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(54) Title: A DECORATIVE ELEMENT FOR A PLANTING SYSTEM AND A METHOD OF FORMING A DECORATIVE ELEMENT

(57) Abstract: A decorative element includes a first layer and a second layer. The decorative element is disposed on an article, both the article and the decorative element being biodegradable. The first layer includes a protective material and the second layer includes at least one seed embedded therein. The first layer is disposed adjacent the second layer. An adhesive comprising a biodegradable material secures the decorative element to the article.



WO 2007/050282 A2

A DECORATIVE ELEMENT FOR A PLANTING SYSTEM AND A METHOD OF FORMING A DECORATIVE ELEMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] The subject invention generally relates to a decorative element, more specifically to a planting system having an article with the decorative element disposed thereon.

2. Description of the Prior Art

[0002] Planting systems of the type disclosed herein typically include an article, such as a greeting card, the greeting card having folding lines for overlapping pages and a decorative element attached thereon. An example of such a planting system is disclosed in United States Patent Publication 2002/0040670 to Hornak. The planting system includes a greeting card formed from a card stock with indicia disposed thereon. A decorative element is disposed on the greeting card and formed from mixing together a pulp, a quantity of water, and at least one seed. The decorative element is poured in a mold and dried. A first side and a second side of the decorative element include protrusions because the seeds bulge through the pulp. The protrusions make the design of the decorative element difficult to see. An adhesive attaches the decorative element to the greeting card. The adhesive bond is weak for easily detaching the decorative element from the greeting card. The decorative element is placed into soil to allow the seeds to germinate, while the greeting card is retained as a keepsake that may eventually be discarded into the trash.

[0003] Although the prior art has developed an improved planting system, there remains an opportunity to develop a planting system that avoids the potential drawbacks of the protrusions in decorative element and disposing of the greeting card.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The invention provides for a decorative element disposed on an article, both being biodegradable. The decorative element includes a first layer and a second layer, in which the first layer is disposed adjacent the second layer. The second layer includes at least one seed disposed therein and the first layer forms a

raised surface. The first layer includes a protective material for protecting the seeds in the second layer. An adhesive comprising a biodegradable material secures the decorative element to the article.

[0005] The invention also provides a method of forming a decorative element. The method comprises the steps of forming a first layer having a first side and a second side and comprising a first biodegradable material, forming a second layer having a first side and a second side and comprising a second biodegradable material, the second biodegradable material having at least one seed embedded therein, the first side of the second layer being disposed adjacent the second side of the first layer, and forming the decorative element.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated, as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0007] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a greeting card having a decorative element disposed thereon,

[0008] Figure 2 is a top view of the greeting card having the decorative element disposed thereon,

[0009] Figure 3A is a bottom view of the decorative element,

[0010] Figure 3B is a sectional view of the decorative element,

[0011] Figure 4 is a perspective view of the greeting card partially opened, and

[0012] Figure 5 is a perspective view of placing the greeting card into soil.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0013] Referring to the Figures, wherein like numerals indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views, a decorative element is generally

shown at 26 in Figure 1. The decorative element 26 will be further discussed below in a planting system 20.

[0014] The planting system 20 includes an article and the decorative element 26 disposed thereon. The article may include, but is not limited to, a greeting card, a post card, a gift bag, a gift box, a bookmark, an ornament, a necklace, a calendar, a ribbon, or a wrapping paper. The article will be discussed below as a greeting card 22.

[0015] As shown in Figure 1, the greeting card 22 has folding lines 24 for overlapping pages and the decorative element 26 is disposed on one of the pages. The greeting card 22 may be disposed in an envelope (not shown) for delivering the greeting card 22 to a recipient. The greeting card 22, the decorative element 26, and the envelope are biodegradable and each comprise a pulp to provide a mulch for the planting system. The pulp may include paper, hemp, cotton, cellulose, abaca, coloring, or any other biodegradable material known in the art.

[0016] Referring to Figures 3A and 3B, the decorative element 26 includes a first layer 40 and a second layer 42, both first and second layers 40, 42 are biodegradable. The first layer 40 includes a first side 44 and a second side 46 in a spaced and parallel relationship. The first layer 40 further includes a protective material. The protective material may include a cellulose and the pulp. However, it is to be appreciated that the protective material may include, any material similar to cellulose, paper, hemp, cotton, abaca, coloring, or any other biodegradable material known in the art. The first layer 40 prevents discoloring of the pulp and provides a protective barrier for the second layer 42.

