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METHOD FOR SECURING HANDS OF TOBACCO

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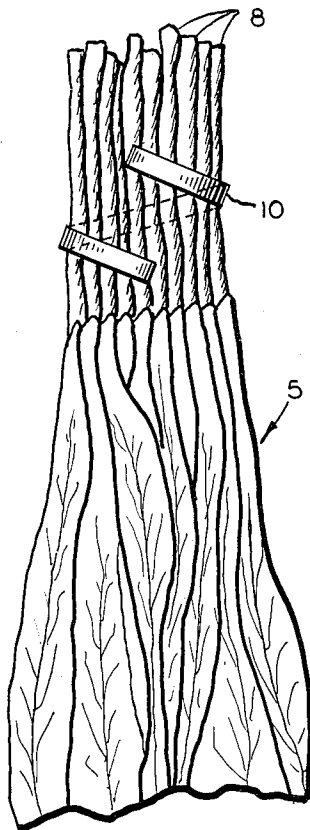


Fig. 2.

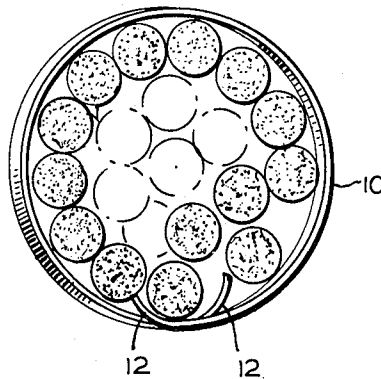
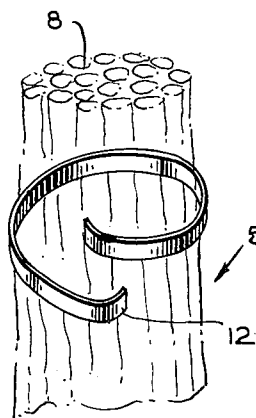
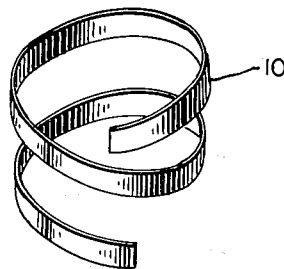


Fig. 3.



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1

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METHOD FOR SECURING HANDS OF TOBACCO

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5 Claims. (Cl. 131-1)

This invention relates to the leaf-tobacco handling art, and more particularly it relates to a method for tying a hand of leaf tobacco whereby accidental disassociation of the leaf from the hand is obviated.

Prior to the present invention it has been customary for the tobacco farmer upon pulling green tobacco to secure the leaves in bundles or hands of a predetermined number of tobacco leaves. In order to secure the hands of tobacco from disassociation while being cured it has been customary to tie the leaves securely together by the use of a rolled leaf of tobacco. For this purpose a top quality leaf is required, and since this leaf usually is discarded when the hand of tobacco is taken apart for processing in the tobacco industry, there results a large loss to the industry and to tobacco farmers generally.

The use of a tobacco leaf in tying the leaves into a hand also has had a further big disadvantage in that during the process of heat curing of the hand of tobacco there is considerable shrinkage, so much so that after curing, the individual leaves of tobacco making up the hand are often held together very loosely by the securing leaf. During the subsequent handling by the tobacco farmer in transporting to market, by the buyers at the auction sale, and by workmen at the redrying plants, many of these hands of tobacco become untied and the leaves disassociated. This detracts from the appearance of the tobacco at the market and at the redrying plants necessitates a large expenditure for labor to effect re-tying of the broken hands of tobacco.

It is, therefore, a principal object of the present invention to provide a means for securing individual hands of tobacco in a manner which will prevent accidental disassociation of the leaves making up the hands.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a method for securing together the individual leaves in a hand of tobacco whereby a constant holding pressure against the stem portion of the hand throughout the curing and treating processes will be maintained, so that no matter what amount of shrinkage takes place upon drying the hand of tobacco will be firmly secured against accidental breakage.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a means for tying tobacco hands which is inexpensive, uncomplicated and which can be placed more rapidly than would be possible by the use of a rolled leaf of tobacco for tying purposes.

Further objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying claims and drawings.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 shows a hand of tobacco secured according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is the top view showing the stem portions of the hand and the inturned end portions of the securing clip means of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a view of one of the clip securing members according to the present invention, and

2

Figure 4 is a side view of a hand of tobacco in broken lines with the securing means of the present invention shown in full lines encircling the stem portion of the tobacco hand.

Referring to the drawings in more detail, a hand of tobacco 5 which is composed of the individual tobacco leaves 8 of predetermined number is secured according to the present invention by means of a spring clip member 10 which is of sufficient length to encircle the stem portion of the tobacco hand at least once completely.

