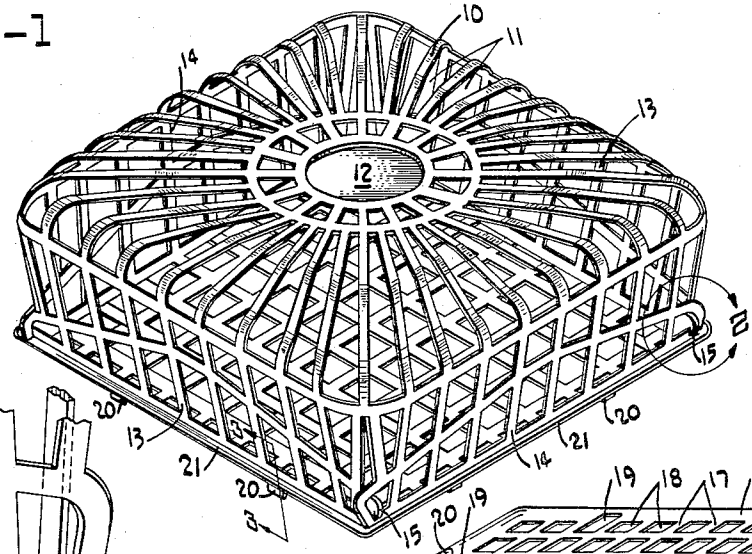
June 17, 1958 W. B. CRANE 2,839,214

BASKET FOR BERRIES AND THE LIKE

Filed May 9, 1955

Fig - 1



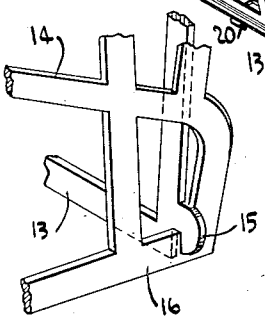


Fig - 2

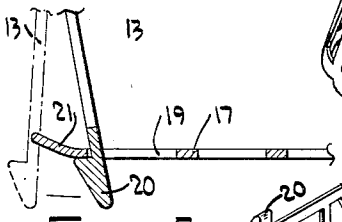


Fig - 3

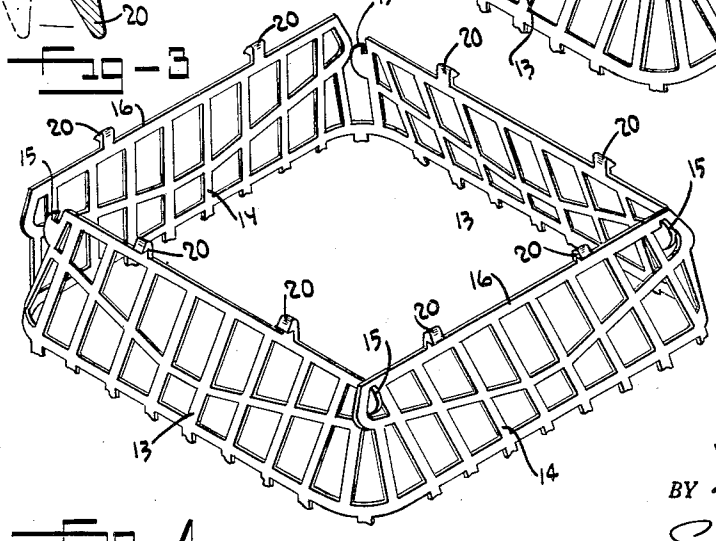


Fig - 4

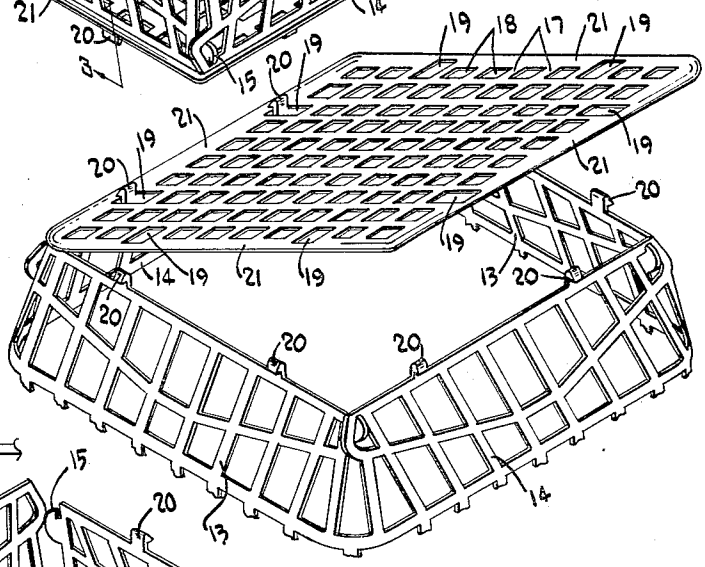


Fig - 5

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BASKET FOR BERRIES AND THE LIKE

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5 Claims. (Cl. 220—4)

This invention relates generally to article carriers and more particularly to berry baskets.