[0017] The second layer 42 includes a first side 48 and a second side 50 in a spaced and parallel relationship. The second layer 42 includes the pulp and at least one seed 28 disposed therein. Preferably, the first layer 40 is disposed adjacent the second layer 42. More preferably, the first layer 40 is disposed adjacent the first side 48 of the second layer 42. Most preferably, the second side 46 of the first layer 40 is disposed adjacent the first side 50 of the second layer 42. It is contemplated that the second layer 42 may be disposed entirely over the first layer 40 or partially over the first layer 40.

[0018] As best shown in Figures 1, 3A, and 3B, the first layer 40 of the decorative element 26 includes a raised surface 30, wherein the raised surface 30

projects outwardly away from the second layer 42. The second side 50 of the second layer 42 may define a cavity 52 to provide space for the seeds 28 and give the decorative element 26 a three dimensional appearance. However, it is to be appreciated that the second side 50 of the second layer 42 may be concave, undulated, or define grooves.

[0019] Referring to Figures 2, 3A, and 3B, an adhesive 34 comprising a biodegradable material secures the decorative element 26 to the greeting card 22. The decorative element 26 includes a periphery 32, wherein the adhesive 34 is disposed thereon. Additionally, the adhesive 34 is disposed on the second side 50 of the second layer 42. It is to be appreciated that the adhesive 34 may be disposed entirely over the periphery 32 and the second side 50 of the second layer 42 or partially disposed over the periphery 32 and the second side 50 of the second layer 42. The adhesive 34 may include a wheat paste. Alternatively, the adhesive 34 may include cellulose or any other biodegradable adhesive known in the art.

[0020] Referring to Figure 4, indicia 36 may be disposed on the greeting card 22 for providing information. The indicia 36 includes an ink, wherein the ink is biodegradable. The ink includes an oil. The oil may include a vegetable oil, such as a soybean oil. However, it is contemplated that the vegetable oil may include: a cashew oil, a castor bean oil, a flax seed oil, a hemp oil, a mustard oil, a poppy seeds oil, a rapeseed oil, a safflower oil, a sesame seed oil, a sunflower oil, an almond oil, an apricot oil, an avocado oil, a corn oil, a cotton plant seed oil, a coconut oil, a fusarium oil, a hazelnut oil, a neem oil, an olive oil, a palm oil, a palm kernel oil, a peanut oil, a pumpkin seed oil, a rice bran oil, a walnut oil, and combinations thereof.

[0021] The subject invention also includes a method of forming a decorative element 26 having a first layer 40 and a second layer 42. The first layer 40 includes a first side 44 and a second side 46 and comprises a first biodegradable material. The first biodegradable material is formed by mixing a pulp and a quantity of water together and draining the mixture and adding cellulose. The first biodegradable material is introduced into a mold and allowed to set. It is to be appreciated that the first biodegradable material may be introduced into the mold by pouring, spreading, or any other acceptable way known in the art.

[0022] The second layer 42 includes a first side 48 and a second side 50 and comprises a second biodegradable material. The second biodegradable

material is formed by mixing the pulp and the quantity of water together and draining the mixture and adding at least one seed 28. The second biodegradable material is introduced into the mold adjacent the second side 46 of the first layer 40. More specifically, the first side 48 of the second layer 42 is disposed adjacent the second side 46 of the first layer 40. It is to be appreciated that the first biodegradable material may be introduced into the mold by pouring, spreading, or any other acceptable way known in the art. The first and second layers 40, 42 are pressed together to form the decorative element 26. It is contemplated that the decorative element 26 may be press molded, stamp molded, or molded from any other acceptable method known in the art. An adhesive 34 is disposed on the second side 50 of the second layer 42 to attach the decorative element 26 to an article, such as a greeting card 22. When it is time to discard the greeting card 22, place soil 38 over the decorative element 26 and the greeting card 22 to germinate the seeds 28, as shown in Figure 5.

