In one embodiment, a convertible protective cover for protecting an article. The cover includes a covering portion having an underside, a pillowcase portion having an inside surface, and a tether having two ends, one end coupled to the covering portion and the other end coupled to the pillowcase portion.

The covering portion can be stuffed into the tethered pillowcase portion to form a stuffed pillow that conceals the cover. Conversely, the protective cover conceals the pillowcase portion while the protective cover is in use to protect the article.
CONVERTIBLE PROTECTIVE COVER AND PILLOW FOR PATIO FURNITURE AND THE LIKE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority to co-pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/878,283, filed Sep. 16, 2013, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The disclosure relates, generally, to protective covers, and more particularly, to weatherproof protective covering devices for barbecue grills and other cooking apparatus, automobiles, outdoor furniture, and the like.

[0003] Conventional weatherproof covers are used to protect outdoor furniture and other valuable items against damage from sun, rain, snow, dust, rodents, tree sap, spills, and the like. When a conventional cover is removed from an item of outdoor furniture, such as a deck chair or chaise lounger, and the cover is not in use, it can be cumbersome to find suitable convenient storage for the cover due to its bulk.

[0004] The functionality of conventional patio chairs is often enhanced by the use of one or more conventional outdoor furniture pillows. Due to their bulk, such pillows are typically removed from the patio chair prior to applying a conventional weatherproof cover, and may even be brought indoors or stowed away in another dry location away from sunlight.

[0005] Accordingly, use of conventional outdoor furniture covers and outdoor furniture pillows in conjunction with one another involves having to dedicate storage space for either one or the other, at nearly all times. The cover is stowed away in a designated storage location while the pillow is in use, and the pillow is stowed away in a designated storage location while the cover is in use.

SUMMARY

[0006] Embodiments of the present disclosure provide convertible protective covers, for use with patio furniture and other outdoor items for which protection against weather is desirable, such as barbecue grills. A protective cover consistent with embodiments of the disclosure is adapted to convert into a pillow, whereby the cover itself is stored inside the pillow. Thus, no additional storage space is required for the cover when the cover is not in use, because the cover converts into a pillow. Conversely, no additional storage space is required for the pillow when the pillow is not in use, because the pillow converts back into a cover.

[0007] In one embodiment, the disclosure provides a convertible protective cover includes: a covering portion having an underside, a pillowcase portion having an inside surface, and a tether having two ends, one end coupled to the covering portion and the other end coupled to the pillowcase portion.

[0008] In another embodiment, the disclosure provides a method for concealing a protective cover for an article. The method includes: receiving, inside a pillowcase portion having an inside surface, a covering portion having an underside. The pillowcase portion is tethered to the covering portion by means of a tether. One end of the tether is coupled to the underside of the covering portion, and the other end of the tether is coupled to the inside surface of the pillowcase portion.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 shows an exemplary convertible outdoor chair cover consistent with a first embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a chair cover;

[0010] FIG. 2 shows the convertible outdoor chair cover of FIG. 1, in an intermediate stage of conversion to a pillow;

[0011] FIG. 3 shows the convertible outdoor chair cover of FIG. 1, in use as a pillow;

[0012] FIG. 4 shows an exemplary convertible outdoor chair cover consistent with a second embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a pillow;

[0013] FIG. 5 shows an exemplary convertible outdoor chaise lounge cover consistent with a third embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a chaise lounge cover; and

[0014] FIG. 6 shows an exemplary convertible barbecue grill cover consistent with a fourth embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a barbecue grill cover.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] Detailed illustrative embodiments of the present disclosure are disclosed herein. However, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are merely representative for purposes of describing example embodiments of the present disclosure. Embodiments of the present disclosure may be embodied in many alternative forms and should not be construed as limited to only the embodiments set forth herein. Further, the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of example embodiments of the disclosure.

[0016] FIG. 1 shows an exemplary convertible outdoor chair cover 100 consistent with a first embodiment of the disclosure. In FIG. 1, cover 100 is shown during use as a cover for a chair 110. It can be seen that, from its outside appearance, cover 100 appears to be an ordinary chair cover, and only covering portion 101 is visible.

[0017] FIG. 2 shows cover 100 of FIG. 1, in an intermediate stage of conversion to a pillow. As shown, cover 100 includes a pillowcase portion 102 coupled to covering portion 101 by means of a tether 103. Tether 103 connects to an interior portion of covering portion 101 at one end, with the other end of tether 103 connecting to an interior portion of pillowcase portion 102.

