United States Patent [19]

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[11] **3,732,593**

[45] **May 15, 1973**

[54] PAINT ROLLER AND TRAY AND CLEANER THEREFOR

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[22] Filed: **May 12, 1971**

[21] Appl. No.: **142,593**

[52] **U.S. Cl.**.....**15/257.06,** 134/138

[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**B44d 3/12**

[58] **Field of Search**.....15/256.06, 256.05, 15/104.92; 134/135, 138, 137, 139, 157, 161; 34/58

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A roller brush-type painter's tray which is structurally similar to commonly used trays while the user is painting and which is unique in that the respective end portions have spaced parallel coplanar properly paired tracks. These tracks are provided with first and second lids, one of which is associated with the relatively deep sump and the other one with the elongated relatively shallow roller brush trough-like guide. These lids are in different planes when in use, and when closed they permit the nozzle of a garden hose to be passed through spaced ends of the lids in a manner to spin the confined roller brush. The force-fed stream of water acting on the turning brush will clean the brush and also the interior surfaces of the rim-like wall of the overall tray.

9 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures

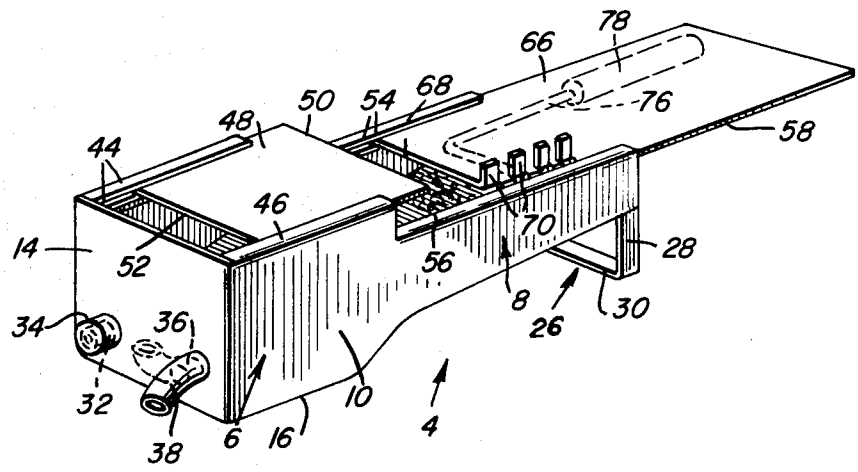


Fig. 1

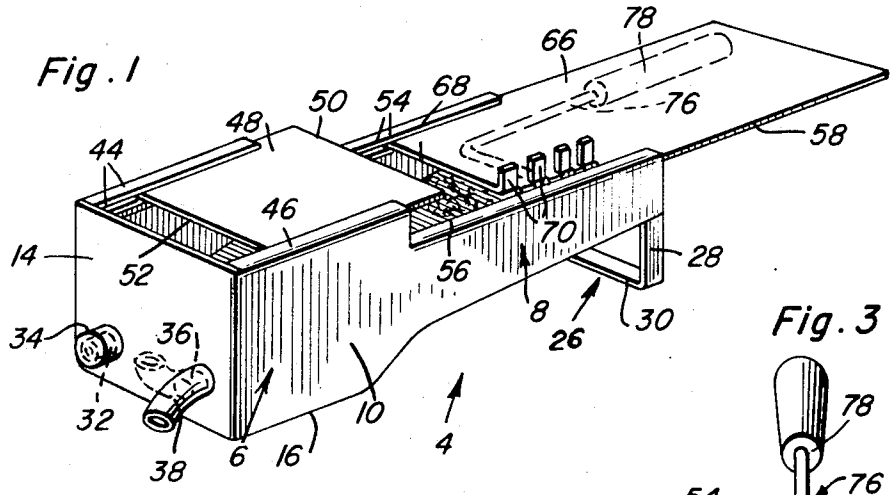


Fig. 3

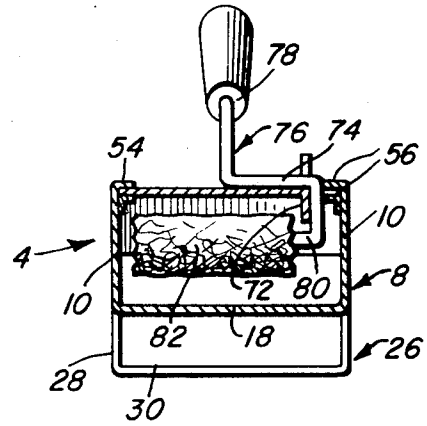
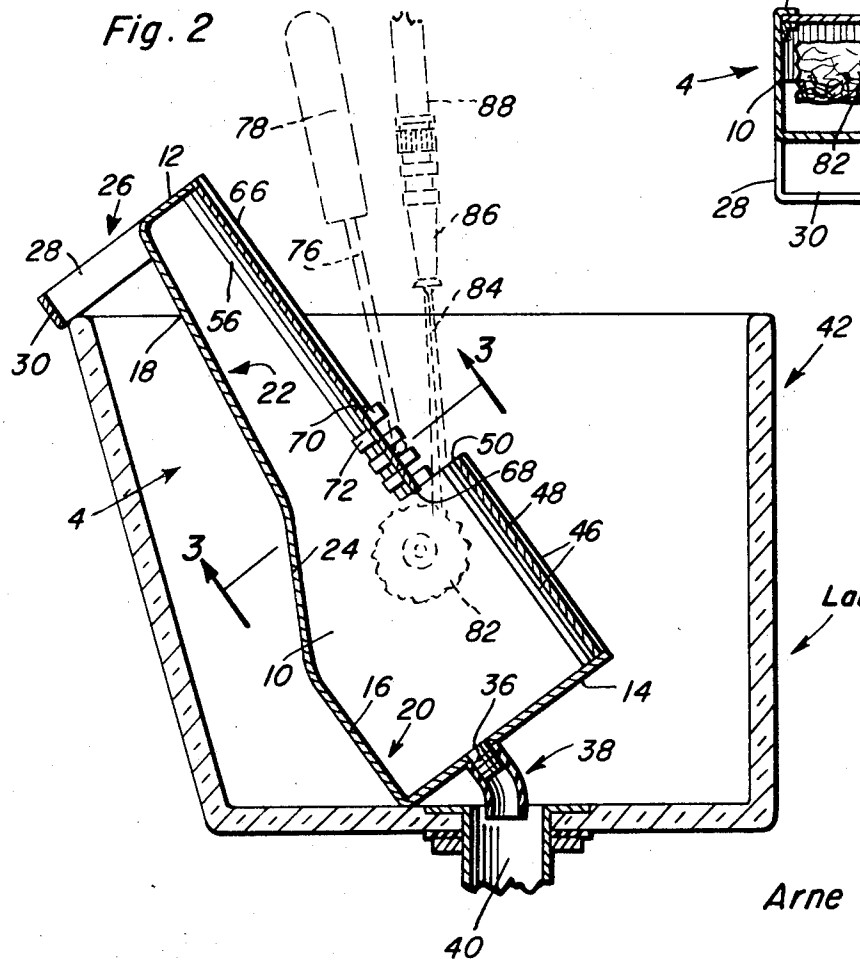


Fig. 2



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PAINT ROLLER AND TRAY AND CLEANER THEREFOR

The present invention relates to a portable elongated roller brush paint tray which resembles similar paint trays currently being used, but is structurally unique and different in that it is provided with novel self-contained features which permit unrestricted use of the tray while painting and which when properly applied and associated convert the tray into a covered enclosure for the roller brush and so that with the proper use of a garden hose the user can wash and clean the roller brush and, in addition, clean the walls of the tray itself.