In more detail, the securing means 10 used according to the present invention comprises a circular coiled clip member of resilient material such as spring steel. While any resilient material has been found satisfactory for the purpose, a clip prepared from spring steel has been found to be most satisfactory from the standpoint of cost and availability. Due to the fact that stray clips inadvertently become commingled with the tobacco during processing, one fabricated from ferrous metal can be readily removed by the magnetic means employed in the industry for this purpose, and spring steel material is, therefore, desirable from this viewpoint.

Depending upon the grade of spring steel employed for this purpose the clip in its relaxed condition will be of circular figuration as seen in Figure 3 and of relatively small inner diameter.

The free end portions of the clip member 10 are inturned as seen at 12 in Figures 2 and 4. This construction causes a slight penetration of the clip interiorly of the hand so as to prevent its easy removal from its position on the hand of tobacco, and also prevents injury to the person of the tobacco handlers which might result from contact with the free end portions of the clip member 10 when handling the tobacco hands.

As has been previously pointed out, the present method may be employed by the tobacco farmer in making the original tie of the tobacco hand, or it may be employed at the tobacco redrying plants to resecure a hand of tobacco which has fallen apart after having been tied by conventional methods.

According to the present invention, the hands or bundles of tobacco are formed as in the past, but instead of securing the hands with a rolled leaf of tobacco or other tying means, it has been found that the use of a spring clip member 10 to hold the hand together is far superior to the conventional method.

The most satisfactory means of placing the clips around the hands of tobacco has so far been found to be manually, since the tobacco farmer or redrying plant worker can spread and place the clip 10 with one hand while holding the bundle of tobacco in the other hand. The clip may be opened by means of the thumb and first two fingers of one hand sufficiently to be placed around the stem portion of the tobacco hand. This is a very rapid operation, once the technique is developed, and actually has been found to speed up the process of tobacco tying.

Other means for placing the clip members on the hand of tobacco may be envisioned, and the present invention is not intended to be limited to the precise disclosure, but is limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A hand of tobacco comprising a plurality of leaves of tobacco having their stem ends substantially parallel and in juxtaposition to each other in bunched formation, a clip of flat spring material having at least one and not more than two coils surrounding said stem ends and maintaining them in juxtaposition, the ends of said clip being in substantially superposed relationship, and the free ends of the clip being inturned whereby they may extend between adjacent stem ends to provide a gripping effect on said stems and to avoid injury of the hands of an operator handling the hand of tobacco.

3

2. A hand of tobacco comprising a plurality of leaves of tobacco having their stem ends substantially parallel and in juxtaposition to each other in bunched formation, a clip of flat spring material having at least one coil surrounding said stem ends and maintaining them in juxtaposition, the ends of said clip being in substantially superposed relationship, and the free ends of the clip being intumed whereby they may extend between adjacent stem ends to provide a clipping effect on said stems and to avoid injury of the hands of an operator handling the hand of tobacco.

3. A hand of tobacco comprising a plurality of leaves of tobacco having their stem ends substantially parallel and in juxtaposition to each other in bunched formation, a clip of flat spring material having at least one coil surrounding said stem ends and maintaining them in juxtaposition, the ends of said clip being in substantially superposed relationship, and at least one of the free ends of the clip being intumed whereby it may extend between adjacent stem ends to provide a gripping effect on said stems and to avoid injury of the hands of an operator handling the hand of tobacco.

4. The method of forming a hand of tobacco comprising steps of: assembling tobacco leaves with their stems in substantially parallel and bunched relationship, providing a clip of spring material having at least one coil, expanding said clip, applying one end thereof around a portion of said stems, placing said end of said clip between the substantially parallel stems, passing an intermediate portion of the clip in a direction toward an end of the bunched leaves and laterally from said first portion around another portion of said stems, and positioning the remainder of said clip toward the same end of said bunched leaves and in spaced relation from the first portion of said clip, and placing the other end of said clip between the substantially parallel stems, said clip being

4

maintained in position on said stems due to the inherent resiliency of said clip.

5. A method of forming a hand of tobacco comprising steps of: assembling tobacco leaves with their stems in substantially parallel and bunched relationship, providing a clip of spring material having at least one coil, expanding said clip, applying one end thereof around a portion of said stems, passing an intermediate portion of the clip in a direction toward an end of the bunched leaves and laterally from said first portion around another portion of said stems, and positioning the remainder of said clip toward the same end of said bunched leaves and in spaced relationship from the first portion of said clip and placing the other end of said clip against adjacent stems, said clip being maintained in position on said stems due to the inherent resiliency of said clip, at least one of said clip ends extending to a position between substantially parallel stems.

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