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(54) **PLASTIC BAGS WITH GRIPPING TABS**

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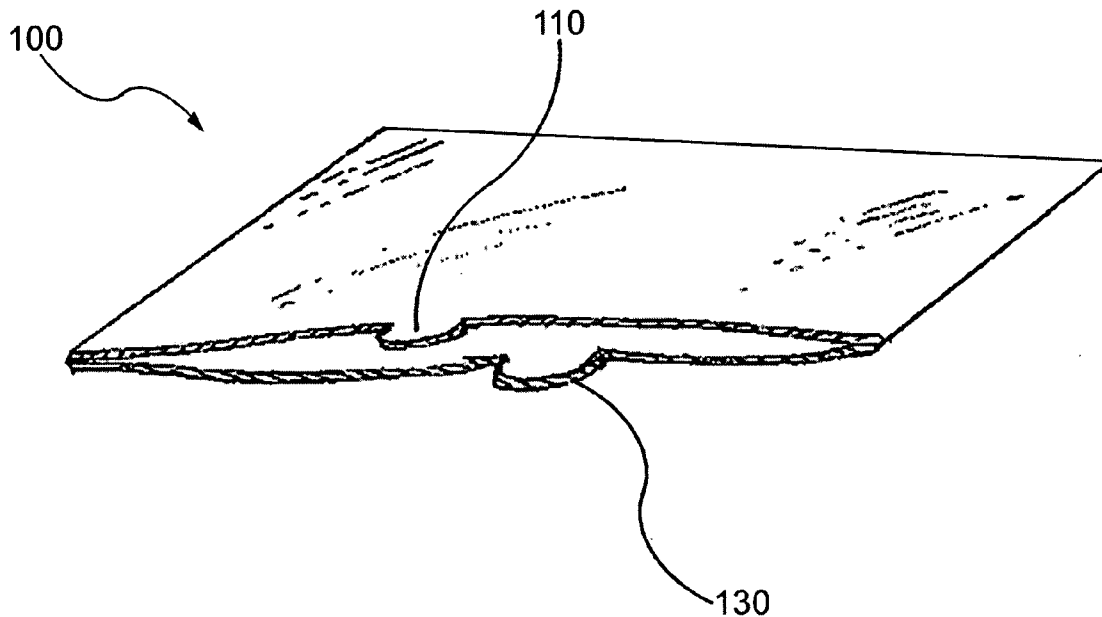
