

June 30, 1970

R. M. COORS

3,517,604

COMBINED TEAPOT COVER AND TEA BAG HOLDER

Filed Sept. 20, 1968

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1

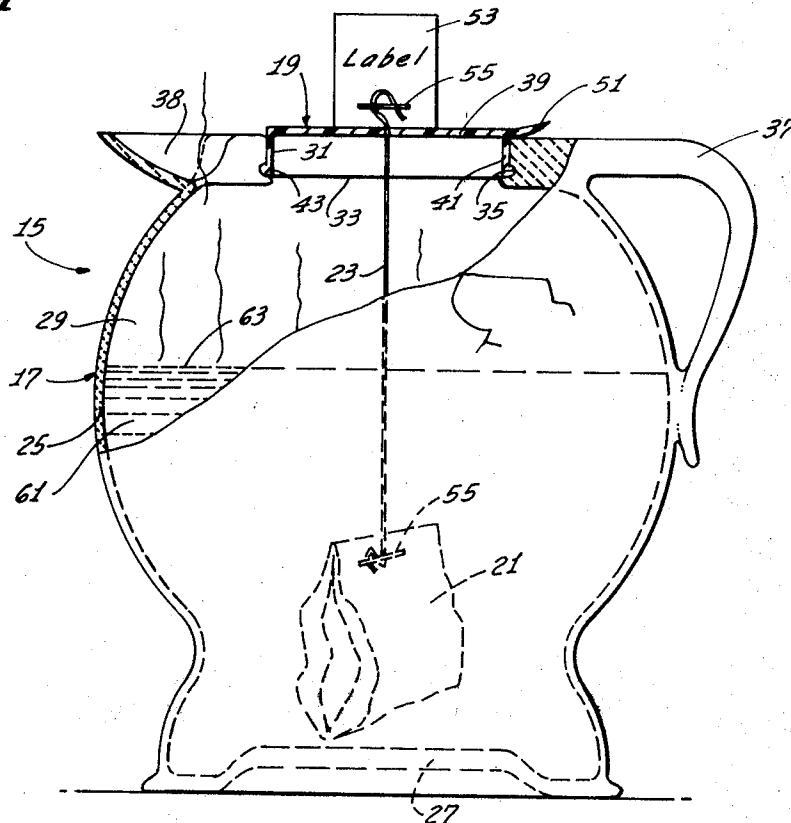


Fig. 2

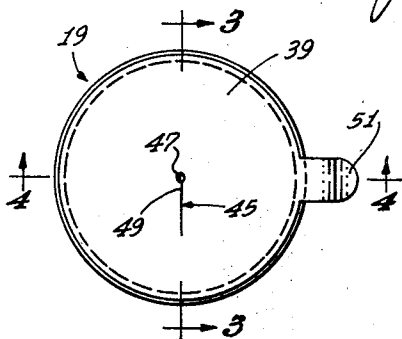


Fig. 3

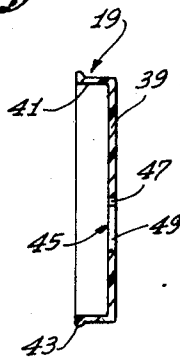


Fig. 4

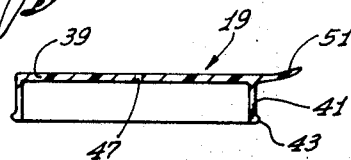


Fig. 5

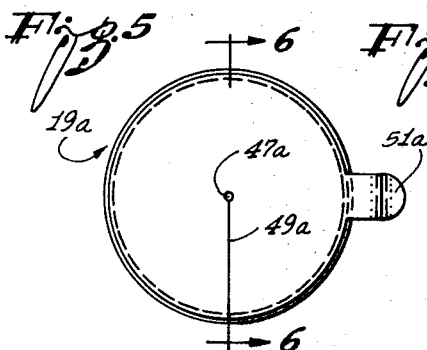
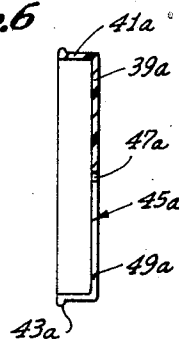
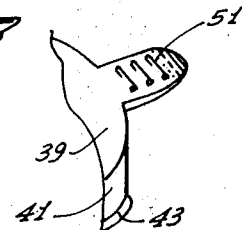


