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(54) **OUTDOOR STORAGE BIN**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Shown and described is a storage bin intended for outside lawn use, which is waterproof, windproof and foldable conveniently for storing the structure. The material used for the structure is flexible as well as waterproof and is reinforced by metal or plastic which is stiffly resilient. The intended use is for lawn storage of toys, outdoor furniture cushions and the like.

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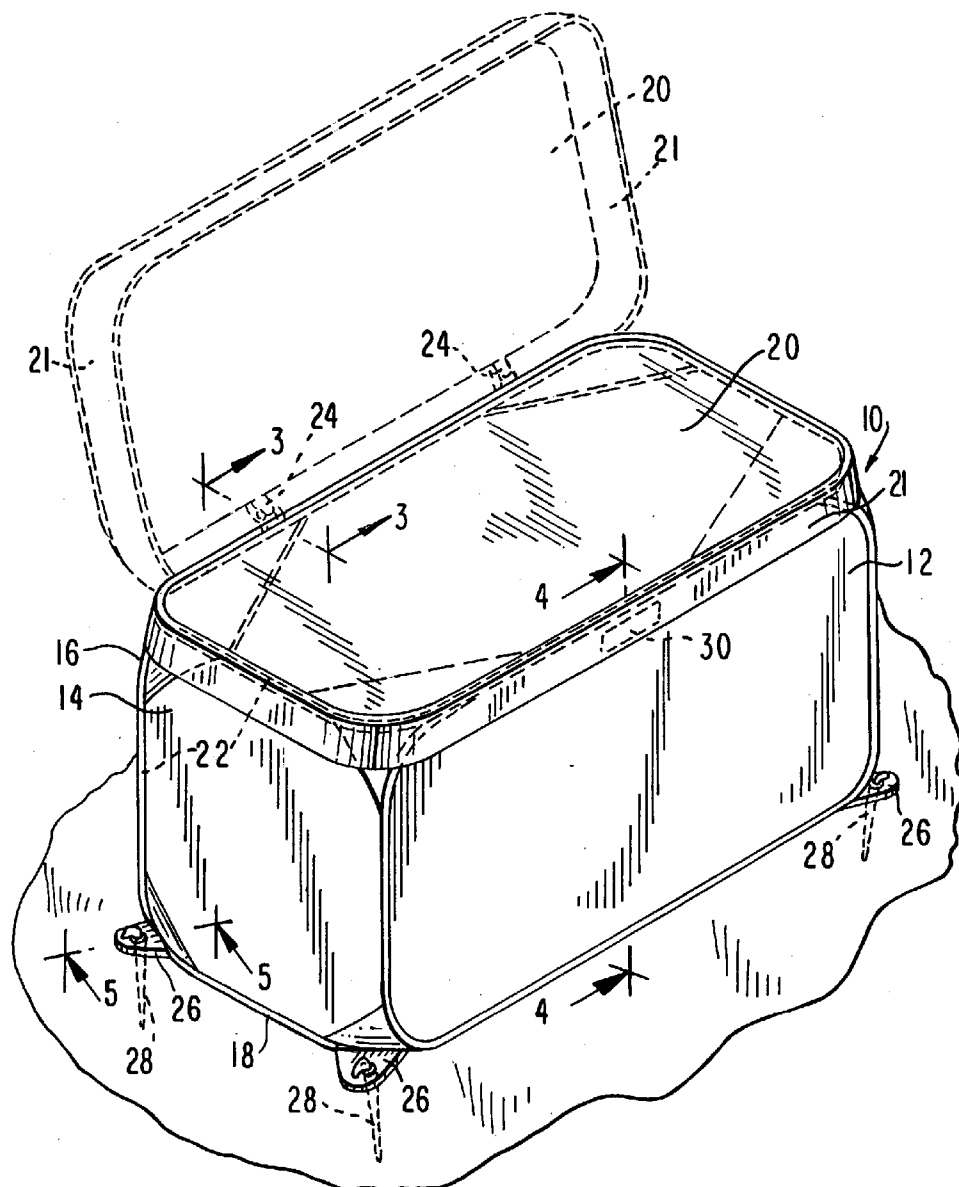