Heretofore strawberries or the like have been packaged in open faced wooden or cardboard baskets. In order to prevent the spilling of berries from the baskets while presenting the berries to the view of the purchaser, it has been common practice to apply a transparent wrapping about the baskets. Such a wrapping, however, forms substantially an airtight envelope about the basket and its contents and prohibits the free circulation of air therethrough as is desirable to aid in the preservation of the berries. Moreover the prior baskets themselves had relatively solid side and bottom panels and greatly inhibited such free circulation of air.

The cost of fabricating the baskets, especially those of wooden construction, was relatively high and the application of the transparent wrapping about the baskets further increased the packaging costs. Moreover, berries are often transported to a point of sale in large trays and in such cases the baskets are filled and wrapped at the point of sale. Wrapping of the baskets is performed by hand and is a tedious and time consuming operation.

Also to improve sales appeal, the berries generally fill the baskets to a point above the upper rims of the latter, and stacking one basket on top of the next results in crushing of the berries. While berry baskets have been proposed which include a relatively rigid top to permit stacking of the baskets, such tops rendered manual packing of the baskets difficult since it was hard to estimate when the baskets were correctly filled owing to the above mentioned practice of filling the baskets above their upper rims. Placing the top on an overfilled basket would, of course, result in crushing of the berries.

This invention has as its primary object the provision of a berry basket for packaging strawberries, or the like, which avoids the above mentioned and other deficiencies of existing berry baskets.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a berry basket which permits relatively free circulation of air through the contents thereof while preventing spilling of the berries therefrom.

Still another object of the invention is the provision of a berry basket which permits a substantial portion of its contents to be viewed by the purchaser and which is relatively inexpensive to manufacture.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a berry basket which includes a relatively rigid top panel whereby the berries will be retained in the basket and several baskets may be stacked on top of one another without crushing of the berries.

Still a further object of the invention is the provision of a berry basket, as in the foregoing, a plurality of which may be conveniently and compactly stacked in their empty condition and readily and accurately filled at a point of sale.

These and other objects of the invention are attained generally by providing a berry basket of molded plastic construction which is formed with a crown shaped, latticed top panel integrally and resiliently joined along its edges with latticed side panels of the basket. These latticed side panels are separated at the corners of the basket and prior to filling of the latter, are disposed in planes which diverge toward the bottom so as to permit stacking of the baskets in their empty condition. Prior to filling of the baskets, the side panels are urged together to bring them together at the corners of the basket, means being provided for retaining the side panels in this condition. The basket is then inverted and filled through the open bottom to the plane of the lower edges of the side panels whereupon a flat, latticed bottom panel is assembled on the basket, the latter being disposed in an upright position for sale.

A clearer understanding of the invention as well as a fuller appreciation of its objects and advantages may be had from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the annexed drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the berry basket of this invention;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged detail showing of the portion of the basket enclosed by the circular arrows 2 in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged section taken along line 3—3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a view, in perspective, of the present basket in inverted position and prior to assembly of the bottom panel over the open bottom of the basket, the latticed top panel being omitted for the sake of clarity; and

Fig. 5 is a view similar to Fig. 4 showing the bottom panel being assembled on the basket.

Referring now to the drawings, the berry basket of this invention is preferably of molded plastic construction and comprises a crown-shaped top panel 10 of latticed construction so as to provide a plurality of openings therethrough, as shown. The center of the top may present a solid disk, as at 12, for receiving advertising or the like.

Integrally joined along their normally upper longitudinal edges to the edges of the top panel 10 are two pairs of opposed side panels 13 and 14 also of ribbed or latticed construction so as to provide openings therethrough. Side panels 13 and 14 are separated at the corners of the baskets and are sprung outwardly, as indicated in phantom lines in Fig. 3, so that the sides will be normally disposed in planes which diverge slightly toward the bottom of the basket. It will be appreciated that this divergence of the side panels 13 and 14 permits one basket to be stacked inside of another for convenient and compact storage of the baskets in their empty condition.

The end edges of the respective side panels 13 and 14, that is, the edges at the corners of the basket, converge toward the bottom of the latter so that when the sides 13 and 14 are sprung inwardly (e. g. from the phantom line position to the solid line position of Fig. 3), about their aforesaid upper longitudinal edges to bring their end edges together at the corners of the basket, the planes of the side panels 13 and 14 will converge toward the bottom of the basket, in the fashion of a conventional berry basket, as shown more clearly in Fig. 1.

Opposite end edges of side panels 13 are formed with hooks 15, extending in the planes of the panels 13. These hooks are adapted to be engaged over lower, longitudinally extending ribs 16 formed on side panels 14, as clearly shown in Fig. 2, so that the side panels 13 and 14 will be joined together at the corners of the basket with the planes of the side panels converging in the aforedescribed manner.