Fig. 6



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COMBINED TEAPOT COVER AND TEA BAG HOLDER

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Fig. 8

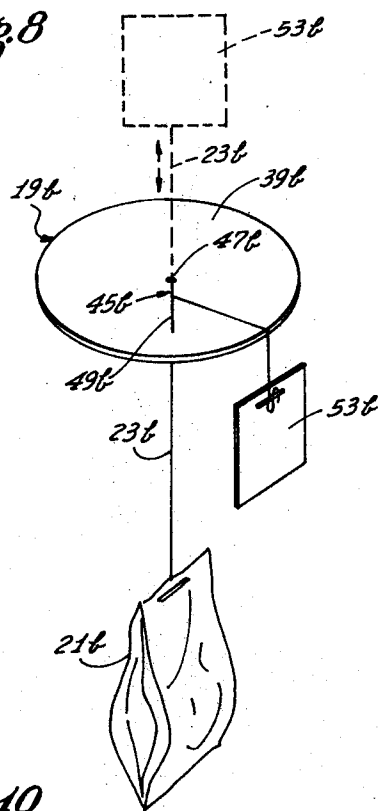


Fig. 9

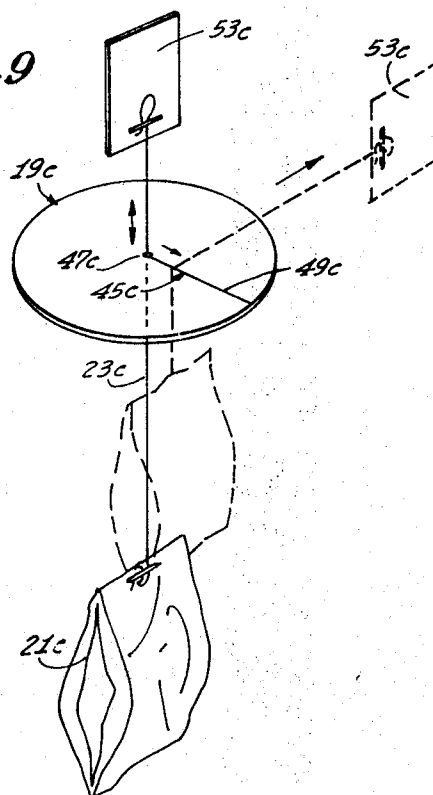


Fig. 10

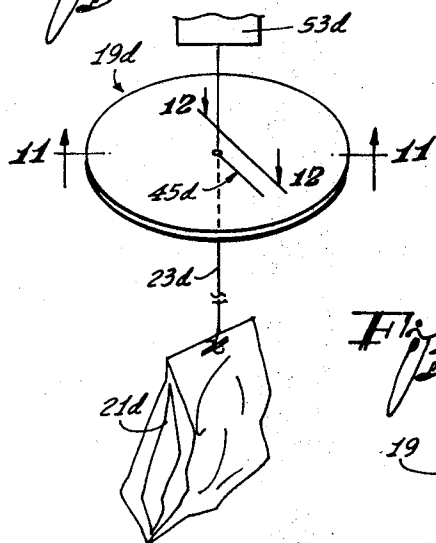


Fig. 11

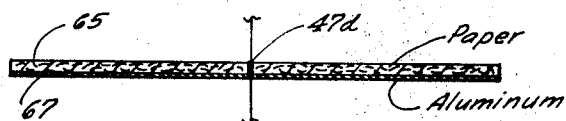


Fig. 13

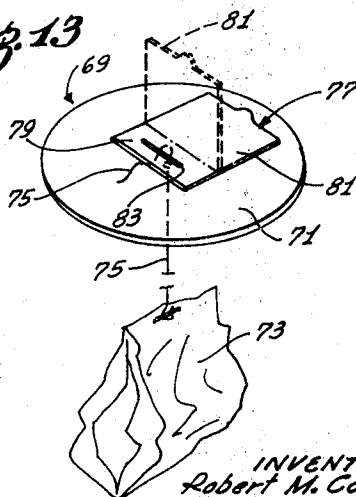
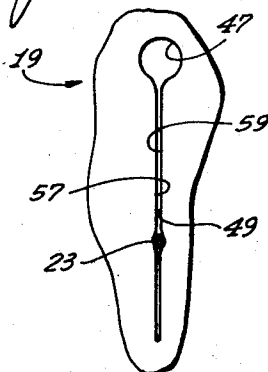