[0018] The shape, size, and dimensions of covering portion 101 will vary and should generally conform to the shape, size, and dimensions of the patio furniture (or barbecue grill, or other article being covered). Accordingly, the particular size and dimensions for the construction of covering portion 101 will not be discussed herein. Covering portion 101 is desirably manufactured, e.g., from 100% polypropylene or other waterproof material. In one embodiment, covering portion 101 is a three-layer product consisting of two outer layers of spunbond polypropylene with an inner layer of polypropylene film. The polypropylene film is 100% waterproof and breathable. Covering portion 101 is desirably strong, lightweight, durable, UV-resistant and protects patio furniture from the elements. Covering portion 101 is also desirably flexible and stuffs easily into the interior of pillowcase portion 102. In some embodiments, hook-and-loop fastener (not
shown) or other strap-type fasteners may be included, to permit covering portion 101 to be fastened securely to chair 110.

[0019] Pillowcase portion 102 is sized to receive both the entire covering portion 101 and the entire tether 103, which are adapted to be “stuffed” by a user into covering portion 101, in pocket or envelope fashion. When stuffed inside pillowcase portion 102, covering portion 101 acts as the stuffing of the pillow, yielding a usable comfortable and attractive pillow that can be placed on furniture, and hiding the fact that a patio furniture cover is stored inside. Pillowcase portion 102 is desirably manufactured, e.g., from solution-dyed acrylic for durability, UV-stability, fade-resistance and to provide a soft, luxurious feel consistent with patio cushions and pillows. In one embodiment, pillowcase portion 102 is designed to operate in like manner to a duvet cover, with an opening in the rear instead of at one edge, so that covering portion 101 can be stuffed into pillowcase portion 102 through the rear opening.

[0020] Tether 103, which may be formed, e.g., from polypropylene webbing, is desirably included to prevent covering portion 101 from becoming lost or otherwise separated from pillowcase portion 102. In one embodiment, tether 103 is an elastic cord composed of one or more elastic strands forming a core, covered in a woven cotton or polypropylene sheath. In the embodiment of FIGS. 1-3, tether 103 is permanently and non-releasably attached to covering portion 101 and pillowcase portion 102. However, in alternative embodiments, tether 103 is releasably attached (e.g., using hook-and-loop fastener, one or more releasable connectors, or the like) to one or more of covering portion 101 and pillowcase portion 102, e.g., to permit detangling and/or cleaning. Tether 103 may be elastic (e.g., to reduce tangling and length) or non-elastic, in different embodiments, and may include wire, rope, string, cord, or the like. In some embodiments, tether 103 may be omitted altogether.

[0021] As seen in FIG. 1, during use as a cover, pillowcase portion 102 simply remains hidden underneath covering portion 101, e.g., disposed between chair 110 and covering portion 101. As seen in FIG. 3, during use as a pillow, covering portion 101 remains hidden inside pillowcase portion 102.

[0022] Although pillowcase portion 102 remains open at one end in the embodiment of FIGS. 1-3, FIG. 4 shows an alternative embodiment of a pillowcase portion 402 that includes a zipper 408 along its edge, to permit closure of the open end of pillowcase portion 402, thereby securely retaining and concealing the covering portion and the tether inside pillowcase portion 402. Other closure devices that may be used for similar purposes include buttons, hook-and-loop fastener, snaps, or the like. Alternatively, in certain embodiments, the closure of the pillow may be achieved by overlapping the fabric edges of the pillowcase portion 402, with a closure device either being omitted altogether or with a closure device being provided by one or more folds or pockets formed in the fabric edges of the pillowcase portion 402. Inclusion of zipper 408 or one or more other closure devices permits closure of pillowcase portion 402 after stuffing by the user, thereby providing the appearance of a neat, manufactured pillow product that can be placed on a patio chair or other outdoor furniture after removing the cover from the chair and converting it into a pillow.

[0023] FIG. 5 shows an exemplary convertible outdoor chaise lounge cover 500 consistent with a third embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a cover for a chaise lounge 510. Cover 500 of FIG. 5 is similar to cover 100 of FIGS. 1-3, except that the dimensions of cover 500 are different from those of cover 100. In other respects, covers 100 and 500 are constructed and function in like manner to one another.

[0024] FIG. 6 shows an exemplary convertible barbecue grill cover 600 consistent with a fourth embodiment of the disclosure, in use as a cover for a barbecue grill (not shown). Cover 600 of FIG. 6 is similar to cover 100 of FIGS. 1-3 and cover 500 of FIG. 5, except that the dimensions of cover 600 are different from those of covers 100, 500, because cover 600 is adapted to fit a barbecue grill. In other respects, cover 600 is constructed and function in like manner to covers 100, 500.

[0025] Accordingly, a convertible cover consistent with embodiments of the disclosure eliminates the problem of having to find a place to store patio furniture covers by creating, a pillow that has its own storage location for the cover inside the pillow. Additionally, the problem of having to find a place to store patio furniture pillows is eliminated by creating a pillow that converts into a patio furniture cover that is subsequently disposed over an article of patio furniture.

[0026] This disclosure should not be construed as being limited to covers for patio furniture, grills, or any other particular devices. A convertible cover consistent with embodiments of the disclosure can alternatively be used to be used as a heatproof and/or waterproof protective cover for other items.

