Jan. 23, 1968 R. E. SAXON 3,365,260

SPICE CHEST

Filed April 13, 1966 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

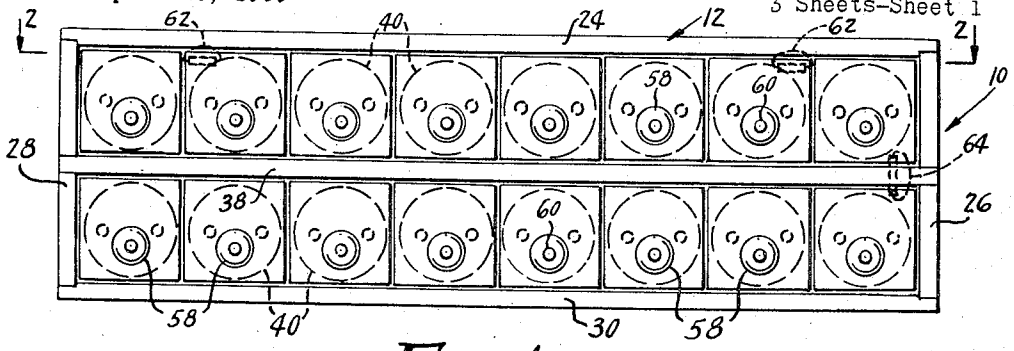



FIG. 1

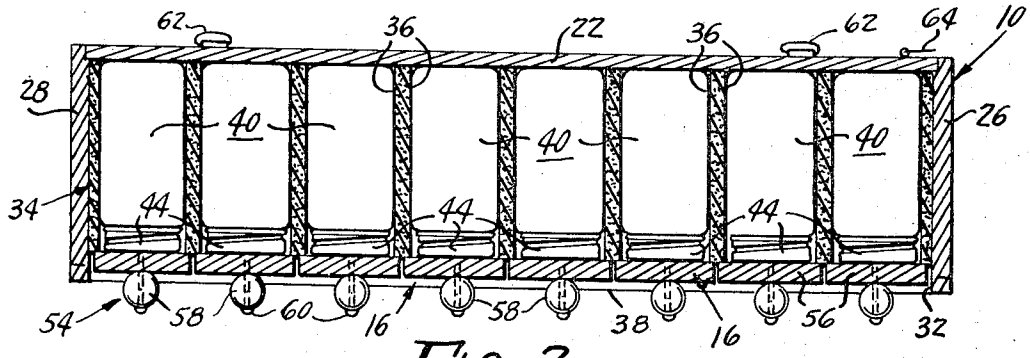
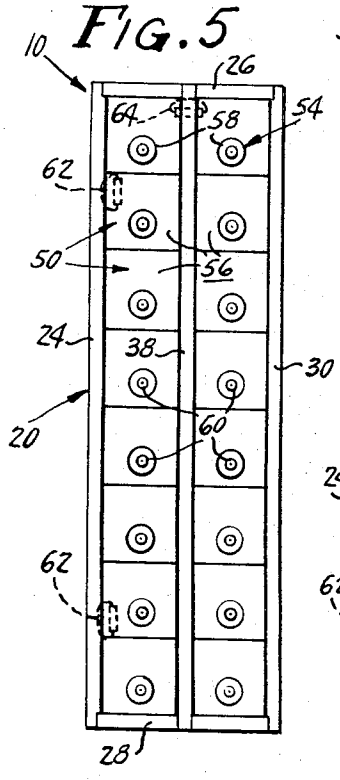



