COOKING VESSEL LID HOLDER WITH DRIP COLLECTION APPARATUS

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Abstract
A cooking vessel lid holder and drip collection apparatus which includes wire frame front and rear upright member, an intermediate wire frame structure between the front and rear upright members, and a wire frame base supporting the upright members, all of which form a space for removable placement of a drip collection receptacle. The front and rear upright members a provided with one-way hinges so that the frame assembly collapses inwardly for storage in a typical low profile kitchen drawer.
The present invention relates generally to cooking vessel lid holders, and more particularly to a cooking vessel lid holder with an apparatus for the collection of moisture. The present invention provides a lid holder constructed of two horizontal semicircles attached by vertical rods and a cradle for the lid. U.S. Design Pat. No. 282,323, to Fetty, discloses a lid holder constructed of two horizontal semicircles attached by vertical rods. U.S. Pat. No. 4,893,771, to Kaneshiro, discloses a lid holder comprised of a stand and a cradle for the lid. And U.S. Design Pat. No. to Kinsley et al., shows a wire pot lid holder. However, each of these references describe devices for holding a vessel lid in a generally horizontal position, thus obviating the need for a drip collection device.

The foregoing patents reflect the current state of the art of which the present inventor is aware. Reference to, and discussion of, these patents is intended to aid in discharging Applicant’s acknowledged duty of candor in disclosing information that may be relevant to the examination of claims to the present invention. However, it is respectfully submitted that none of the above-indicated patents disclose, teach, suggest, show, or otherwise render obvious, either singly or when considered in combination, the invention described and claimed herein. Specifically, the aforementioned patents do not teach a cooking vessel lid holder that incorporates an apparatus to capture moisture. Further, none of the aforementioned patents teaches, discloses, or suggests a cooking vessel lid holder having hinged frame members that enable folding of the apparatus for storage in a kitchen drawer having a typical depth. A need remains, therefore, for an apparatus that elegantly, simply, and conveniently supports a vessel lid in an upright orientation while simultaneously collecting moisture running off the lid surfaces, and further having means to collapse the lid holder for storage in a drawer.

The present invention is a cooking vessel lid holder with a removable drip collection receptacle. In a first preferred embodiment, the present invention comprises a frame assembly including two vertically disposed rod members comprising a front and a rear upright for supporting a leaning cooking vessel lid or other plate-like article. The uprights are dimensioned to hold lids falling within the range of sizes used on pots and pans found in an ordinary residential kitchen; i.e., between roughly 4 inches and 12 inches in diameter. However, it will be understood that there is nothing imperative in the particular or desired sizes, as the novel features of the present invention pertain to such apparatus in any size. Additionally, the present invention is not adapted for use strictly with round plate-like articles. Any suitably sized generally planar article could be supported in the inventive apparatus, whether round, square, or alternatively shaped.

The front and rear uprights of the inventive apparatus each have upper and lower portions, the lower portions forming a configuration comprising a base permitting the frame assembly to be placed on a flat surface so that the entire assembly is a substantially upright position. Each upright further includes first and second arms which extend upwardly and slightly outwardly from the base portion to the upper portion. The rear upright preferably includes a transverse stabilizing rod which extends between its arms and may also include structure which facilitates removable placement of the apparatus on a wall hook.

Preferably the rear upright bends at its lower portion into an integral foot extending forwardly to and beyond
a lower bend formed at the lower portion of the front upright member. The lower bend of the front upright and the foot of the rear upright may be welded or otherwise affixed to provide increased stability.

[0018] Additionally, the frame assembly includes first and second rounded shoulders, each comprising a truncated oval, and each shoulder having an interior ends welded to the front and rear uprights to create a rigid frame structure. The shoulders also cooperate with the uprights to provide means for capturing and retaining a drip collection receptacle, or drip boat, which is employed to hold the lower portion of the lid's rim and to collect condensation or liquid which runs off the vessel lid.

[0019] When laid on either its front or rear upright members, the frame assembly is small enough to fit within a conventionally sized kitchen drawer. However, in an alternative embodiment, the front and rear uprights include hinges in each arm to allow folding of the rear arms forwardly and the front arms rearwardly, thus creating a compact frame structure suitable to placement in shallow or low profile drawer.