Fig. 12



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3,517,604

COMBINED TEAPOT COVER AND TEA BAG HOLDER

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U.S. Cl. 99-323

10 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This disclosure describes a teapot and a cover therefor. The cover has an aperture extending therethrough and the aperture has a relatively wide section and a relatively narrow section. The wide section is sufficiently wide to permit the string from a tea bag to be slidably received therein and the narrow portion is sufficiently narrow so as to clampingly retain the tea bag string when the tea bag string is moved into the narrow section. Thus, with the cover in place on the teapot and a tea bag string in the aperture, the user may first elevate the tea bag out of the water when the tea has completely brewed, and then move the string into the narrow section to retain the tea bag in the elevated position.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

As is well known, the conventional teapot typically includes a teapot and a cover. Tea can be brewed with a conventional teapot by pouring hot water over one or more tea bags in the teapot with the string from the tea bags extending through an opening in the teapot.

When the tea is brewed to the satisfaction of the user, the tea bag is removed by pulling on the tea bag string to lift the tea bag out of the pot. The tea bag is, of course, wet and is subject to dripping for a prolonged period. This is undesirable in that drops from the tea bag may stain the table, tablecloth, or clothes of the user. In addition, it is often difficult to find a suitable place to deposit the tea bag once it is removed from the tea pot.

In an attempt to solve this problem, it has been proposed to form an aperture in the cover of the teapot through which the string from the tea bag can extend. With this construction, when the tea has brewed to the satisfaction of the user, the tea bag can be elevated out of the water in the teapot. The tea bag is then retained in this elevated position by winding of the tea bag string around a suitable knob formed on the teapot. Although this arrangement eliminates the need for removing the tea bag from the teapot, it does involve a winding or tying process. In addition, if the winding operation is not carried out promptly, the weight of the moist tea bag may be sufficient to allow gravity return of the tea bag into the tea within the pot.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The teapot construction of this invention eliminates the need for removing the tea bag from the teapot when the tea has been satisfactorily brewed. This desirable result is accomplished by elevating the tea bag out of the water in the teapot to a position immediately beneath the cover of the teapot. The tea bag is retained in this elevated position by simple lateral movement of the tea bag string and no winding or tying of the string is necessary. The tea bag retaining means provides a positive lock of sufficient strength so that the weight of the moist tea bag is insufficient to return the tea bag to the tea within the pot.

These advantageous results can be embodied in a teapot cover which has an aperture therein. The aperture has a relatively wide section and a relatively narrow sec-

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tion and is adapted to cooperate with a tea bag having the usual elongated flexible element or string affixed thereto. The cover is removably mountable on a teapot body which may include a tea making chamber and an opening adjacent the upper end of the chamber.

The elongated element has a cross section which is sized to be slidably receivable in the relatively wide section of the aperture to permit movement of the tea bag downwardly into the tea making chamber an elevation thereof upwardly to an elevated position above the liquid level in the chamber. The relatively narrow section of the aperture is sufficiently wide to permit lateral movement of the flexible element relative to the cover. The present invention provides means responsive to such lateral movement of the flexible element when the tea bag is in the elevated position to automatically retain the tea bag in the elevated position. Preferably such means includes the elongated element and the relatively narrow section of the aperture. More particularly, the elongated element is preferably sufficiently wider than the relatively narrow section of the aperture so that the cover grips and retains the elongated element when the elongated element is moved into the relatively narrow section of the aperture. Thus, by movement of the elongated element from the wide section to the narrow section of the aperture with the tea bag in the elevated position, the cover is caused to retain the tea bag in the elevated position.