Persons conversant with the state of the art to which the present invention relates are aware that it is not new to insert and confine a roller brush or a regular paint brush in an enclosed space and to subject the brush to a force-fed stream of water or a special cleaning solution and, in so doing, to dislodge and remove the paint and clean the brush for subsequent handling and use. One such adaptation is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 3,075,534 granted to me and on which the present invention is an improvement. Two other patents, perhaps less pertinent than my prior patent, but which may be cited for background purposes are U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,472,251 and 3,422,828. While in addition to these patents there are others which have a general bearing on the invention, it is believed that the several herein cited will suffice for background information.

An object of the present invention is to improve upon the mentioned prior patents and to do so by using an elongated pan or tray which, generally stated, is structurally and functionally similar to roller brush paint trays which are commonly in use, but which is equipped with added facilities, whereby the overall receptacle portion of the tray can be converted to provide a brush and liquid confining enclosure and wherein the enclosed brush can be subjected to a force-fed stream of water for cleaning purposes.

The herein disclosed tray and paint roller cleaner is an innovation in that it enables one to clean paint rollers and paint brushes, for example, in a kitchen sink or a laundry tub, and to accomplish the result without splashing paint or water.

In carrying out the principles of the invention, the shallow trough-like end of the tray is provided with a depending stand or bracket which renders the overall tray self-standing when being used in a horizontal position. In addition, the relatively deep sump portion is provided with a first lid and the shallow trough-like end portion is provided with a second lid.