[0023] Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. The invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described within the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A decorative element for disposing on an article comprising:
a first layer, the first layer being biodegradable; and,
a second layer having at least one seed disposed therein and being biodegradable, said first layer forming a raised surface and being disposed adjacent said second layer.
2. An element as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first layer of said decorative element includes a protective material.
3. An element as set forth in claim 2 wherein said protective material comprises a cellulose.
4. An element as set forth in claim 2 wherein said protective material further comprises a pulp.
5. An element as set forth in claim 1 wherein said second layer of said decorative element comprises the pulp.
6. An element as set forth in claim 1 wherein said second layer includes a first side and a second side.
7. An element as set forth in claim 6 wherein said first layer is disposed adjacent said first side of said second layer.
8. An element as set forth in claim 6 wherein said second side of said second layer defines a cavity.
9. A planting system comprising:
an article; and,
a decorative element having a first layer, a second layer, and a raised surface and being disposed on said article, said second layer having at least one seed

disposed therein, said article and said decorative element being biodegradable and said first layer forming said raised surface and being disposed adjacent said second layer.

10. A system as set forth in claim 9 wherein said first layer of said decorative element includes a protective material.

11. A system as set forth in claim 10 wherein said protective material comprises a cellulose.

12. A system as set forth in claim 10 wherein said protective material further comprises a pulp.

13. A system as set forth in claim 9 wherein said second layer of said decorative element comprises the pulp.

14. A system as set forth in claim 9 wherein said second layer includes a first side and a second side.

15. A system as set forth in claim 14 wherein said first layer is disposed adjacent said first side of said second layer.

16. A system as set forth in claim 14 wherein said second side of said second layer defines a cavity.

17. A system as set forth in claim 14 including an adhesive being disposed on said second side of said second layer to secure said decorative element to said article, the adhesive being biodegradable.

18. A system as set forth in claim 17 wherein said adhesive comprises a wheat paste.

19. A system as set forth in claim 9 wherein said article comprises the pulp.

20. A system as set forth in claim 9 including indicia disposed on said article.
21. A system as set forth in claim 20 wherein said indicia comprises an ink.
22. A system as set forth in claim 21 wherein said ink is biodegradable.
23. A system as set forth in claim 22 wherein said ink comprises an oil.
24. A system as set forth in claim 23 wherein said oil comprises a vegetable oil.
25. A system as set forth in claim 24 wherein said vegetable oil comprises a soybean oil.
26. A system as set forth in claim 9 wherein said article comprises one of a greeting card, a post card, a gift bag, a gift box, a bookmark, an ornament, a necklace, a calendar, a ribbon, or a wrapping paper.
27. A method of forming a decorative element, said method comprising the steps of:
 - forming a first layer having a first side and a second side and comprising a first biodegradable material; and,
 - forming a second layer having a first side and a second side and comprising a second biodegradable material, the second biodegradable material having at least one seed embedded therein, the first side of the second layer being disposed adjacent the second side of the first layer, and forming the decorative element.
28. A method as set forth in claim 27 wherein the step of forming the first layer includes the step of introducing the first biodegradable material into a mold.

29. A method as set forth in claim 28 wherein the step of forming the second layer includes the step of introducing the second biodegradable material into the mold adjacent the second side of the first layer.

30. A method as set forth in claim 27 further including the step of pressing together the first layer and the second layer to form the decorative element.