FIG. 2

FIG. 5



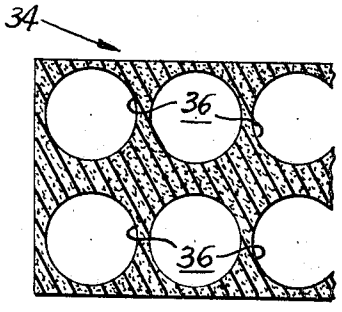




FIG. 4

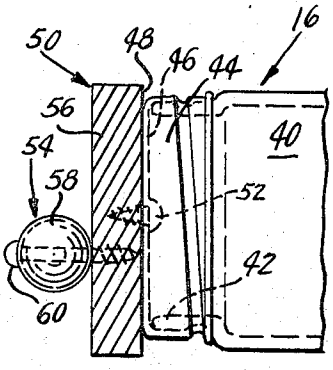



FIG. 3

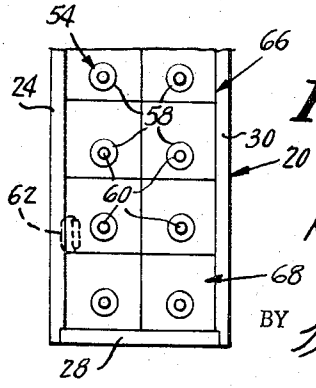



FIG. 6

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SPICE CHEST

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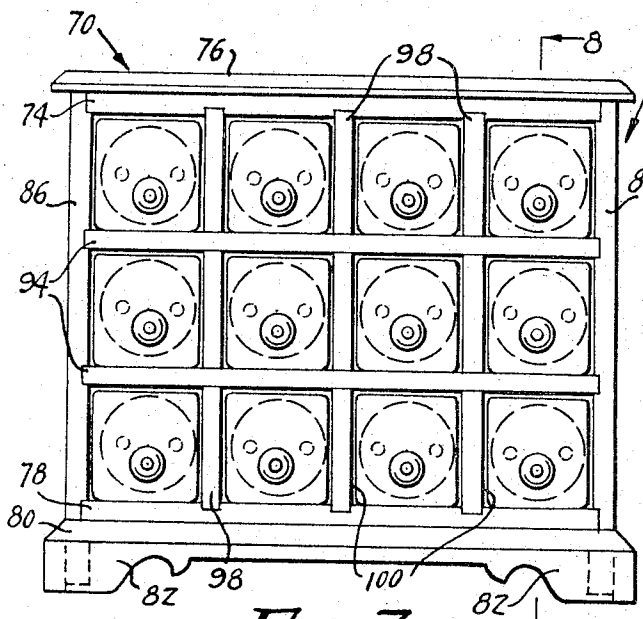



