the form of the tubular housing **11** is such that it may be laid out on such planar material, cut from the material, and thereafter rolled into a tubular or cylindrical configuration. For reasons to be pointed out more fully hereinafter, the preferred form for the tubular housing is that of a frustum of a right-circular cone, having parallel bases of different diameters. Adjacent one extremity of the tubular housing **11** are provided a series of circumferentially spaced apart openings **14**, for the admission of air into the housing **11**, and an internally concave circular bead **15** is formed intermediate the openings **14** and the other extremity of the housing **11**. The bead **15** (FIGURE 4) is formed to provide a concave surface as viewed from the interior of the tubular housing **11** and is therefore referred to as internally concave.

The perforate grate member **12** preferably is formed from the same material as the open ended tubular housing **11**, and retains a planar form. Aditionally, the grate member **12** is provided with a number of openings **16** formed therein, as by punching or the like, and is positioned within the housing **11** to partition the volume therewithin into ignitible material receiving and charcoal receiving areas, as pointed out more fully hereinafter. The predetermined dimensions of the perforate grate member **12** are such that the member **12** is engaged by the internal concavity of the bead **15** (FIGURE 4) so as to be secured in position within the housing **11**. Preferably, the outline configuration of the perforate grate member **12** corresponds to the circular cross-sectional configuration of the housing **11** taken at the bead.

In forming the housing **11** and grate member **12** of the charcoal starter **10**, and assembling these members into the completed starter, it is preferred that the bead **15** be located to define a plane substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the tubular housing **11**. Further, the dimensions of the blank which is rolled to form the tubular housing **11** are such that the ends of the blank overlap at a side seam, where the housing is secured in tubular form by a plurality of rivets **18** or similar fastening means, as is well known in the art of manufacturing sheet metal articles. In order to facilitate handling the starter **10**, a handle **19** of thermally insulating material such as wood is provided and is secured to the housing **11** intermediate the extremities thereof by a pair of spacing members **20** and suitable fastening means such as screws **21** securing the handle **19** and spacer members together. The spacer members **20** are secured to the housing **11** by rivets **18**, which also function as described above to hold the rolled blank in the desired tubular configuration.

In use, the handle **19** may be gripped by a user to manipulate the charcoal starter **10** and position the starter standing on the extremity having air openings **14** formed adjacent thereto, with the grate member **12** overlying a body of ignitible material. Placement of the starter **10** in this position is facilitated by the tubular housing **11** being of right-circular conical configuration and the extremity thereof adjacent which the openings **14** are formed being the base of greater diameter. A body of charcoal may be introduced through the other open end of the tubular housing **11** to be supported on the grate member **12** either before or after the starter **10** is positioned with the grate member overlying a body of ignitible material. With both the ignitible materal and charcoal in position, the ignitible material may be ignited by any suitable means and, while burning, will ignite charcoal supported on the grate **12**.

Thereafter, when the body of charcoal is fully ignited, the starter may be lifted by the handle **19**, the charcoal dumped through the open end of the tubular housing **11** into the body of a grill and the starter then set aside to cool.

In the drawings and specification, there has been set forth a preferred embodiment of the invention, and although specific terms are employed, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for purposes of limitation, the scope of the invention being defined in the claims.

I claim:

1. A charcoal starter comprising:

an open ended tubular housing of predetermined dimensions and in the form of a frustum of a right-circular cone formed from an initially planar thin incombustible sheet material, said sheet material overlapping along a longitudinal seam extending the length of said housing, said housing having a series of circumferentially spaced apart openings adjacent the larger extremity thereof and in internally concave circular bead extending circumferentially of said housing intermediate said openings and the smaller extremity of the housing, said bead defining a plane substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of said housing.

handle means including a member of thermally insulating material adapted to be engaged by a hand of a user for manipulation of the charcoal starter,

a plurality of fastening members penetrating said sheet material along said longitudinal seam with some of said fastening members also penetrating said handle means for securing said seam together and for securing said handle means to said housing at said seam, and

a perforate, planar sheet of thin, incombustible material formed with a circular outline configuration substantially identical with the internal circular cross-sectional configuration of said housing taken at said bead and engaging the internal concavity of said bead and secured in position thereby to partition the volume within said housing,

said charcoal starter adapted to be stood on said larger extremity with said grate member overying a body of readily ignitible material and supporting a body of charcoal so that the ignitible material may be fired to ignite the charcoal.

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