A cover embodying the concepts of this invention may be disposable or reusable. If the cover is to be reusable, or if the tea bag is to be installed by the user, it is preferred to extend the aperture all the way to the periphery of the cover to facilitate insertion and removal of the elongated element. Although the tea pot cover may be permanently affixed to the teapot body, it is preferred to utilize a cover which is removably mountable on the teapot body.

Another feature of the present invention involves the attachment of a tea bag to a teapot cover. According to this aspect of the invention, a tea bag is attached to a teapot cover by an elongated element and a handle or removal tab is conveniently attached to the teapot cover. The entire unit is disposable after a single usage.

The invention, both as to its organization and method of operation together with further features and advantages thereof may best be understood by reference to the following description taken in connection with the accompanying illustrative drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevational view partially in section of one form of teapot constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention.

FIG. 2 is a top plan view of one form of teapot cover constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention.

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken along line 4—4 of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 is a top plan view of a second form of teapot cover constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention.

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken along the line 6—6 of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary perspective view illustrating a cover portion common to both of the covers of FIGS. 2 and 5.

FIGS. 8-10 are perspective views of other forms of teapot covers with tea bags attached thereto. In FIGS. 8 and 9 the string and tag are shown in two positions to illustrate the operation of the device.

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FIG. 11 is an enlarged sectional view taken along line 11—11 of FIG. 10.

FIG. 12 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of the aperture through the cover illustrating how the relatively narrow section of the aperture retains the elongated element.

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of another form of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the drawings and in particular to FIG. 1 thereof, reference numeral 15 designates a teapot constructed in accordance with the teachings of this invention. The teapot 15 generally includes a teapot body 17, a teapot cover 19 and a tea bag 21 attached to the cover by an elongated flexible element in the form of a string or strand 23. Although the teapot body 17 may be of various sizes and shapes, in the embodiment illustrated, the teapot body has a peripheral wall 25 and a bottom wall 27 which defines a tea making chamber 29.

The peripheral wall 25 has an upper inner surface 31 which defines an opening 33 at the upper end of the tea making chamber 29. The surface 31 is formed with an annular groove 35 to permit releasably attaching the cover 19 to the teapot body 17. The teapot body 17 also has a suitable handle 37 integral with the peripheral wall 25 and a pouring spout 38.

The cover 19 is illustrated in detail in FIGS. 2-4. The cover 19 is preferably integrally molded from a suitable plastic material and includes an end wall 39 and an annular peripheral wall or attachment flange 41. An annular rib 43 is formed integrally with the peripheral wall 41 and projects radially outwardly therefrom. The outside diameter of the peripheral wall 41 is substantially equal to the diameter of the opening 33 with the outside diameter of the peripheral wall across the rib 43 being slightly larger than the diameter of the opening 33. With this arrangement, the peripheral wall 41 can be forced into the opening 33. As the cover 19 is pushed downwardly, the rib 43 will eventually come into registry with, and snap into, the groove 25 to releasably attach the cover 19 to the teapot body 17. With the cover 19 thus mounted on the teapot body 17, the end wall 39 thereof closes the opening 33.

The end wall 39 has an aperture 45 formed therein. The aperture 45 has a wide section 47 and a relatively narrow section 49. Although various arrangements of the aperture 45 can be utilized, in the embodiment illustrated the wide section 47 is located centrally of the end wall 39 and the narrow section 49 extends radially outwardly from the wide section. The wide section 47 in the embodiment illustrated is in the form of a circular hole and the narrow section 49 is generally in the form of an elongated slit or slot.

The cover 19 also has a gripping portion 51 (FIGS. 1, 2, 4 and 7) which is integral with the walls 39 and 41 and projects generally radially therefrom at the intersection of these walls. The gripping portion 51 can be conveniently gripped by the user to facilitate handling of the cover 19. With the cover 19 mounted on the teapot body 17, the gripping portion 51 is exposed above the upper surface of the teapot body so that it can be easily grasped for removal of the cover.

The tea bag 21 may be of conventional construction. Thus, the tea bag 21 is constructed of water pervious paper and completely encases a quantity of tea. The tea bag 21 is attached to a tab 53 by the string 23. The string 23 may be attached to the tea bag 21 and the tab 53 by any suitable means such as staples 55.