FIG. 7

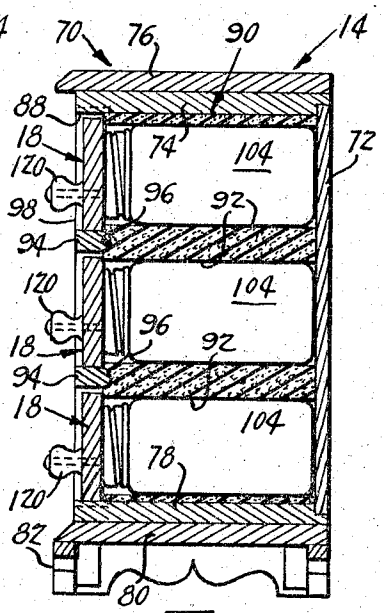



FIG. 8

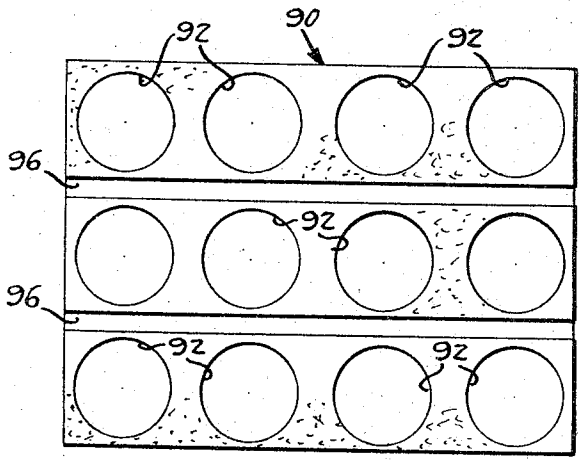



FIG. 11

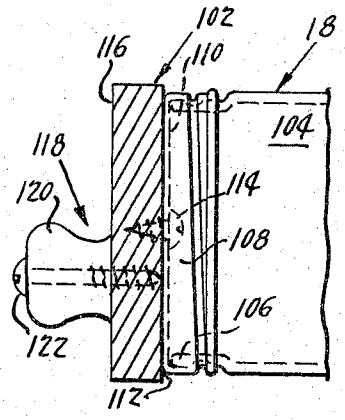



FIG. 9

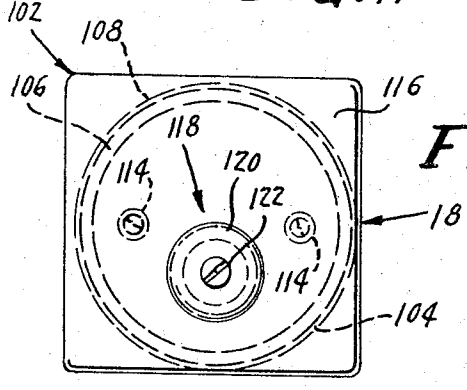



FIG. 10

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SPICE CHEST

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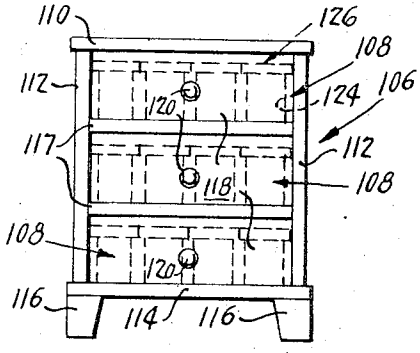



FIG. 12

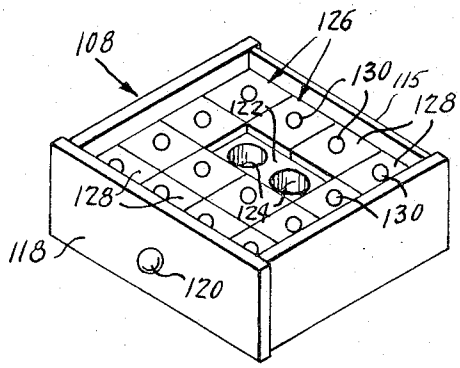



FIG. 13

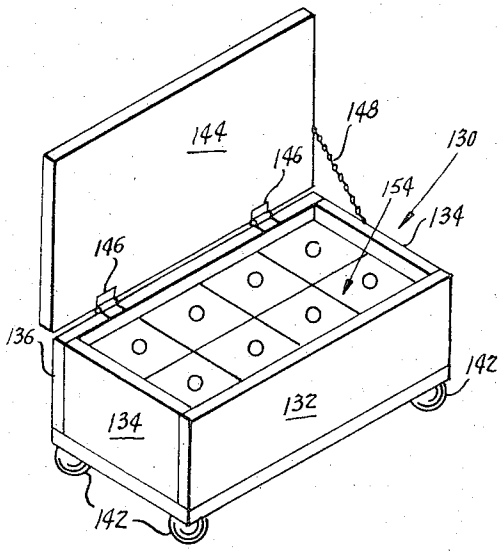



FIG. 14

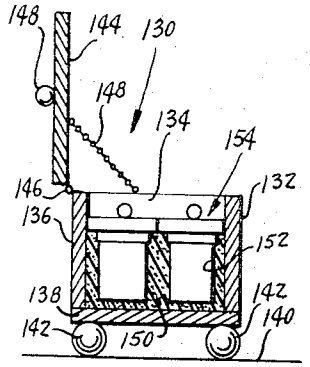



FIG. 15

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# SPICE CHEST

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3 Claims. (Cl. 312—234.1)

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Apparatus comprising a substantially closed hollow receptacle having but one open side, the receptacle preferably being provided with an external appearance of a finished article of furniture. The receptacle has fitted in, from its open side, a block insert of light weight plastic material having an external contour adapted to nest and to be fixedly secured within the receptacle, the block insert having preformed compartments formed therein, each being provided with an opening at one of their adjacent ends and in communication with the above-mentioned open side, the compartments each being adapted to slidably receive a jar or container for a condiment, spice, herb and the like, each of the jars having an open end closed by removable closure means including an enlarged cover plate, the cover plates cooperating with one another and with adjacent portions of the receptacle to provide the illusion of a finished cabinet having sliding drawer components, this being accomplished through the effective concealment of the block insert which results from the arrangement, disposition and cooperation of the cover plates with one another and with the adjacent portions of the receptacle.

*Specification*

This invention relates to spice chests and, more particularly, to a spice chest which constitutes an improvement over my Patent No. 3,259,445, entitled "Spice Chest," Ser. No. 431,079, filed Feb. 8, 1965, and which issued on July 5, 1965.