Briefly, the invention is characterized by an elongated portable painter's tray of the type which is expressly designed and adapted to accommodate a handle supported roller brush, that is, a type of brush which is currently on the market and is popularly used. The tray has a bottom wall with upstanding longitudinal side walls and transverse end walls, thus providing an encompassing rim and, in addition, providing a relatively deep paint-accumulating sump at one end, and a complemental relatively shallow trough-like roller guide at the other end. The bottom wall portion of the sump is flat and adapted to rest firmly on a relatively stationary support surface. On the other hand, the bottom wall portion of the trough-like roller guide is elevated to a plane above the plane of the first named bottom wall and in fact inclines and slopes toward and merges with

the first named bottom wall portion and serves as depending guide elevating and stabilizing prop means. Readily applicable and removable cover means is provided for the sump and roller guide respectively. This cover means when in use, serves to enclose the roller brush in a manner that it can be washed and cleaned by a stream of water under pressure, that is, water issuing from the nozzle of a garden hose, or the like, and which, of course, is properly aimed to play upon the confined brush.

Novelty is also predicated upon the provision of nipple-like discharge necks at the transverse end of the sump. These necks are preferably screw-threaded to accommodate screw caps. The necks are selectively usable and one neck can be closed by the cap while the cap can be removed from the other neck so that a rubber or an equivalent elbow can be attached thereto to facilitate draining the contents of the tray into a drain pipe in a laundry tub or sink, as the case may be. The elbow is also turnable from a down position to an up position to achieve the end results desired.

Further, novelty is predicated upon providing spaced parallel tracks for the sump and similar tracks for the roller guide, these tracks serving to accommodate the first and second insertable and removable closing lids.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a paint roller cleaner constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention showing the sliding lids in properly open position, showing the roller brush inserted in phantom lines, showing one discharge neck capped and the other one uncapped and provided with an attachable and detachable manipulatable elbow.

FIG. 2 is a view showing a conventional laundry tub in section and showing the tray positioned in the tub for drainage purposes and assuming a properly inclined position, showing the two lids closed and showing, in phantom lines, the roller brush and also the garden hose with the stream of water aimed at and playing upon the rotary brush.

FIG. 3 is a cross section taken approximately on the plane of the section line 3—3 of FIG. 2 with the brush appearing in elevation and looking in the direction of the indicating arrows.

The overall sheet material portable manually usable tray is denoted, generally stated, by the numeral **4**. This tray is structurally and functionally similar to roller brush trays which are commonly in use. To the ends desired and in carrying out the principles of the present invention, the tray is characterized by a relatively deep, but rectangular box-like end section which is here referred to as a sump **6**, and which is in alignment and cooperable with the tapering, reduced, elongated shallow and trough-like end portion which is conveniently referred to here as a roller guide **8**. The longitudinal side walls of the tray are denoted on both sides by the numeral **10**. One transverse end wall, the wall at the left in FIG. **2** is denoted by the numeral **12**, and the other end wall, the one at the right in FIG. **2**, is denoted by the numeral **14**. The flat bottom portion of the sump is denoted at **16** while the sloping or inclined bottom por-

tion of the guide or trough is denoted at **18.** The receptacle portion of the sump is denoted at **20** in FIG. **2** and the trough-like receptacle portion of the guide is denoted at **22.** The intervening or web portion between the two bottom portions **16** and **18** is denoted at **24** and joins the two bottom portions in proper relationship. When in use the tray is placed in position on a support surface and to stabilize the same, the righthand end portion of the trough or guide is provided with a stabilizing prop **26** as shown in FIG. **1** where the depending legs of this U-shaped prop are denoted at **28,** and the bight portion is denoted at **30.** The bight portion is in a common plane with the bottom wall portion **16** to thus support the tray when it is being used.

It should be noted that the transverse end wall **14** is provided with two discharge necks. More specifically, there is a neck **32** at the left in FIG. **1** which is screw-threaded and provided with a suitably threaded closing cap **34.** This neck and also the one at the right denoted at **36** is spaced a distance above the level of the bottom wall **16.** In actual practice the neck **36** is also provided with a cap. In fact the cap **34** can be selectively used for both necks. Or, two caps can be provided when both necks are to be closed for painting purposes. Assuming that the cap on the neck **36** has been removed, it can be replaced with a rubber or equivalent conveniently emptying elbow **38.** This elbow is normally applied and used in the manner shown in FIG. **2** for draining the contents of the overall tray into the drain pipe **40** of the laundry tube **42.** This result is accomplished when the tray is placed in the downwardly sloping position illustrated in FIG. **2.** It will be noted that the upper or open mouth portion of the sump is higher than the corresponding open upper end or top side of the trough **8.** It will be further noted that the upper edges of the side walls of the sump are provided with cover mounting tracks. More specifically, the two flanges **44** at the left provide one track and the flanges **46** at the right provide a second track, and both tracks are in a common plane and are so constructed and arranged so as to accommodate the insertable and removable flat cover or lid **48.** One end or edge of the lid is denoted at **50,** and the other one at **52.** When the edge **52** is in the position shown in FIG. **2** a space is provided for inserting a hose for washing out the tray, or the brush, as the case may be.

