This invention relates to a can flattening device and more particularly to a can flattening device adapted for use in the household.

Many municipalities throughout the United States have ordinances which require that tin cans be crushed or flattened after the contents have been removed in order that they may be disposed of easily. Even where the law does not require flattened cans, the housewife is able to save considerable space in her kitchen if she does not have to provide a large receptacle for discarded tin cans.

Several complicated, and therefore expensive, can crushing devices are available commercially; however, their use is restricted primarily to institutions such as hotels, restaurants, hospitals and the like, that can justify their expense. These devices are designed to flatten the large size cans that are purchased by the above institutions and are frequently combined with means for cutting out the ends. Although the aforementioned crushing devices are useful for institutions having a considerable number of used cans to be disposed of, they are wholly unsuitable for use in the household where what is needed is an inexpensive, simple device constructed to flatten only the type can used in the home.

It is the object of this invention to provide a can crushing device for use in the home which will provide the essentials outlined above.

The device claimed herein is simply constructed of inexpensive materials, provided with means whereby the great force necessary to completely flatten a tin can is not required, and means for retaining the can in position between the jaws at the inception of the flattening operation.

Other objects of the present invention will be in part specifically pointed out hereafter, or will become apparent from the following description wherein reference is made to the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 shows a waste receptacle positioned next to a part of a kitchen wall on which is suspended the can crushing device, the construction of which is to be described in detail in connection with the remaining figures, and a portion of the forearm and hand of the person operating said device.

Figure 2 is a front elevation taken in the direction of arrows 2—2, Figure 3, showing a movable jaw, handle, hinge and supporting means.

Figure 3 is a side elevation taken in the direction of arrows 3—3 of Figure 2, showing the relationship between the movable jaw and a fixed jaw with respect to a tin can and an adjustable stop member.

Figure 4 is a perspective view taken in the direction of arrow 4 in Figure 2 showing a pin in the adjustable stop member and spaced holes in the fixed jaw for reception of the pin.

Referring now to Figure 1 of the drawing in which is shown wall 10 to which is affixed the can flattening device 11 to be described in detail herein. Said can flattening device is positioned with the opening between the movable jaw 12 and the fixed jaw 13 facing downward in such manner that when a person, represented by hand 14, completes the can flattening operation and raises the movable jaw, the tin can 15 will fall into a waste receptacle 16 positioned below. Although the can flattening device can be used quite easily while lying horizontal on a table or drainboard with the movable jaw on top, it is convenient to position it on a wall as shown in Figure 1. It should be noted that if the can flattening device is used on a horizontal surface it is not necessary to attach it to such surface, thereby making it possible to store it in a drawer when not in use. Whatevisever in horizontal position, jaw 13 must either be as long as the movable jaw 12 or it must be attached to the flat surface.

Figure 2 shows a front view of a can flattening device having a movable jaw 12 of substantially rectangular shape, secured along its top end to one side of hinge 17 and formed at the lower end into a narrower handle portion 18, shown with a beveled edge to permit a firm grip without injuring the hand. Means for suspending the device on a wall are indicated by the brackets 19 which are secured to the back of the fixed jaw.

In Figure 3 will be seen a side view of the device claimed herein showing the movable jaw and the fixed jaw pivotally connected to one another in spaced relation by the hinge. An adjustable stop 20 is interposed transversely between the movable and the fixed jaws and is adjustably attached to the fixed jaw by means of at least two pins 21 which pass through the stop into corresponding holes 22 in the fixed jaw. Several sets of holes are provided in the fixed jaw to permit adjustment of the stop for tin cans of various sizes. The fixed and movable jaws are fastened to the hinge in such a relation that the inner surface of the jaws will be approximately parallel when the movable jaw rests against the stop. The fixed jaw is approximately the same shape and size as the movable jaw without the handle portion. Both jaws are preferably constructed of a hardwood board having a thickness of one-half inch or greater in order that they will be strong enough to withstand the stress of flattening tin cans without breaking. The jaws should be wide enough to cover the average can used in the home with it being laid between the jaws with its axis horizontal; however, it is not necessary to have the jaws so wide that they will cover large cans, such as fruit juice and shortening cans, because these may be flattened in two or more operations. The length of the movable jaw must be adequate to permit a woman to apply the force needed to flatten a large tin can; such as, the length including the handle approximately three times the width. The fixed jaw must not extend below the point at which the movable jaw narrows to form the handle or the operator's fingers would be squeezed between the jaws and the jaws could not close fully.

Figure 4 shows the upper right hand corner of the flattening device to more clearly illustrate manner in which the stop is adjustably secured to the fixed jaw and how the movable jaw is mounted for pivotal movement on the fixed jaw by means of the hinge.

In order to operate the can flattening device described above, the tin can to be flattened is inserted between the fixed and movable jaws with its axis horizontal, the lower portion of the can resting on the stop. The jaws are closed by hand pressure on the handle of the movable jaw until the movable jaw engages the stop on the fixed jaw. The stop is positioned relative to the pivot point in the holes in the fixed jaw to facilitate flattening cans of different sizes. It should be noted that the stop makes it unnecessary to hold the can between the jaws as the force exerted on the can by the weight of the movable jaw is sufficient to hold the can against the stop and
prevent its being forced from between the jaws. In order to flatten large cans, one end may be positioned between the jaws and flattened at a time. The stop member and the spaced relation of the jaws make it unnecessary to apply the great force needed to crush until the opposite walls touch as the present device leaves a space between opposite walls of the flattened can approximately the thickness of the stop which is sufficiently flat for easy storage and disposal.

What is claimed as new is:

A household can flattening device comprising: a fixed jaw member having at least one substantially flat face; a movable jaw member having a substantially flat face opposing the flat face of the fixed jaw member; a hinge member connected between the ends of the fixed and movable jaw members to permit pivotal movement therebetween; a handle formed integral with the movable jaw member on the end opposite the hinge member, said handle extending beyond the corresponding end of the fixed jaw member; and a stop member attached to the fixed jaw member in spaced substantially parallel relation to the hinge member forming means for engaging the cylindrical surface of an open-ended tin can and holding said can between said hinge and stop members as the movable jaw member is moved toward the fixed jaw member to flatten the can between the corresponding opposed flat faces thereof, said stop member being adjustable on the fixed jaw member into a plurality of spaced substantially parallel positions with respect to the hinge member in order to accommodate cans of different diameters spaced therebetween.

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