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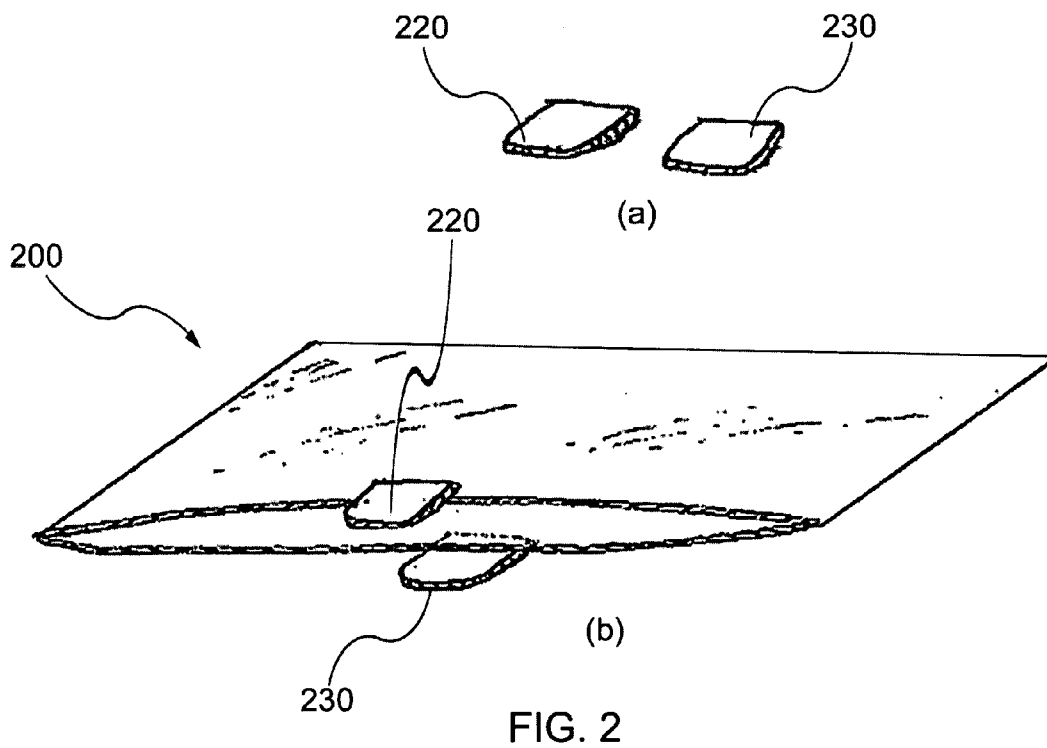
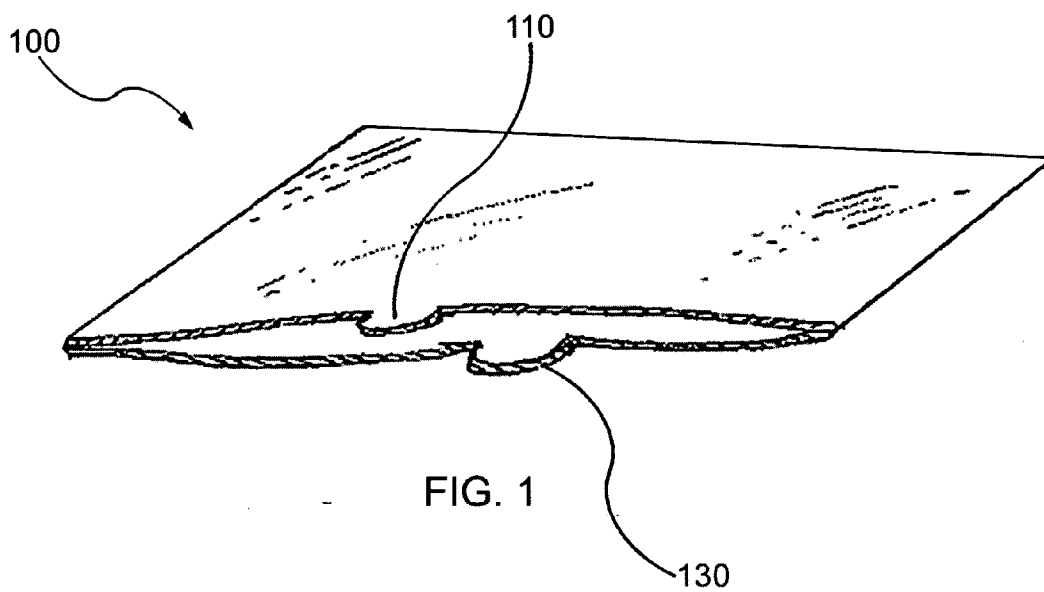
ABSTRACT