The present application was, thus, copending with the application on which my patent (supra) was granted.

As conducive to an understanding of the instant invention, reference is made to the aforementioned patent wherein there is disclosed a spice chest having a plurality of intersecting vertical and horizontal partitions forming a plurality of rectangular compartments into which a plurality of spice jars may be placed. In the manufacture of the device of the aforementioned patent, it has been found that the construction and assembly of the vertical and horizontal interlocking partitions is unduly expensive and time consuming when compared with the construction of the spice chest of the instant invention. Another disadvantage of the construction of the aforementioned patent resides in the weight of the assembled device. It has been found that the potency and shelf-life of certain spices are affected by heat and moisture for which the spice chests of the prior art make no provision.

It has also been found that certain spices are adversely affected by prolonged exposure to light. Although the spice chest of the aforementioned patent reduces the amount of light exposure to each of the spice jars, it is believed desirable to provide a spice chest in which each of the spice jars is kept in the dark except when an individual removes the jar from the chest. Another disadvantage of the spice chests of the prior art lies in the instability of the jar when placed therein.



It is a primary object of the instant invention to provide an improved spice chest in which a molded foam plastic block or the like is formed with a multiplicity of compartments for receiving a plurality of spice jars.

Another object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which the spice jars include a plate on the outer end thereof such that when all of the spice jars are in place, the front face of the foam plastic block and the spice jars themselves will be hidden from view.

Still another object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which the jars used therewith are provided with a square or rectangular cover plate such that when all of the spice jars are in place, the exposed outer face of the plastic block will be substantially covered.

A further object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest characterized by exceptionally light-weight, an ability to insulate the spice jars from excesses of heat and moisture, an ability to maintain the jars in the chest in a darkened area even though one or more of the jars has been removed from the chest, and an ability to stabilize the jars positioned in the chest.

A still further object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which at least one strip is provided along the open face of the receptacle to secure the foam plastic block therein with the strip and cover plates of the spice jars cooperating to conceal the face of the block.

Still another object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which at least one strip is provided along the open face of the receptacle to align the cover plates into an attractive configuration.

A still further object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which the potency of spices stored therein is maintained by insulating the spices from extremes of heat and moisture.

Still another object of the instant invention is to provide an improved spice chest in which the stored spices are maintained in a darkened area, even when one or more of the jars is removed therefrom.

Other objects and advantages of the instant invention reside in the combinations of elements, arrangements of parts, and features of construction, all as will be more fully pointed out hereinafter and disclosed in the accompanying drawings wherein there is shown a preferred embodiment of this inventive concept.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a front elevational view of one form of spice chest of the instant invention illustrating a plurality of spice jars received therein;

FIGURE 2 is a horizontal cross-sectional view of the spice chest of FIGURE 1 taken substantially along line 2—2 thereof as viewed in the direction indicated by the arrows, illustrating the spice jars received in the compartments formed by the foam plastic block;

FIGURE 3 is a partial enlarged view of the connection between the spice jar and closure plate;

FIGURE 4 is a partial view of the plastic block received in the spice chest of FIGURES 1 and 2 for accommodating the spice jars;

FIGURE 5 is another view of the spice chest of FIGURES 1 and 2 illustrating that it may be positioned on a wall with the long axis being vertical rather than horizontal, the spice jars being turned 90° to position the grasping means in an appropriate manner;

FIGURE 6 is a partial front elevational view of an-

other form of the spice chest of the instant invention illustrating that the closure plates affixed to each of the jars may be configured to conceal the plastic block in which the jars are positioned;

FIGURE 7 is a front elevational view of still another embodiment of the spice chest of the instant invention with a plurality of vertical and horizontal strips cooperating with the closure plates affixed to the spice jars for concealing the plastic block within the chest;

FIGURE 8 is a vertical cross-sectional view of the spice chest of FIGURE 7 taken substantially along line 8—8 thereof as viewed in the direction indicated by the arrows;

FIGURE 9 is an enlarged partial view of the spice jar and closure plate, similar to FIGURE 3;

FIGURE 10 is a front elevational view of the spice jar of FIGURE 9;

FIGURE 11 is a front elevational view of the plastic block received in the spice chest of FIGURES 7 and 8 for accommodating the spice jars of FIGURES 9 and 10;