[0020] Finally, the inventive apparatus includes hinges in both the front and rear upright members that allow for selective folding of the apparatus for storage in a low profile kitchen drawer.

[0021] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved cooking vessel lid holder suitable for holding cooking vessel lids or other plate-like objects in an generally upright orientation.

[0022] It is another object of the present invention to provide a new and improved cooking vessel lid holder having means to capture and collect drips from water or other liquid runoff from the surfaces of a lid or plate.

[0023] A further object or feature of the present invention is a new and improved cooking vessel lid holder that collapses for easy storage in a conventional kitchen drawer.

[0024] Other novel features which are characteristic of the invention, as to organization and method of operation, together with further objects and advantages thereof will be better understood from the following description considered in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which preferred embodiments of the invention are illustrated by way of example. It is to be expressly understood, however, that the drawings are for illustration and description only and are not intended as a definition of the limits of the invention. The various features of novelty that characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming part of this disclosure. The invention does not reside in any one of these features taken alone, but rather in the particular combination of all of its structures for the functions specified.

[0025] Certain terminology and derivations thereof may be used in the following description for convenience in reference only, and will not be limiting. For example, words such as "upward," or "upwardly," "downward," or "downwardly", "left," and "right" would refer to directions in the drawings to which reference is made unless otherwise stated. Similarly, words such as "inward", "inwardly", and "outward" or "outwardly" would refer to directions toward and away from, respectively, the geometric center of a device or area and designated parts thereof. References in the singular tense include the plural, and vice versa, unless otherwise noted.

[0026] There has thus been broadly outlined the more important features of the invention in order that the detailed description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in order that the present contribution to the art may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described hereinafter and which will form additional subject matter of the claims appended hereto. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the conception upon which this disclosure is based readily may be utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0027] The invention will be better understood and objects other than those set forth above will become apparent when consideration is given to the following detailed description thereof. Such description makes reference to the annexed seven (7) sheets of drawings wherein:

[0028] **FIG. 1A** is an upper front left perspective view of the cooking vessel lid holder with a drip collector, shown with a lid (in phantom) leaning against a rear upright member and having its rim disposed in the drip collector;

[0029] **FIG. 1B** is an upper perspective view of the apparatus of **FIG. 1A**, shown without the lid;

[0030] **FIG. 2** is an exploded front upper left perspective view of the apparatus of **FIG. 1A**;

[0031] **FIG. 3A** is a left side view in elevation of the apparatus of **FIG. 1A**;

[0032] **FIG. 3B** is a left side view in elevation of the apparatus of **FIG. 1B**, showing how the front and rear uprights each fold inwardly to create a collapsed configuration;

[0033] **FIG. 3C** is a detailed view of a preferred hinge type disposed on the front and rear upright members;

[0034] **FIG. 4** is a front view in elevation of the inventive apparatus with the drip boat included;

[0035] **FIG. 5** is a detailed front view in elevation showing rear and front right hinges, respectively; and

[0036] **FIG. 6** is a top plan view showing the inventive apparatus in the folded configuration.

**DRAWING REFERENCE NUMERALS**

[0037] 100 present invention generally
[0038] 110 frame assembly
[0039] 120 front upright
[0040] 130 rear upright
[0041] 150 cooking vessel lid
[0042] 160 upper portion of front upright
The foot member preferably extends both outwardly and beyond the lowest portion of the bend in the front upright to form a front stabilizing portion 220a, and outwardly and beyond the lowest portion of the bend in the rear upright to form a rear stabilizing portion 220b. The lower bends of the upright members and the foot member may be integral, welded as separate pieces, or otherwise formed and affixed to one another to provide increased structural rigidity and stability.

Each of the front and rear uprights is formed of first and second arms 230, 240, and 250, 260, which extend upwardly and slightly outwardly from the base portions 180, 190 to the upper portions 160, 170. The rear upright preferably includes a transverse stabilizing rod 270 which extends between its arms and may also include hook capturing means or structure 280 which facilitates removable placement of the apparatus on a wall hook.