FIG. 1

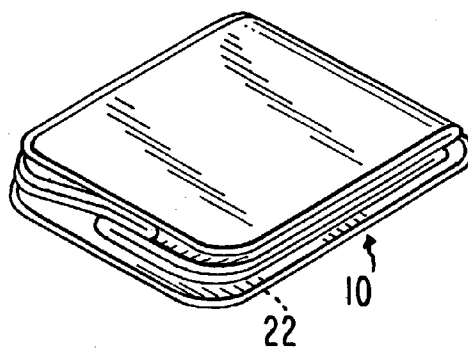


FIG. 2

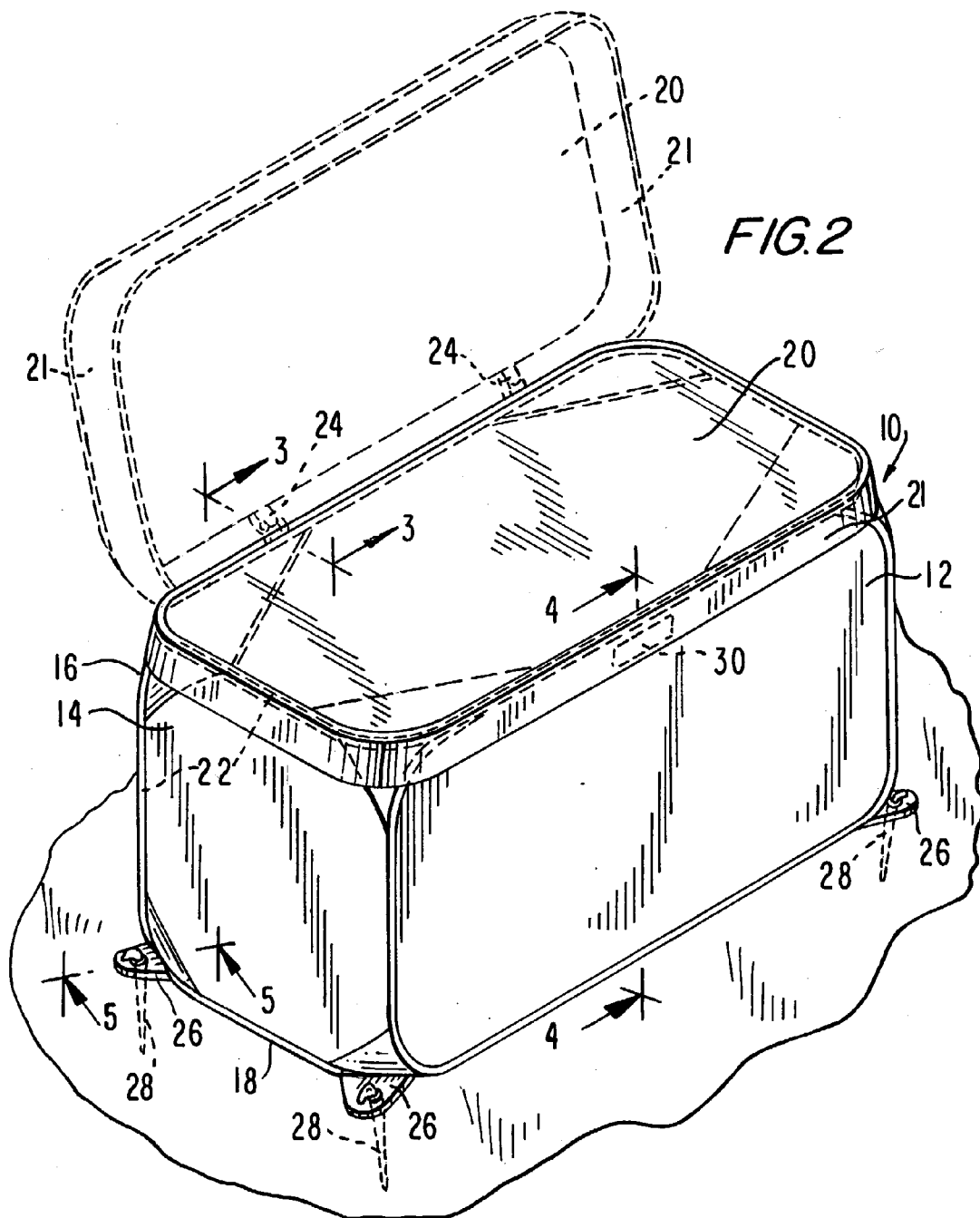