FIGURE 12 is a front elevational view of a chest of drawers embodying the spice jar storage principles of the instant invention, the jars being positioned in a substantially vertical attitude;

FIGURE 13 is an isometric view of one of the drawers situated in the spice chest of FIGURE 12, a plurality of jars being removed to illustrate the plastic block;

FIGURE 14 is an isometric view of another form of spice chest of the instant invention which is configured as a miniature cedar chest; and

FIGURE 15 is a transverse cross-sectional view of the spice chest of FIGURE 14 illustrating the vertical orientation of the spice jars and the means by which they are accommodated within the spice chest.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, wherein like reference characters designate like elements throughout the several views thereof. However, it should be noted that throughout the several modifications disclosed herein the invention is characterized by a chest made of wood or other suitable material and appears to have a number of conventional drawers. In reality, the interior of the chest contains a plastic block formed with holes, each of which is of an appropriate size and shape to serve as a compartment for a spice jar. Each drawer front has a square or rectangular face plate attached to the lid of a spice jar. Upon insertion of each spice jar into its receiving compartment, the face plates align to completely cover and conceal the interior and give the initially described appearance of a spice chest with traditional drawers.

One difficulty with using a merely compartmented plastic block is that the block is normally visible when jars are placed therein thus creating an unsightly spice chest. Since spice chests are often placed in the kitchen of a home, it will be readily apparent that such a device would not be widely accepted because of the desire of most individuals to provide an attractive kitchen. Accordingly, spice chests according to this invention are constructed such that the compartment forming plastic block is hidden from view in manners more fully explained hereinafter.

Referring now to the embodimnt of FIGURES 1 to 5 inclusive, spice chest **10** includes a receptacle shown generally at **20** having a rear wall **22**, a top wall **24**, a pair of side walls **26**, **28**, and a bottom wall **30** forming an generally elongated rectangular structure having an open front **32**. A plastic block shown generally at **34** in FIGURE 4 is preferably made of a low density polyurethane or polystyrene foam or other suitable plastic or plastic foam-type material and forms a plurality of cylindrical compartments **36** arranged in a symmetrical manner to provide an attractive appearance for spice chest **10**. Plastic block **34** may be glued to the interior of receptacle **20** by any suitable waterproof adhesive with a horizontal brace **38** secured to side walls **26**, **28** across open front **32** cooperating to retain plastic block **34** in receptacle **20**.



As may be seen most clearly in FIGURE 2, receptacle **20** is somewhat deeper than plastic block **34** to provide for the insertion of spice jars **16** completely therein. Referring now to FIGURE 3, spice jar **16** is illustrated as including a cylindrical bottle **40**, although it should be understood that any suitably configured bottle may be used, forming an externally threaded neck **42** about which is engaged an internally threaded cap **44** having a substantially flat outer wall **46** juxtaposed to a complementarily configured inner face **48** of a closure plate shown generally at **50**. A suitable frictional fastener **52**, which is illustrated as a screw, or any other suitable means may be used, such as glue, nails, brads, rivets or the like, secures cap **44** to closure plate **50**.

Grasping means shown generally at **54** is affixed to outer face **56** of closure plate **50** and is illustrated as a spherical knob **58** having a screw **60** extending therethrough and frictionally engaged with closure plate **50**. It should be understood, however, that any suitably shaped knob or any other suitable type of fastener may be used. As may be seen in FIGURES 1 and 5, knobs **58** are preferably, although not indispensably, placed below the center of closure plate **50** to allow the positioning of suitable indicia thereabove to indicate the type of spice placed in bottle **40**.

As may be seen in FIGURES 1, 2 and 5, a pair of spaced apart fingers **62** are affixed to the exterior of rear wall **22** along the upper edge thereof for hanging spice chest **10** such that the long axis thereof is substantially horizontal. In order to provide a degree of flexibility for the positioning of spice chest **10**, a second hanger **64** is affixed to the exterior of rear wall **22** adjacent side wall **26** to allow a vertical positioning of spice chest **10** as may be seen in FIGURE 5. When affixing spice chest **10** in either the horizontal position shown in FIGURE 1 or the vertical position shown in FIGURE 5, jars **16** must be oriented such that spherical knob **58** is located adjacent the lowermost end of compartment **36** for positioning the indicia immediately above knob **58** in a convenient attitude for reading by an individual.