After the end edges of the basket side panels 13 and 14 have been thus joined, the basket is inverted, so as to occupy the position of Figs. 4 and 5, so that top 10 becomes in effect, the bottom of the basket. While the

basket is in this inverted position, it is filled with the desired berries to the plane of the normally lower longitudinal edges of the side panels **13** and **14** (which edges will be the upper longitudinal edges in the inverted condition of the basket). It will be seen that since the basket is filled only to a point where the berries are flush with the bottom rim of the basket, it is possible to accurately judge when the basket is correctly filled. This, as previously mentioned, is not readily accomplished with a berry basket which is filled in the upright position since the baskets are generally filled above their upper rims and judgment must be exercised as to when the basket has been "overfilled" the correct amount. In the present basket construction, of course, the crown-shaped top panel **10** accommodates this "overfilling" of the basket.

To close the open bottom of the basket, after the latter has been filled in the manner just described, there is provided a bottom panel **17** of latticed construction to provide openings **18** therethrough and, along each edge of the panel, a pair of enlarged openings **19**.

Formed along the normally lower longitudinal edges of each of the side panels **13** and **14** (which will be the upper longitudinal edges in the still inverted position of the basket) are a pair of hook shaped elements **20** which project in the planes of the side panels. Hooks **20** are adapted to be received in enlarged openings **19** of the bottom panel **17** and to be engaged over peripheral ribs **21** defining the side edges of the bottom panel. The hook elements **20** are provided with inclined camming surfaces, as shown, to facilitate snapping of the bottom panel thereover. The basket may now be positioned in an upright position for sale, the weight of the contents of the basket tending to move side panels **12** and **13** outwardly so as to urge hooks **20** into tighter engagement with peripheral ribs **21**. The openings in top **10**, sides **13** and **14**, and bottom panel **17** provide for the free circulation of air through the contents of the basket and also render the contents visible while preventing loss thereof from the basket. Since the basket is relatively rigid, several baskets may be stacked without damage to the contents.

It will be seen that the present invention provides a berry basket which has all of the advantages and is fully capable of attaining all of the objects heretofore set forth.

It is to be understood, of course, that the preferred form of the present invention herein described is by way of illustration only, and not of limitation and that various modifications thereof may be made without departing from the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A basket for containing berries or the like comprising: a polygonal top panel, side panels integrally and flexibly joined along their normally upper edges to the side edges of the top panel, the top panel being generally dome-shaped so as to project above the upper edges of the side panels whereby to permit the basket to be filled with berries to a level above said upper edges and thereby afford an over filled appearance to the basket, the planes of the side panels diverging in a downward direction away from said dome-shaped top panel prior to filling of the basket whereby one basket may be nested inside of another, the side panels being separated at the corners of the basket whereby said side panels may be sprung inwardly to bring adjacent side panels together at said corners, means for retaining the side panels in said inwardly sprung positions, a separate bottom panel, and means for attaching said bottom panel to the normally lower edges of the side panels.

2. A basket for containing berries or the like comprising: a polygonal, top panel, side panels integrally and resiliently joined along their normally upper edges to the side edges of the top panel, the top panel being generally dome-shaped so as to project above the upper edges of the side panels whereby to permit the basket to be filled with berries to a level above said upper edges and thereby afford an over filled appearance to the basket, said side panels being disposed in planes which diverge toward the bottom of the basket prior to filling of the latter whereby one basket may be nested inside another, the side panels being normally separated at the corners of the basket whereby said side panels may be sprung inwardly to bring adjacent side panels together at said corners, cooperating hook means carried by adjacent panels for retaining said side panels in their inwardly sprung positions to form a basket having an open bottom through which said basket is adapted to be filled when in inverted position, a separate bottom panel for closing said open bottom, and cooperating hook means on the bottom and side panels for securing said bottom panel to the normally lower edges of the side panels.

3. A basket for containing berries or the like comprising: a polygonal, top panel, side panels integrally and resiliently joined along their normally upper edges to the side edges of the top panel, the top panel being generally dome-shaped so as to project above the upper edges of the side panels whereby to permit the basket to be filled with berries to a level above said upper edges and thereby afford an over filled appearance to the basket, said side panels being disposed in planes diverging toward the bottom of the basket prior to filling of the latter whereby one basket may be nested inside of another, the side panels being normally separated at the corners of the basket, the edges of each side panel at said corners converging toward the bottom of the basket whereby said side panels may be sprung inwardly to bring adjacent side panels together at said corners, means for retaining the side panels in their inwardly sprung positions to form a basket having an open bottom and side panels which converge toward the bottom, the basket being adapted to be filled through said open bottom, a separate bottom panel for closing said open bottom, and for attaching the bottom panel to the lower edges of said side panels.

4. A basket according to claim 3 wherein at least some of said panels have openings therethrough to permit the contents of the basket to be viewed and permit air to circulate through said contents.

5. The subject matter of claim 3 wherein said basket is a molded plastic article and said panels are of latticed construction to provide a plurality of openings therethrough, said openings permitting the contents of the basket to be viewed and the free circulation of air through said contents.

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