FIG. 3

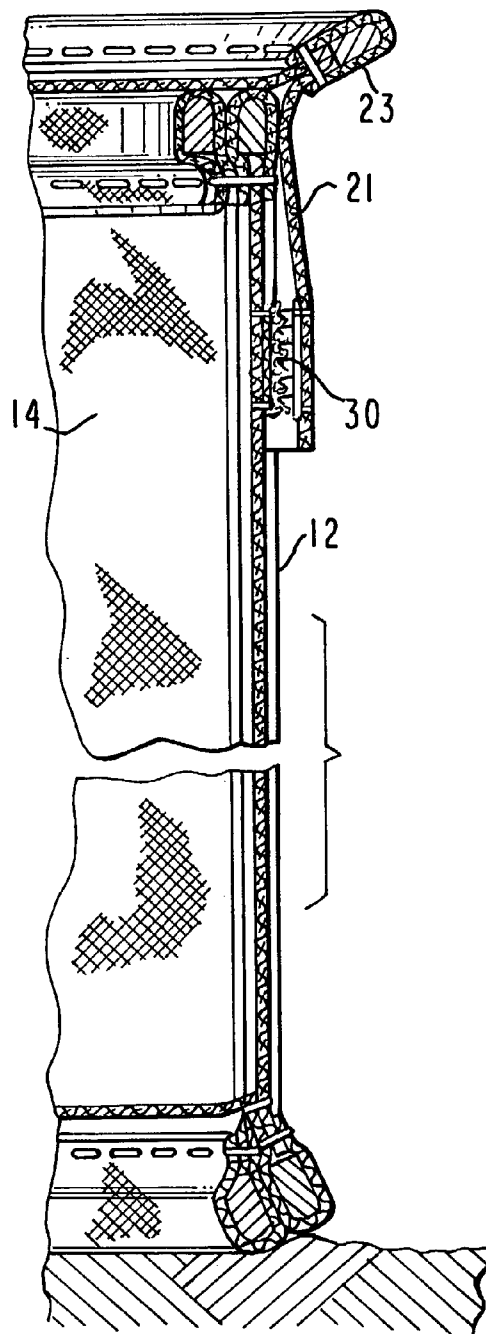
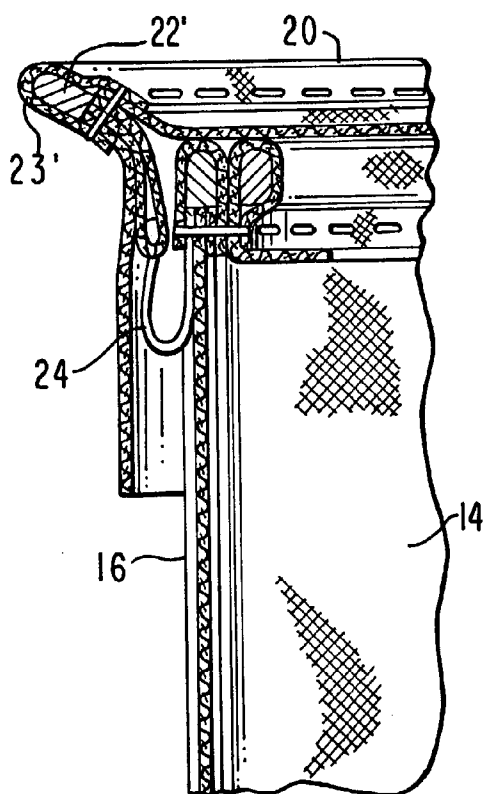