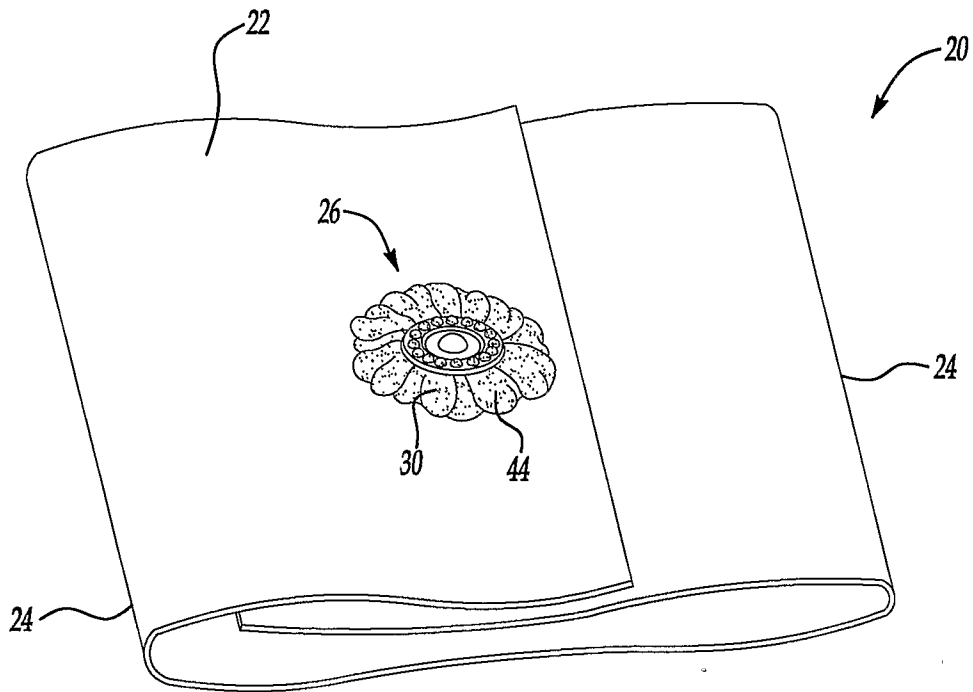


Fig-1

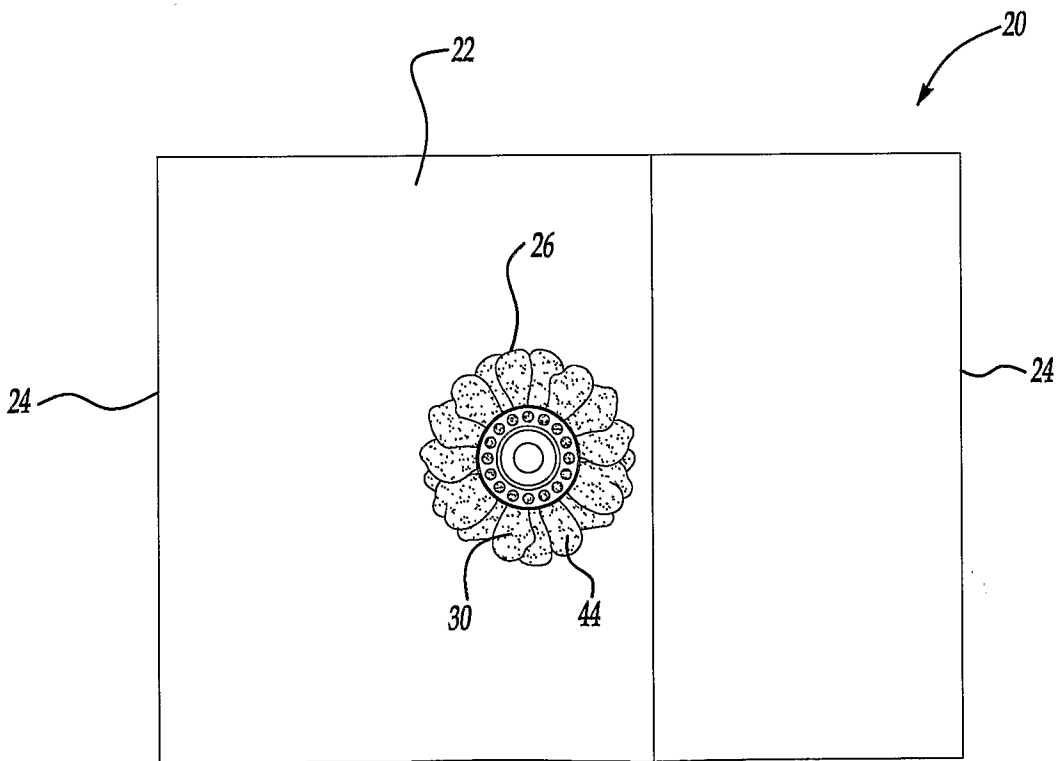


Fig-2