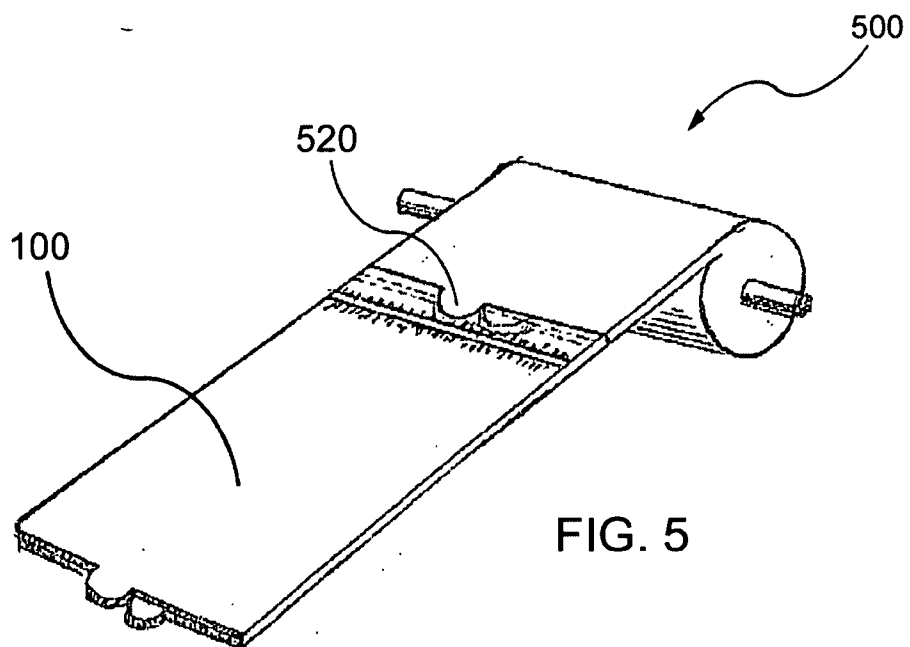
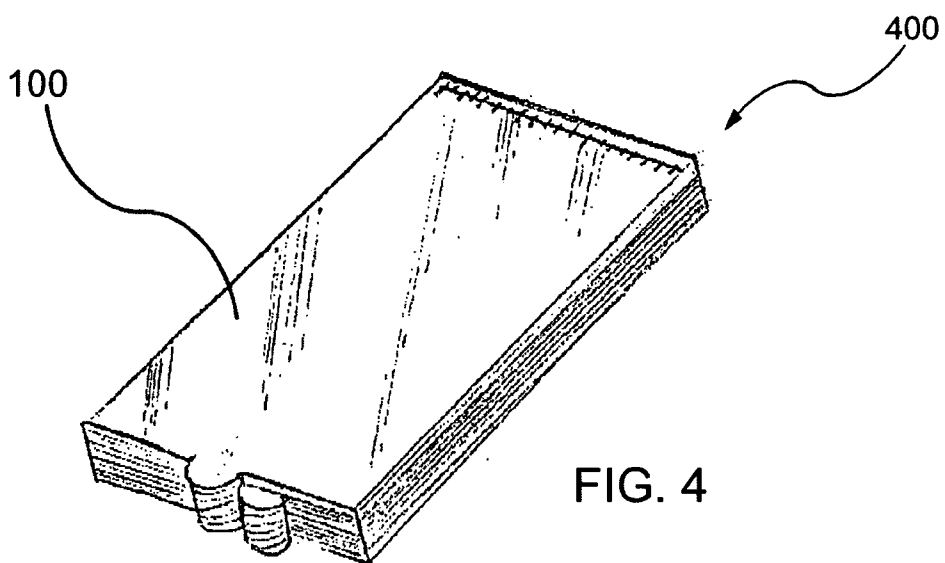
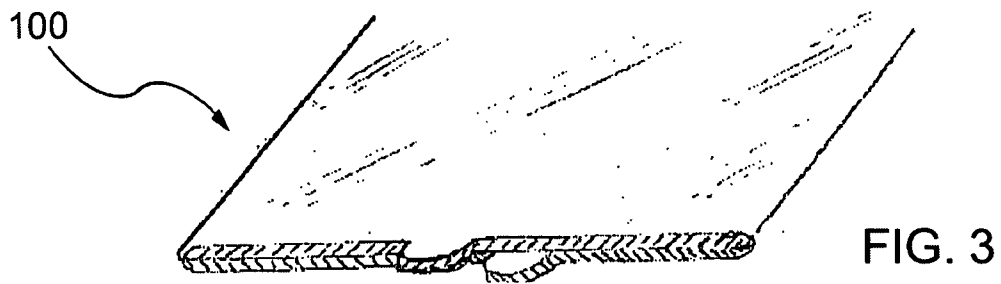
The invention describes means for providing gripping tabs on each side of a plastic bag's mouth to facilitate the opening thereof, especially for flattened bags, which are otherwise difficult to open.