The upper edges of the side walls of the trough **8** are also provided with tracks, the flanges at the left being denoted at **54,** and those at the right at **56.** The edge portions **58** of the elongated lid **66** are slidable in these guide tracks so that the edge **68** of the lid or cover can be slid toward and from the first named lid or cover. Thus there are first and second lids, and the lids are independent and slidingly mounted.

It will be noted that one forward corner portion of the lid **66** is struck out to provide a plurality of bendable keeper tongues **70** and **72** and, as shown in FIGS. **2** and **3.** The tongues **70** are bent up at right angles to the plane of the lid and are spaced apart while the alternating tongues **72** are bent down at right angles to the lid. These upwardly and downwardly bent tongues **70** and **72** serve to accommodate the adjustably positionable laterally bent portion **74** of the frame **76** of the roller brush in the manner shown. When the tray is disposed in the inclined brush cleaning position, as illustrated in FIG. **2,** the lid **66** will slide downwardly and forwardly by itself. In operation the user must hold the roller in one hand and the water delivering hose in the other hand as shown in phantom lines in FIG. **2.** In this connection it may well be added that a significant reason for the aforementioned keeper tongues **70** and **72** is to position and retain the lid **66** at a proper locale and distance relative to the companion lid **48.** Also, in operation it is important that the lid **66** be positioned in proper relation to the lid **38,** that is, approximately as shown. If the lid **66** is too far back, the paint would be thrown over the edge of lid **48** when the roller is spinning. If it is too far foward, one would encounter difficulty hitting the roller properly with the stream of water. Also and inasmuch as the operator's hands are in use on the roller handle and water hose at the same time, there is a significant need for the upstanding keeper tongues **70,** as is evident from FIG. **1.**

In practice, the two first and second lids **48** and **66** can be removed so that a conventional type tray is available. This is to say the tray can be used as a paint tray while painting and, to the ends desired, it is shaped like a common painter's tray. When the painting job has been completed, the insertable and removable lids can be brought into play, the first lid **48** being slid into the keying tracks **44** and **46.** This lid can be closed in the manner shown at the bottom of FIG. **2.** The other lid **66** is also slid into place in the keying tracks and it too can be closed as brought out in FIG. **2.** Thus, both compartments, that is the sump and the trough, are covered, and on the other hand it will be noted that the adjacent ends **50** and **68** of the lids are spaced apart due to the fact that the lids are in different planes. Consequently, a space is thus provided to permit the stream of water **84** to be passed through the opening from the nozzle **86** of a garden hose, or the like, **88.** It follows that with the brush in position and hose in position as shown in phantom lines in FIG. **2,** and also with the tray inclined and in the tub, the desired brush washing result can be attained.

Ordinarily and to clean the roller it is only necessary to pour paint thinner or a similar cleansing fluid in the bottom of the tray and roll it back and forth until the surfaces are soaked with the fluid. Then the first and second covers are placed in position in order to confine and hold the roller in the manner shown in phantom lines in FIG. **2.** The user can employ any water hose attached to any house water tap and with an ordinary garden hose nozzle to make the roller spin. It is desirable to move the nozzle across the width or length of the roller. Centrifugal force on the roller will act on and spin the paint off the roller and leave it in a clean and fluffy condition, in fact, aptly dry that one can change from one color to another with little or no trouble or difficulty. In order to clean the inside of the tray, the cover **66** can be moved toward the front of the tray, thereby enabling one to enter the water hose at the rear end of the tray and to wash out the inside of the same. The brushes may also be cleaned by the water hose by holding them under this cover to avoid splashing of paint and water.

To achieve a good cleaning job, the user can, if desired, soak the roller in a small amount of paint thinner or fuel oil. This is done with the brush in the tray and also this fluid at the same time will loosen the paint in the tray bottom and on the wall surfaces, thereby making it easier to clean not only the brush but the tray too.

