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(54) **METHOD FOR LOCATING OBJECTS**

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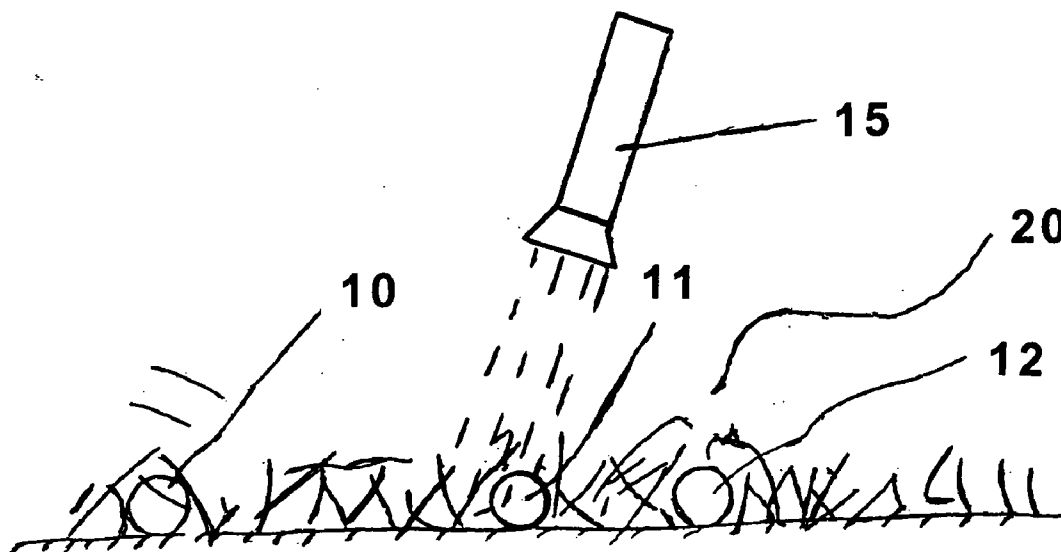
(57) **ABSTRACT**

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May 6, 2004 (GB) 0410133.3

An ultraviolet light source such as an ultraviolet flashlight **15** is used to locate lost or concealed objects such as a golf ball **11** located in rough ground **20**. The method is preferably carried out in darkness or subdued light.