As mentioned previously, it should be pointed out that an important feature of spice chest **10** resides in the cooperation of strip **38**, top wall **24** and bottom wall **30** with closure plates **50** to cover substantially all of the front face of plastic block **34**. Without this cooperation, it will be evident that the front face of block **34** will be visible thus detracting from the appearance of spice chest **10**. It should also be pointed out that strip **38**, top wall **24** and bottom wall **30** act to align cover plates **50** to provide an attractive configuration. Because of the relatively close fit between compartments **36** and bottles **40**, it will be apparent that each of jars **16** is stable within spice chest **10** allowing little, if any, free movement. Not only will the plastic foam block insulate the spices within bottles **40** from extremes of heat and moisture, but also acts as a light filter or diffuser to avoid exposing the contents of jars **16** to light even when one or more of jars **16** is removed. This should be compared with a spice chest having one or more openable doors into a large interior compartment where all the spices are stored.

Referring now to FIGURE 6, the second embodiment of the instant invention is shown generally at **12** with like reference characters being utilized on like elements for purposes of brevity. The sole difference between spice chest **12** and chest **10** resides in the omission of strip **38** and providing larger closure plates shown generally at **66** having an outer face **68** of such a size as to hide that portion of plastic block **34** uncovered by the omisison of strip **38**. Although the embodiment of FIGURE 6, as well as other embodiments of the instant invention, is illustrated as having plate **66** of a square configuration to fit within the complementary shape provided by receptacle **20**, it should be pointed out that plates **66** may be diamond shaped with the configuration of top wall **24**, bottom wall **30** and side walls **26**, **28** being suitably modi-

fied. The major requirement of closure plates 50, 66 is to conceal the front face of plastic block 44 which can obviously be accomplished in many different manners.

Referring now to FIGURES 7 to 11 inclusive, the third embodiment of the instant invention is shown generally at 14 and includes a decorated cabinet indicated generally at 70 having a rear wall 72, a top wall 74 underlying a finished top 76, a bottom wall 78 overlying a bottom 80 from which depend a plurality of ornamented legs 82 and a pair of side walls 84, 86 arranged to form a receptacle having an open front 88. Although cabinet 70 is illustrated as of the Early American format, it should be understood that any style may be utilized. A plastic block shown generally at 90, similar to the plastic block of FIGURE 4, resides interiorly of receptacle 70 and may be secured therein by glue or the like.

Aiding in the securement of plastic block 90 in receptacle 70 and acting to conceal a portion thereof is a pair of horizontal strips 94 imbedded in a groove 96 formed by pressing strip 94 inwardly. A plurality of vertical segments 98 are placed intermediate the length of strips 94 in aligned relation to form a plurality of indentations 100 for receiving a closure plate shown generally at 102 of spice jar 18. To one uninitiated to the instant invention, it would appear that the provision of horizontal strips 94 and vertical segments 98 would be as expensive as the provision of horizontal and vertical interlocking partitions of the spice chest disclosed in the aforementioned application. This has not proved to be true since strips 94 and segments 98, as well as strip 38 of spice chest 10, may be glued in place in a relatively rapid manner.

Referring now to FIGURES 9 and 10, spice jar 18 includes a cylindrical bottle 104 adapted to be closely received by cylindrical compartments 92 and having an externally threaded neck 106 for engagement with an interiorly threaded cap 108. Cap 108 includes a planar outer wall 110 juxtaposed to a flat inner face 112 of closure plate 102 with a pair of suitable frictional fasteners 114 securing cap 108 to closure plate 102. Affixed to outer face 116 of closure plate 102 is a convenient grasping means shown generally at 118 comprising a knob 120 affixed to closure plate 102 by a screw 122. As may be seen from FIGURES 7 and 10, knob 120 is preferably affixed below the center of closure plate 102 such that suitable indicia may be placed thereabove to designate the contents within bottle 104.