The frame assembly further includes right and left rounded shoulders 310, 320, respectively, protecting outwardly and to the sides of the upright members. Each shoulder comprises a partial oval shape akin to a truncated oval. Each is formed from rounded rod members which have interior ends 310a, 310b, and 320a, 320b, terminating at and welded to the front and rear uprights to complete the rigid frame structure. The shoulders, uprights, and base elements collectively define a space 330 which accepts and retains an elongate drip boat 340. The drip boat holds the lower portion 150a of the lid’s rim, and it also collects condensation or liquid that runs downwardly and off the vessel lid under the influence of gravity.

Referring now to FIGS. 3A to 6, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the front and rear uprights include one-way hinges, 350a, 350b, and 360a, 360b, respectively, disposed in lower portion of each arm to allow folding of the rear arms forwardly and the front arms rearwardly. This provides the user with a more compact frame structure that can be placed in a shallow drawer.

The above disclosure is sufficient to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to practice the invention, and provides the best mode of practicing the invention presently contemplated by the inventor. While there is provided herein a full and complete disclosure of the preferred embodiments of this invention, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction, dimensional relationships, and operation shown and described. Various modifications, alternative constructions, changes and equivalents will readily occur to those skilled in the art and may be employed, as suitable, without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention. Such changes might involve alternative materials, components, structural arrangements, sizes, shapes, forms, functions, operational features or the like.

Therefore, the above description and illustrations should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention, which is defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed as invention is:

1. A cooking vessel lid holder and drip collection apparatus, comprising:
   - front and rear upright members, each having upper and lower portions;
   - intermediate structure interposed between said front and rear upright members so as to define a space for the removable capture of a drip collection receptacle; and
a drip collection receptacle disposed in the space defined by said intermediate structure and said front and rear upright members.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, further including capturing means for hanging said apparatus from a wall-mounted hook.

3. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said rear upright member includes right and left arms and said capturing means comprises a transverse wire rod member interposed between said right and left arms.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of said front and rear upright members include one-way hinges to allow said upright members to collapse inwardly toward one another into a low profile configuration.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said intermediate structure includes a base member for supporting said front and rear upright members in a generally vertical orientation.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said intermediate structure includes right and left shoulders.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said intermediate structure includes a base member and right and left shoulders.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said base member is formed from the attachment of said lower portions of said upright members to a foot member.

9. A plate and lid holder for supporting plates and lids in a generally upright orientation, said apparatus comprising:

   two vertically disposed rod members, including a front upright a rear upright, each having an upper portion and a lower portion, said lower portions including integral bends;

   a foot member attached at a plurality of points to each of said integral bends in said lower portions of said front and rear uprights; and

   a drip collection and container structure interposed between said front and rear uprights.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said foot member includes a front stabilizing portion extending outwardly and beyond said integral bend in said lower portion of said front upright, and a rear stabilizing portion extending outwardly and beyond said integral bend in said lower portion of said rear upright.

11. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein each of said front and rear uprights includes first and second arms extending upwardly and angling outwardly from said lower portions to said upper portions.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said rear upright includes a transverse stabilizing rod interposed between its first and second arms.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, further including hook capturing means.

14. The apparatus of claim 9, further including right and left shoulders.

15. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said shoulders comprise partly arcuate rod members having interior ends terminating at and connected to both front and rear uprights.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said front and rear uprights, said foot member, and said shoulders cooperate to define a space for removable placement of a said drip collection and container structure.

17. The apparatus of claim 9, further including hinge elements in said front and rear uprights which allow said uprights to be folded toward one another.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein said hinges are disposed in said lower portion of said front and rear uprights.

19. A cooking vessel lid support, comprising:

   a wire frame assembly having front and rear upright members;

   a base member for supporting said front and rear upright members in a substantially vertical orientation; and

   a drip collection receptacle disposed between said front and rear upright members.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein said front and rear upright members each include at least one one-way hinge, such that said upright members may be collapsed inwardly toward one another.