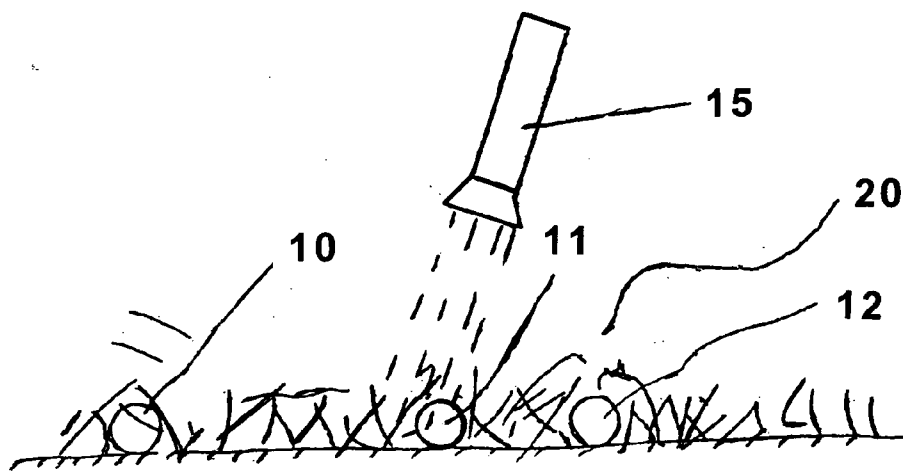


FIG. 1

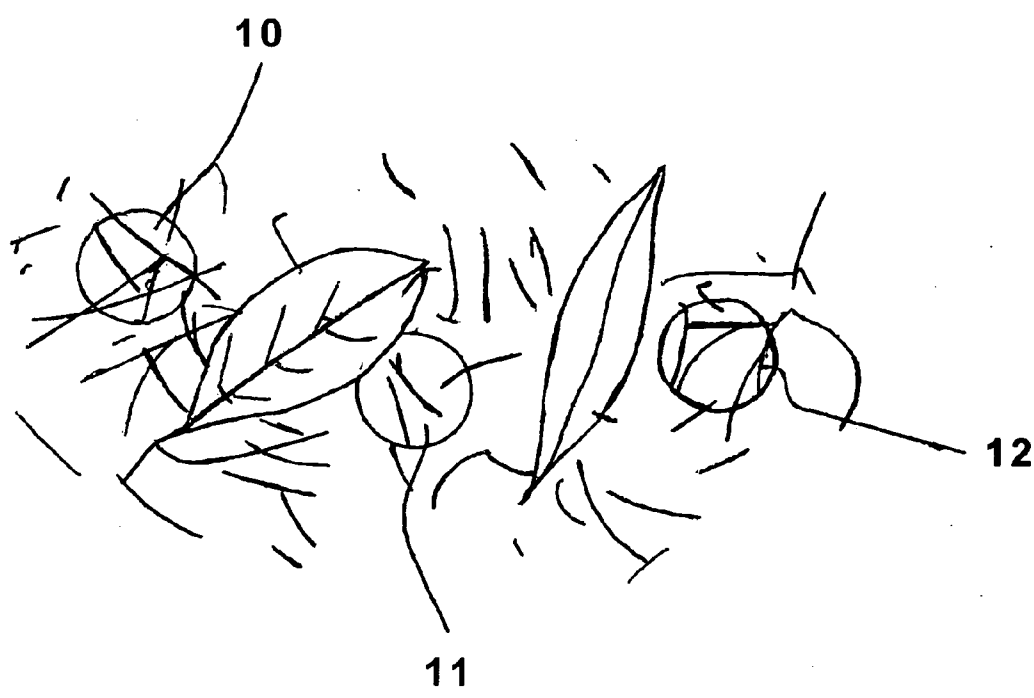


FIG. 2

METHOD FOR LOCATING OBJECTS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is claiming priority of United Kingdom patent application number 0410133.3, filed May 6, 2004, and entitled "Method for Locating Objects," which is incorporated herein by reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not applicable.

REFERENCE TO A MICROFICHE APPENDIX

[0003] Not applicable.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0004] This invention relates to a method for locating lost or hidden objects such as golf balls which may, for example, lie concealed in rough ground.

BACKGROUND

[0005] Infrared radiation is used in various fields for rendering visible objects or markings which would otherwise not be visible. For example, household goods such as television sets can be marked with a postcode or other identification, using an "invisible" marker, which then shows up when illuminated by ultraviolet (UV) light.

[0006] UV radiation can also be used in the medical field to transilluminate tissue to show up tumors or other pathological conditions, as described for example in UK patent publication GB-A-2092856. Ultraviolet light can also be used to detect gas leaks, for example, in chemical plants or air conditioning systems.

[0007] In recent years, ultraviolet flashlights have been developed, but so far these have acquired only specialist uses, for example, for security purposes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The invention is particularly, though not exclusively, concerned with locating lost objects such as golf balls. The game of golf inevitably involves the loss of large numbers of balls which, if they land in the rough, may be concealed by grass, leaf litter, and the like and be very difficult to see. This is particularly the case in subdued light, for example, when shaded by trees or during the late evening. Golf balls are expensive to replace, and the game itself is adversely affected if a player's ball cannot be quickly located.

[0009] The present invention provides a method of locating lost or concealed objects, such as golf balls, and which comprises shining an ultraviolet beam in the area where the object is thought to be located.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] An embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0011] FIG. 1 shows in side view how a lost golf ball can be located using an ultraviolet flashlight; and

[0012] FIG. 2 shows in plan view how a ball which would otherwise be concealed shows up clearly when illuminated with UV light.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] Referring first to FIG. 1, a patch of rough grass generally indicated by 20 conceals lost golf balls 10, 11, and 12. Using an ultraviolet flashlight 15, the area can be scanned, causing the ball 11 to show up clearly while the other balls 10 and 12 remain concealed and barely visible. Persons of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the term "flashlight", as used herein, has the same meaning as the term "torch" as it is used in the United Kingdom.

[0014] FIG. 2 shows how the illuminated ball 11 shows up clearly when viewed from above, while other balls remain difficult to see.

[0015] The method of the invention is particularly effective when carried out in darkness or in subdued light. Thus, an ultraviolet flashlight, such as 15, could be used at a golf club each evening after the end of play to locate and recover balls lost during the course of the day's play. This can result in substantial cost savings.

[0016] While golf balls, being generally coloured white or yellow, show up particularly well under ultraviolet light, the method of the invention can also be used for locating other lost objects, such as tennis balls, or even car keys or jewelry if these items have a white or other UV-responsive surface.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of locating a lost or concealed object which comprises illuminating with ultraviolet light an area in which the object is thought to be located.
2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the area is illuminated with a beam from an ultraviolet flashlight.
3. A hand-held ultraviolet flashlight for use in locating lost or concealed objects.
4. A method for locating an object, the method comprising:
 - illuminating an area with an ultraviolet light; and
 - wherein the object reflects more of the ultraviolet light than the area surrounding the object.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the object is a golf ball.
6. The method of claim 4 wherein the object is a tennis ball.
7. The method of claim 4 wherein the object is jewelry.
8. The method of claim 4 wherein the object has an ultraviolet-responsive surface.
9. The method of claim 4 wherein the method is occurs in darkness or under subdued light conditions.
10. An apparatus for locating an object, the apparatus comprising:
 - a light bulb that emits an ultraviolet light;
 - wherein the object has an ultraviolet-responsive surface;
 - and

wherein pointing the ultraviolet light at the object causes the object to become more visible to a person.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the apparatus is handheld.

12. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the apparatus is a flashlight.

13. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the object is a golf ball.

14. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the object is a tennis ball.

15. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the object is jewelry.

16. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the object reflects more of the ultraviolet light than the area surrounding the object.

17. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the apparatus is used in darkness or under subdued light conditions.

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