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PLASTIC BAGS WITH GRIPPING TABS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to means for conveniently opening plastic bags. More particularly, the invention relates to providing tabs on each side of the plastic bag's mouth to facilitate the opening thereof, especially for bags, which are otherwise difficult to open.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Common plastic bags that are rolled, pleated, folded, or stacked together are often very difficult to open. My kinds of mass market plastic bags are manufactured and bulk packaged in such a way that they are generally flat and devoid of air within each bag, which is efficient for manufacturing and packaging, but often very inconvenient for the consumer. Typically, the consumer can relatively easily remove the bag from the provided dispenser means, but finds it very difficult to open the flattened plastic bag.

[0003] In many cases there is at least a two fold problem. One problem is to determine which end of the bag is the open side as they often are visibly indistinguishable, and a second problem is after determining, usually with significant effort, the proper side to open, it is typically difficult to separate the plastic sheets at the opening, as such plastic tends to strongly cling to itself (e.g., "static cling") and there is an additional resistance to separating the plastic sheets due, at least in part, to a vacuum force within the flattened bag. Often due to these frustrations when trying to open such flattened plastic bags, the bag is damaged or the person simply gives up.

[0004] Few attempts have been made to facilitate the convenient opening of plastic bags such as the foregoing. Most known attempts are directed to opening plastic bags which are not of the type that are problematic to open due to static cling or vacuum force resistance. For example, at least one known attempt is directed towards an air filled bag (containing tampons) that is provided with tabs (typically overlapping) on the bag's lip to pull apart the bag's lip seal to thereby open the bag.

[0005] In view of the foregoing, there is a need for improved techniques for facilitating the convenient opening of plastic bags which are hard to open at least due to the effects of static cling and vacuum resistance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The present invention is illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings and in which like reference numerals refer to similar elements and in which:

[0007] **FIG. 1** illustrates a top elevated view of an exemplary tabbed plastic bag comprising gripping lip tabs, in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention;

[0008] **FIGS. 2 a** and **b** illustrate a top elevated view of an exemplary tabbed plastic bag comprising applied lip tabs, in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention;

[0009] **FIG. 3** illustrates a top perspective view of the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of **FIG. 1** in the closed position, as is normally the case after the bag is manufactured;

[0010] **FIG. 4** illustrates a top perspective view of the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of **FIG. 3** packaged into a stacked pile, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0011] **FIG. 5** illustrates a top perspective view of the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of **FIG. 3** packaged into a continuous, rolled sheet, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0012] Unless otherwise indicated illustrations in the figures are not necessarily drawn to scale.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] To achieve the forgoing and other objects and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, techniques are described to provide gripping tabs on each side of a plastic bag's mouth to facilitate the opening thereof, which especially helpful for flattened bags, which are otherwise difficult to open. In some embodiments, the tabbed, flattened plastic bags are suitably joined together end to end to form a rolled sheet for dispensing. In other embodiments, the tabbed, flattened plastic bags are joined together at a side and stacked for dispensing.

[0014] Other features, advantages, and object of the present invention will become more apparent and be more readily understood from the following detailed description, which should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0015] The present invention is best understood by reference to the detailed figures and description set forth herein.

[0016] Embodiments of the invention are discussed below with reference to the Figures. However, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the detailed description given herein with respect to these figures is for explanatory purposes as the invention extends beyond these limited embodiments.

[0017] **FIG. 1** illustrates an exemplary tabbed plastic bag **100** comprising gripping lip tabs, in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention. Tabbed plastic bag **100** is shown slightly opened for clarity, and is of the type that is mostly devoid of air when packed for consumer use, and is thereby prone to static cling and vacuum opening resistance between top and bottom bag sheets. As shown in the Figure, there is a gripping tab **110** at the lip of the top bag sheet and similarly a gripping tab **130** on the bottom sheet. In the preferred embodiment shown the top and bottom tabs are preferably slightly offset from one another to avoid the two tabs from sticking to each other, but still be close enough to more easily separate the sheets.