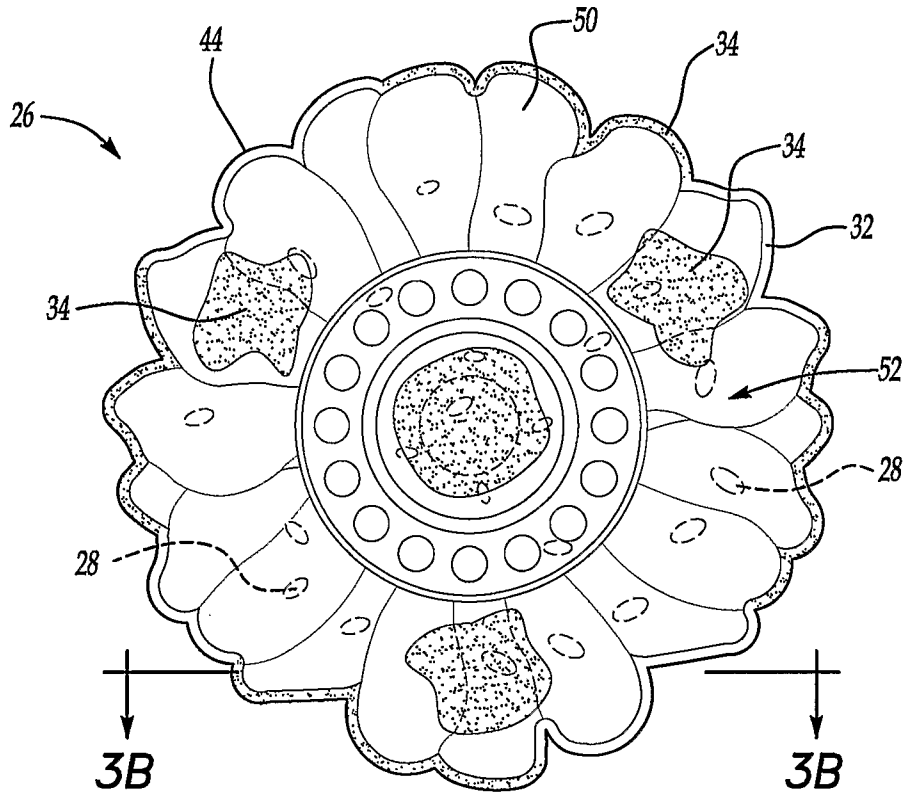


Fig-3A

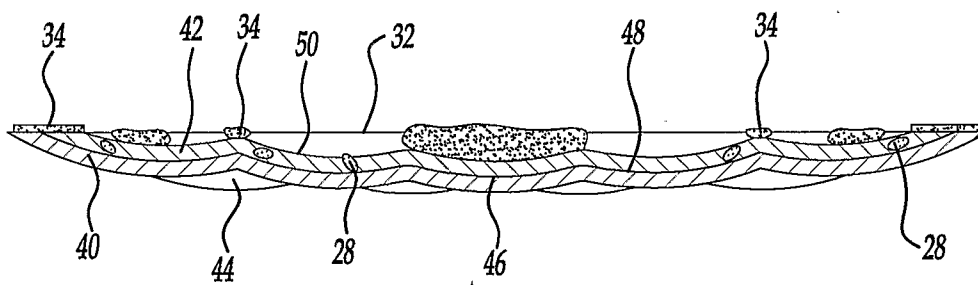


Fig-3B