[0027] It should be understood that various changes in the details, materials, and arrangements of the parts which have been described and illustrated in order to explain the nature of this disclosure may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the disclosure.

[0029] Reference herein to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment can be included in at least one embodiment of the disclosure. The appearances of the phrase “in one embodiment” in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment, nor are separate or alternative embodiments necessarily mutually exclusive of other embodiments.

[0030] Although the disclosure has been described using alternative terms such as “front,” “back,” “side,” “top,” “bottom,” “over,” “above,” “under” and the like in the description and in the claims, such terms are used for descriptive purposes and not necessarily for describing permanent relative positions. It is understood that the terms so used are interchangeable under appropriate circumstances such that the embodiments of the disclosure described herein are, for example, capable of operation in other orientations than those illustrated or otherwise described herein.

[0031] Although the disclosure is described herein with reference to specific embodiments, various modifications and changes can be made without departing from the scope of the present disclosure as set forth in the claims below. Accordingly, the specification and figures are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense, and all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the present disclosure. Any benefits, advantages, or solutions to
problems that are described herein with regard to specific embodiments are not intended to be construed as a critical, required, or essential feature or element of any or all of the claims. [0032] It should be understood that the steps of the exemplary methods set forth herein are not necessarily required to be performed in the order described, and the order of the steps of such methods should be understood to be merely exemplary. Likewise, additional steps may be included in such methods, and certain steps may be omitted or combined, in methods consistent with various embodiments of the disclosure. [0033] Although the elements in the following method claims, if any, are recited in a particular sequence with corresponding labeling, unless the claim recitations otherwise imply a particular sequence for implementing some or all of those elements, those elements are not necessarily intended to be limited to being implemented in that particular sequence. [0034] Although the disclosure has been set forth in terms of the exemplary embodiments described herein and illustrated in the attached drawings, it is to be understood that such disclosure is purely illustrative and is not to be interpreted as limiting. Consequently, various alterations, modifications, and/or alternative embodiments and applications may be suggested to those skilled in the art after having read this disclosure. Accordingly, it is intended that the disclosure be interpreted as encompassing all alterations, modifications, or alternative embodiments and applications as fall within the true spirit and scope of this disclosure. [0035] It will be further understood that various changes in the details, materials, and arrangements of the parts which have been described and illustrated in order to explain the nature of this disclosure may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the disclosure as expressed in the following claims. [0036] The embodiments covered by the claims in this application are limited to embodiments that (1) are enabled by this specification and (2) correspond to statutory subject matter. Non-enabled embodiments and embodiments that correspond to non-statutory subject matter are explicitly disclaimed even if they fall within the scope of the claims. We claim:
1. A convertible protective cover comprising:
   a covering portion having an underside;
   a pillowcase portion having an inside surface; and
   a tether having two ends, one end coupled to the covering portion and the other end coupled to the pillowcase portion.
2. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein one end of the tether is coupled to the underside of the covering portion, and the other end of the tether is coupled to the inside surface of the pillowcase portion.
3. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the pillowcase portion is adapted to receive and conceal the covering portion and the tether.
4. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the pillowcase portion comprises solution-dyed acrylic.
5. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the covering portion comprises one or more layers of polypropylene.
6. The convertible protective cover of claim 5, wherein the covering portion includes at least one spunbond polypropylene layer.
7. The convertible protective cover of claim 5, wherein the covering portion includes two outer layers of material and an inner layer of material disposed between the outer layers.
8. The convertible protective cover of claim 7, wherein the outer layers comprise spunbond polypropylene and the inner layer comprises polypropylene film.
9. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the pillowcase portion has a front surface and a back surface, and an opening is formed in the back surface for receiving the covering portion therein.
10. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the tether comprises polypropylene webbing.
11. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the tether is detachable from at least one of the pillowcase portion and the covering portion.
12. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the tether is elastic.
13. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the pillowcase portion has at least one closure device for retaining the tether and the covering portion inside the pillowcase portion.
14. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the convertible protective cover conforms generally to the shape of a cooking apparatus.
15. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the cooking apparatus is a cart-style barbecue grill.
16. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the convertible protective cover conforms generally to the shape of a vehicle.
17. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the protective cover conforms generally to the shape of an article of furniture.
18. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, wherein the protective cover conforms generally to the shape of a seating device.
19. The convertible protective cover of claim 1, further comprising one or more straps to secure the convertible protective cover around an article.
20. A method for concealing a protective cover for an article, the method comprising:
   receiving, inside a pillowcase portion having an inside surface, a covering portion having an underside, wherein:
   the pillowcase portion is tethered to the covering portion by means of a tether; and
   one end of the tether is coupled to the underside of the covering portion, and the other end of the tether is coupled to the inside surface of the pillowcase portion.

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