[0018] Those skilled in the art will readily recognize a multiplicity of suitable techniques to form the present tabs. By way of example, and not limitation, the tab protrusions may be stamped into the perforation step of a conventional rolled sheet of separable plastic bags. By way of further example, **FIGS. 2 a** and **b** illustrate an exemplary tabbed plastic bag **200** comprising applied lip tabs, in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention. As shown in **FIG. 2a**, in the second embodiment there is a

separate top gripping tab 220 and a separate bottom gripping tab 230, which are then applied to a conventional plastic bag as shown in FIG. 2b. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize suitable means to adhere gripping tabs 220 and 230 to the lip of the bag. Suitable means include, but are not limited to, glues, adhesives, melting them together, etc.

[0019] It should be appreciated that the gripping tabs shown in the foregoing embodiments are only examples, whereby the preferred gripping tab embodiment are designed to have a suitable size, texture, and location to provide convenient finger gripping handles for pulling opening the bag, but the exact implementation will depend on the particular application, and will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art.

[0020] FIG. 3 illustrates the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of FIG. 1 in the closed position, as is normally the case after the bag is manufactured.

[0021] Another attendant aspect of the present gripping tabs according to the teachings of the present invention is to easily indicate the location open side of the plastic bag. Any suitable conventional bag may be properly adapted to comprise the gripping tabs according to the present invention. Moreover, those skilled in the art will recognize a multiplicity of known techniques for packaging and dispensing tabbed bag embodiments of the present invention. A stacked packaging and dispensing technique is shown by way of example in FIG. 4. FIG. 4 illustrates the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of FIG. 3 packaged into a stacked pile 400, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. An alternate packaging and dispensing technique is as a continuous roll of perforated sheets, which is shown by way of example in FIG. 5. FIG. 5 illustrates the exemplary tabbed plastic bag of FIG. 3 packaged into a continuous, rolled sheet 500 of perforated bags, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The perforations of the top and bottom portions of the bags are shaped so as to provide a gripping tab 520 when the adjacently attached bag is detached from this perforated seam.

[0022] Having fully described at least one embodiment of the present invention, other equivalent or alternative methods of providing plastic bags with gripping tabs according to the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art. The invention has been described above by way of illustration, and the specific embodiments disclosed are not intended to limit the invention to the particular forms disclosed. The invention is thus to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A flattened plastic bag comprising:

a top plastic sheet joined to a bottom plastic sheet on all edges except for one side for opening of the formed bag;

a gripping tab protruding from the opening lip of the top sheet; and

a gripping tab protruding from the opening lip of the bottom sheet.

2. The plastic bag of claim 1, wherein the top gripping tab and the bottom gripping tab do not completely overlap one another.

3. The plastic bag of claim 1, wherein the top gripping tab and the bottom gripping tab are configured for convenient finger gripping.

4. The plastic bag of claim 1, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags is suitably joined together end to end to form a rolled sheet for dispensing.

5. The plastic bag of claim 1, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags are joined together at a side and stacked for dispensing.

6. A flattened plastic bag comprising:

a top plastic sheet joined to a bottom plastic sheet on all edges except for one side for opening of the formed bag;

a gripping tab joined to and protruding from the opening lip of the top sheet; and

a gripping tab joined to and protruding from the opening lip of the bottom sheet.

7. The plastic bag of claim 4, wherein the top gripping tab and the bottom gripping tab do not completely overlap one another.

8. The plastic bag of claim 4, wherein the top gripping tab and the bottom gripping tab are configured for convenient finger gripping.

9. The plastic bag of claim 4, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags is suitably joined together end to end to form a rolled sheet for dispensing.

10. The plastic bag of claim 4, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags are joined together at a side and stacked for dispensing.

11. A flattened plastic bag comprising:

a top plastic sheet joined to a bottom plastic sheet on all edges except for one side for opening of the formed bag;

means for gripping tab the opening lip of the top sheet; and

means for gripping tab the opening lip of the bottom sheet.

12. The plastic bag of claim 11, wherein the top gripping means and the bottom gripping means do not completely overlap one another.

13. The plastic bag of claim 11, wherein the top gripping means and the bottom gripping means are configured for convenient finger gripping.

14. The plastic bag of claim 11, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags is suitably joined together end to end to form a rolled sheet for dispensing.

15. The plastic bag of claim 11, wherein a plurality of the tabbed, flattened plastic bags are joined together at a side and stacked for dispensing.

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