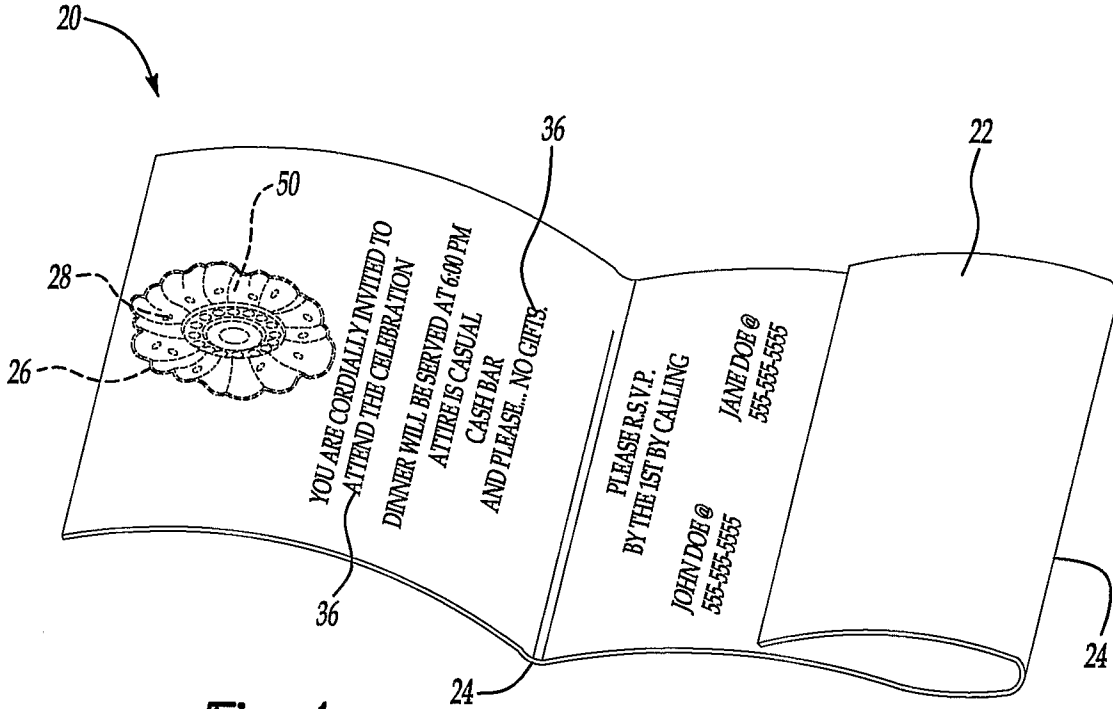


Fig-4

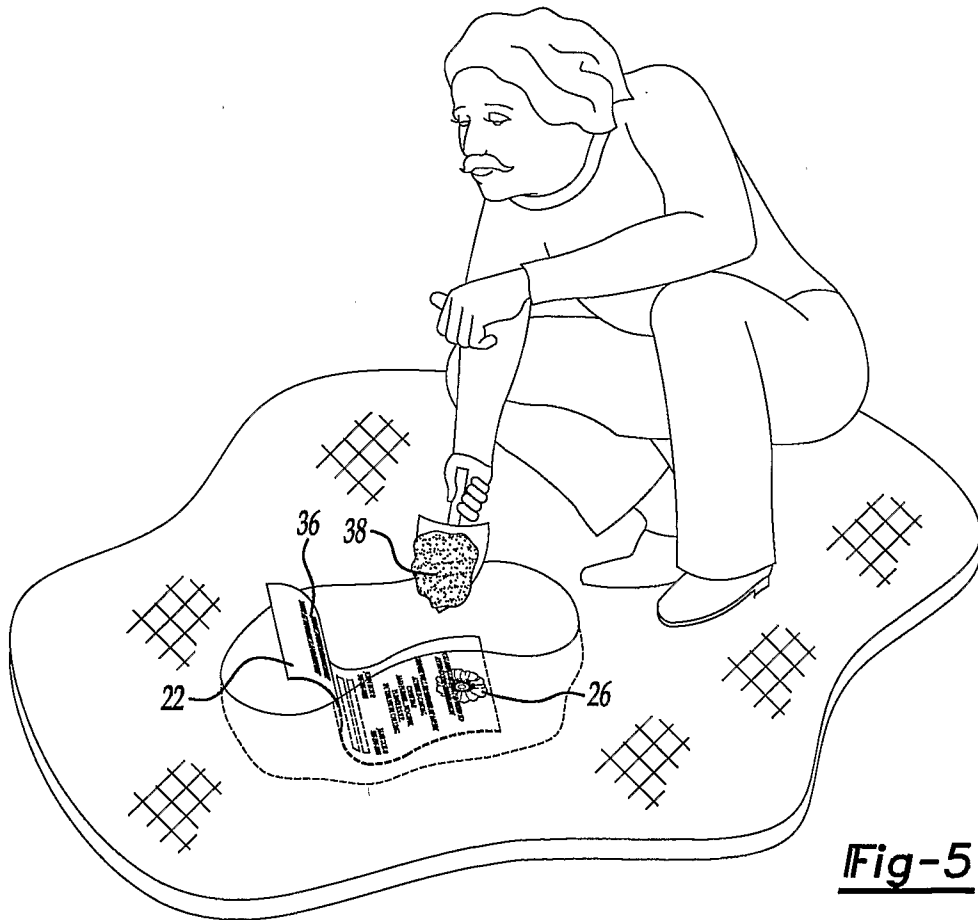


Fig-5