In common with the previous embodiments of the instant invention, spice chest 114 is characterized by a cooperation between top and bottom walls 74, 78, side walls 84, 86, horizontal strips 94, vertical segments 98 and the size and shape of closure plate 102, which is illustrated as square, but which may be of any other convenient configuration, to hide a substantial portion of the front face of plastic block 90. In addition, horizontal strips 94 and vertical segments 98 cooperate to align closure plates 102, thereby providing an attractive exterior appearance. It should be noted that each of spice chests 10, 12, 14 appears to be a conventional spice chest. Instead of the customary interior horizontal and vertical partitions forming jar compartments, the spice chests of the instant invention are provided with a compartment-forming plastic block having advantages of heat and moisture insulation, jar stability and light insulation.

Referring now to FIGURES 12 and 13, another embodiment of the spice chest of the instant invention is shown generally at 106 and is illustrated as a chest of drawers having a plurality of drawers shown generally at 108. Chest 106 includes a top wall 110, a pair of side walls 112, a bottom wall 114, a back wall 115, and a plurality of legs 116 supporting bottom wall 114 from an underlying surface. As seen best in FIGURE 12, side walls 112, bottom wall 114 and top wall 110 cooperate with a plurality of horizontal strips 117 and form suitable receptacles for closely receiving drawers 108 in a conventional manner. It should be understood that spice chest 106 may be made in any desired style. Drawer 108 includes a front wall 118 having a suitable knob 120 thereon for pulling the drawer 108 out of spice chest 106.

Referring now to FIGURE 13, a plastic block 122 forming a plurality of regularly spaced vertically oriented compartments 124 is positioned inside drawer 108 and may be secured therein by the use of glue or the like. A plurality of jars (not illustrated) but provided with face plates shown generally at 126 are positioned in drawer 108. These face plates each include a substantially square closure plate 128 having a suitable grasping means 130 thereon. It will be understood that the jars to which the face plates 126 are connected are substantially similar to jars 16, 18 of FIGURES 3 and 9, a further description thereof is deemed unnecessary. An important feature of the spice chest 106 resides in the vertical orientation of the spice jars which allows the construction of spice cabinets of many different types. In addition, the vertical orientation of the spice jars acts to expose a minimum surface area of the spices to the air within the jar thereby prolonging the shelf life of the spice as mentioned previously.

Referring now to FIGURES 14 and 15, still another form of spice chest of the instant invention is shown generally at 130 and is illustrated in the conventional configuration of a miniature cedar chest. Spice chest 130 includes a front wall 132, a pair of side walls 134, a rear wall 136, and a bottom wall 138 supported from an underlying surface 140 by a plurality of feet 142. A top 144 is mounted on rear wall 136 by a pair of hinges 146 with a chain 148 restraining a pivotal opening of top wall 144. As may be seen in FIGURE 5, a knob 148 or other suitable grasping means may be provided so that an individual may conveniently open top 144. A plastic block 150 forming a plurality of compartments 152 is positioned in the receptacle formed by chest 130 with a plurality of spice jars shown generally at 154 being received in compartments 152. Spice jars 154 are similar in configuration to the remaining spice jars of the instant invention and will not be further described.

It is now seen that there is herein provided an improved spice chest, which accomplishes all of the objects of the instant invention, and others, including many advantages of great practical utility and commercial importance.

Since many embodiments may be made of the instant inventive concept, and since many modifications may be made of the embodiments hereinbefore shown and described, it is to be understood that the foregoing is to be interpreted merely as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

I claim:

1. A chest for conveniently storing a plurality of small containers comprising:
- a large receptacle having an open side;
- a plastic block, in the receptacle and substantially filling it, the block having a plurality of spaced apart compartments formed therein and an exposed front face at said open side;
- a plurality of spice jars, each including
  - a spice receiving bottle configured to be received in one of the compartments;
  - means for selectively opening the bottle;
  - a plate having an inner face affixed to the bottle, the plate being substantially larger than the opening to the compartment, the plates of each of the jars and the configuration of the receptacle cooperating to cover a substantial portion of the exposed front face of the block when each jar is fitted within a compartment; and
- grasping means, on the outer face of the plate, for readily extricating the jars from the compartments.

2. The chest of claim 1 further including a strip extending across the open front of the receptacle, the strip and the plates cooperating to cover substantially all of the exposed front face of the block.

3. The chest of claim 2 further including a plurality of segments transverse to and substantially coplanar with the strips forming rectangular indentations, the plates being rectangular to cover the area bounded by the strips and segments.


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