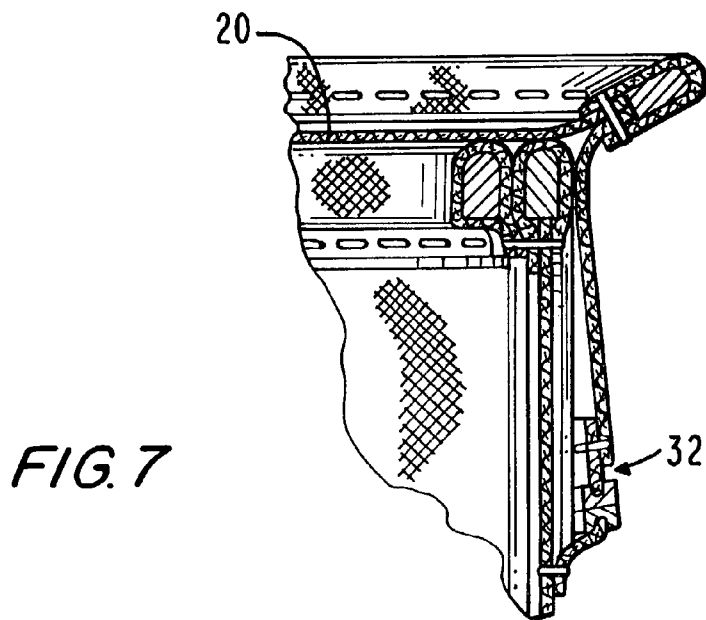
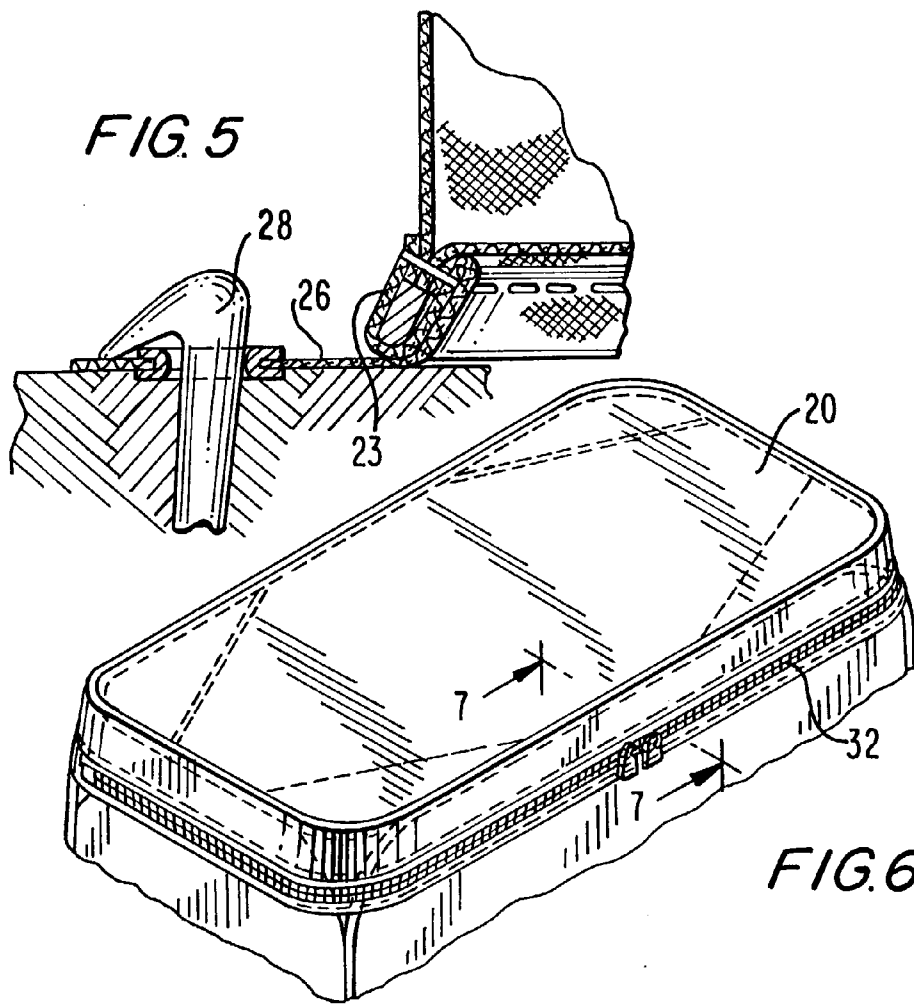