It is reiterated that the end wall **14** of the sump is provided with two waste outlets or discharge necks with a

spout to extend about one inch below the bottom of the tray into the sink drain. This rubber spout is removable so that it can be attached to either of the discharge outlets. The discharge outlets are positioned toward each side of the front end of the tray outlets, and are about two inches up from the bottom of the tray. By having two discharge outlets the waste water can be directed into the sink drain, whether the drain is on the left or right side or the middle of the sink. During the cleaning operation, the tray is placed in the kitchen sink or laundry tub with the rear end of the tray resting on the edge of the sink, and the discharge spout aimed into the sink drain.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. In combination, an elongated portable painter's tray of a type which is expressly designed and adapted to accommodate a handle-supported roller brush, said tray having bottom wall means provided with upstanding longitudinal side walls joined by transverse end walls and embodying a relatively deep paint accumulating sump at one end and a complemental relatively shallow trough-like roller guide at the other end, the bottom wall portion of said sump being flat and adapted to rest firmly on a stationary support surface, the bottom wall portion of said trough-like roller guide being elevated to a plane above the plane of said first named bottom wall portion and inclining toward and merging with said first named bottom wall portion and having a depending roller guide elevating and stabilizing prop, readily applicable and removable cover means for said sump and roller guide, said cover means, when in use, serving to enclose said roller brush in a manner that it can be washed and cleaned by a stream of water under pressure, said sump being provided with a normally open top side which is disposed on a level above the level of the normally open top side of said trough-like roller guide.

2. The tray defined in and according to claim **1**, and wherein said prop comprises a single elongated U-shaped bracket having depending vertical legs joined by a horizontal bight portion, said bight portion being in a plane common with the plane of the bottom wall portion of said sump whereby the overall tray is self-standing when assuming a horizontal in use position.

3. The tray defined in and according to claim **1**, and wherein said cover means comprises a first lid which is slidingly mounted atop the top side of said sump, and a second lid which is independent of said first lid and is slidingly mounted atop the top side of said roller guide.

4. The tray defined in and according to claim **1**, and wherein upper portions of the side walls of said sump are interiorly provided with coplanar spaced parallel lid-keying tracks, said first lid being slidingly and removably keyed in said first named keying tracks and said second lid being slidingly and removably keyed in said second named keying tracks.

5. The tray defined in and according to claim **4**, each lid comprising a flat-faced plate, the ends of said plates adjacent each other being spaced apart in a manner to permit a stream of water to be aimed at and projected by way of the available space into the receptacle portion of said sump for controlled brush and sump cleaning needs.

6. The tray defined in and according to claim **1**, and wherein the transverse end wall of said sump is provided with an outstanding nipple-like discharge neck which, in turn, is provided with a closing cap which, when removed, permits an elbow to be applied to the neck, said elbow being adapted to facilitate emptying the contents of the overall tray into a sink or tub drain pipe.

7. The tray defined in and according to claim **6**, and wherein said transverse end wall is also provided with a second outstanding nipple-like discharge neck which is optionally usable and is likewise provided with a closing cap which when removed permits a detachable pouring elbow to be operatively connected thereto for convenient drainage use.

8. In combination, an elongated portable painter's tray expressly designed and adapted to accommodate a conventional type of handle-supported roller brush, said tray having bottom wall means provided with complemental upstanding longitudinal side walls joined by transverse end walls, defining a rim and providing a relatively deep paint accumulating sump at one end and a complemental elongated shallow trough-like roller guide at the other end in line with said sump, the bottom wall portion of said sump being flat and adapted to rest firmly on a stationary support surface, the bottom wall portion of the troughlike roller guide being elevated to a plane above the plane of the first named bottom wall portion and inclining toward and merging with said first named bottom wall portion, a depending elevating and stabilizing prop, said prop being U-shaped and embodying vertical depending legs joined at lower ends by a bight portion, said bight portion being straight across and disposed in a plane common with the bottom wall portion of said sump, an upper open end of said sump being disposed in a plane above the plane of the upper open end of the guide and being provided on the side walls with guide tracks, a lid slidable in said guide tracks and, when closed, covering the upper portion of said sump, upper edge portion of the side walls of the trough-like guide being provided with similar guide tracks, and a second lid slidable in said last named guide tracks and disposed in a plane below the plane of the first lid, the adjacent ends of the respective lids being spaced apart to permit a stream of water to pass through the space, an end wall of said sump being provided with at least one discharge neck, said neck provided with a cap and also with an alternatively usable attachable and detachable elbow.

9. The tray defined in and according to claim **8**, and wherein one marginal edge portion of the second lid is provided with a plurality of upstanding and depending longitudinally spaced tongues, said tongues constituting keepers and serving to position and hold a handle portion of the roller brush in a given position for washing and cleaning purposes.

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