FIG. 4



OUTDOOR STORAGE BIN

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates primarily to storage bin structures, and more particularly to such structures for use outdoors, on a lawn, whereby children's toys, outdoor furniture cushions, and other items which can be used outdoors, are stored in a waterproof and windproof manner.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Often, the backyard of a typical home includes a neat lawn area, which gets strewn with children's toys, outdoor chair cushions and the like. Sometimes, a small and house-like, permanent or semi-permanent structure is used to store such items, but after a few years of use, such a house-like structure loses the room to store more than a lawn mower, other garden equipment and other large items. Furthermore, such a structure becomes unsightly for various reasons, and is or becomes a place where, for instance, children's toys used on the lawn should not be stored. Such a structure would not be a safe place for children to retrieve their toys, and the toys would become dirty, to the point where children should not play with them.

[0003] Other structures used for cushions or toys are either inconvenient for winter storage, non-waterproof and unable to withstand wind and other outdoor elements during the spring, summer and fall seasons.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Accordingly, a primary object of the present invention is to provide a storage capability structure, for use on the lawn, for outdoor furniture cushions, children's toys and the like.

[0005] A further object of the present invention is to provide such a structure which is waterproof, windproof and collapsible, and yet easy to store during periods of non-use.

[0006] These and other objects of the present invention are provided in a storage bin structure which features a collapsible form of fabric and/or plastic sheeting, combined with resiliently stiff metal or plastic reinforcement to provide a solid rectangle, defining a solid rectangular space there-within, the storage bin including a cover hingedly attached to the balance of the solid rectangular form. The cover includes a skirt attachable to the balance of the solid rectangular form, which provides a loop and stake capability at its base for stabilizing the bin relative to a lawn or ground base.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] Other objects, features and advantages of a storage bin according to the present invention will become apparent by the following more detailed, but nonetheless illustrative, embodiment and an alternative embodiment of the present invention, with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0008] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a collapsed storage bin according to the present invention in a non-use orientation for storing the bin, for instance, for the winter months;

[0009] FIG. 2 is a left side, front and top isometric view of a storage bin according to the present invention in set-up orientation, with the cover closed, and also showing the cover in ghost lines illustrating the open position of the cover for placing inside the bin or removing therefrom, toys, lawn-chair cushions, and the like;

[0010] FIG. 3 is a sectional view, taken along the line 3-3 of FIG. 2 and showing particularly the hinge structure for the cover;

[0011] FIG. 4 is a sectional view, taken along the line 4-4 of FIG. 2 and showing particularly a closure means for securing the cover, with its skirt, over the top of the bin;

[0012] FIG. 5 is a sectional view, taken along the line 5-5 of FIG. 2 and showing particularly the loop and stake combination for securing the bin in the ground when it is used;

[0013] FIG. 6 is a partial view of the storage bin showing an alternative closure means, in the form of a waterproof zipper, for securing the cover to the bin when the bin is in its closed position; and

[0014] FIG. 7 is a sectional view, taken along the line 7-7 of FIG. 6, and showing another view of the cover being secured in closed position by the alternative of a waterproof zipper at the base of the skirt surrounding the cover.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED, AND ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS:

[0015] Referring to the drawings, and in particular, FIGS. 1 and 2, the structure of the bin is shown to include, in its erected form, a generally solid rectangular structure, generally designated 10, with a front face 12, side faces 14, a rear face 16, a bottom face 18 and a cover 20. The cover includes a downwardly depending skirt 21, and throughout the structure are arranged reinforcement rods 22 of a resiliently stiff metal or plastic material. The material of the various face elements of the structure is either fabric or plastic with either a coating of waterproof material on the fabric or the plastic faces are themselves waterproof to satisfy the outdoor storage objectives of the present invention.

[0016] The cover 20 is attached to the main body of storage bin 10 by fabric or other material hinges 24, and at the base of the storage bin structure 10 are located loops 26 for the purpose of stabilizing the structure, for instance in a lawn, by means of stakes 28.

[0017] In more detail, as is shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, it may be seen that rod 22', at an edge of cover 20 is arranged within an opening defined by a tubular element 23'. Likewise, rods 22 throughout the structure are arranged in tubular elements 23 throughout, mainly stiffening the structure at the edges of faces 12, 14, 16 and 18, as well as at the edges of cover 20.

[0018] At or near the bottom edge of skirt 21 (see FIG. 4), which skirts proximate the front face 12 of the storage bin, a closure means 30 is provided. This closure means 30 may be a Velcro fastener or the like, to accomplish securing cover 20 in place at the top of storage bin 10.

[0019] As an alternative embodiment (FIGS. 6, 7) cover 20 is secured by a waterproof zipper 32, or the like, with or

without skirt 21. Also, as an alternative embodiment, the shape of the invention structure is in the form of a cube.

[0020] In order to provide a more complete understanding of the present invention, a series of use descriptions and steps is now offered: FIG. 1 shows the collapsed orientation of the storage bin according to the present invention. The stiffly resilient rods 22 enable this type of complete flattening of the structure to enable ease of storage when the structure is not in use; i.e. in the wintertime when the temporary storage of, for instance, toys or lawn chair cushions is not required.

[0021] With just slight encouragement, or just a small amount of encouragement by pulling parts of the collapsed structure, (or the storage bin just pops open by itself), the storage bin is ready for use, for instance on a lawn. With the cover in the ghost position of FIG. 2, i.e. an open position, the storage bin can be easily staked to the lawn by placing stakes 28 through loops 26 into the lawn, and various items such as children's toys (at bedtime for the children) and non-waterproof outdoor chair cushions are placed into the structure, after which the cover 20 is closed and secured by closure means 30. In this orientation, and with items in the storage bin 10, the weight of such items and stakes 28 secure the structure against winds that are likely to occur on summer and spring evenings. In order to empty the bin, the items in the storage bin are easily removed by opening the closure means 30 or 32 and just flipping cover 20 to its open position.

[0022] Although the foregoing presents a complete description of the present invention, the limits thereof are to be provided only by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A collapsible storage bin for outdoor use and for securing to the ground by the use of stakes proximate the bottom thereof comprising, a cover, side faces, a front face, a bottom face and a rear face, all formed of substantially waterproof material forming tubular elements proximate the edges thereof, said elements defining openings therethrough, and a plurality of stiffly resilient rods arranged, one in each of said openings.

2. A storage bin according to claim 1, wherein said storage bin is of a generally solid rectangular form.

3. A storage bin according to claim 1, wherein a skirt depends from the edges of said cover.

4. A storage bin according to claim 1, wherein a quartet of loops are arranged at the four intersections of said side, front and rear faces with said bottom face in order to accommodate stakes for securing said storage bin to the ground.

5. A storage bin according to claim 3, wherein a closure means is provided to enable said skirt to be attachable to said front face.

6. A storage bin according to claim 1, wherein said cover is attachable to said side faces, said rear face, and said front face by a waterproof zipper.

7. A storage bin according to claim 5, wherein said closure means is a waterproof zipper.

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