The diameter or the largest cross sectional dimension of the wide section 47 of the aperture 45 is larger than the diameter or largest cross sectional dimension of the string 23. Thus, the string 23 is freely slidable within the wide section 47. However, the narrow section 45 is nar-

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rower than the diameter of the string 23. Thus, the string 23 will be gripped by the cover 19 when the string 23 is moved into the narrow section 49.

As best seen in FIG. 12, the cover 19 has generally opposed edges 57 and 59 which are spaced very slightly and which form the narrow section 49. The diameter of the string 23 is greater than the normal spacing between the edges 57 and 59 so that when the string 23 is forced therebetween, the string and/or the edges deform and the edges 57 and 59 tightly grip the string. The gripping force is sufficient to retain the tea bag 21 in a preselected position even when the tea bag is soaked.

In operation of the device, the tea making chamber 29 of the teapot body 17 is filled or partially filled with hot water 61 following which the cover 19 is mounted on the teapot body to close the opening 33 thereof. With the tea bag 21 already installed on the cover 19, and with the string 23 in the wide section 47, the tea bag will gravitate into the water 61 and assume the position shown in FIG. 1.

When the tea has been brewed to the satisfaction of the user, he merely grasps the tag 53 and pulls upwardly to move the string 23 and the tea bag 21 upwardly to an elevated position in which the tea bag 21 is above the upper surface 63 of the water 61. Because the wide section 47 is wider than the string 23, such movement of the string and tea bag 21 is easily accomplished. The user then pulls the string 23 laterally with sufficient force to urge the string between the edges 57 and 59. No tying operation is required. The edges 57 and 59 grip the string 53 with sufficient force to retain the soaked tea bag 51 in the elevated position. Thus, the cover 19 serves not only as a cover, but also as a tea bag holder. When all of the tea has been consumed, the cover 19 and the tea bag 21 may be removed by pulling upwardly on the gripping portion 51.

In the embodiment illustrated, the string 23 is of substantially constant diameter throughout its length. It should be understood, however, that the string may be formed with an enlarged section which would lie adjacent the aperture 45 in the elevated position of the tea bag 21. Such enlarged section should be narrower than the wide section 47 so that it can pass therethrough but wider than the spacing between the edges 57 and 59. With this arrangement, the wide section can be forced between the edges 57 and 59, or it may be elevated thereabove and caused to rest on the upper surface of the cover 19 immediately above the narrow section 49. Thus, the enlarged section might rest on the cover 19 or be gripped by the edges 57. In either event, only a simple short lateral movement of the string 23 is required to lock the tea bag 21 in the elevated position.

FIGS. 5 and 6 illustrate a cover 19a which is identical to the cover 19 in every way not expressly alluded to herein. Portions of the cover 19a corresponding to portions of the cover 19 are designated by corresponding reference characters followed by the letter a.

The cover 19a is identical to the cover 19 except that the narrow section 49a extends from the wide section 47a radially outwardly through the end wall 39a and the peripheral wall 41a and terminates at the periphery of the cover. It can be seen that the narrow portion 49 terminates radially outwardly within the end wall 39 and does not extend to the periphery of the cover 19. The advantage of the cover 19a shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 is that a string from a tea bag can be easily inserted and removed therefrom by the user, whereas the cover 19 of FIGS. 2-4 is particularly adapted for factory installation of the string 23.

FIG. 8 illustrates a cover 19b which is identical to the cover 19 except that the former has no peripheral wall. Portions of the device illustrated in FIG. 8 corresponding to portions of the device shown in FIGS. 1-4 are designated with corresponding reference characters followed

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by the letter *b*. The cover 19*b* has an end wall 39*b* which has an aperture 45*b* formed therein.

The cover 19*b* may be constructed of moisture repellant paper and the upper surface thereof may contain advertising material. The cover 19*b* is preferably sized to close the opening of the teapot and rest on the top of the teapot. In such a position the cover 19*b* may be considered to be mounted on the teapot. The cover 19*b* operates as described above to retain a string 23*b* and a tea bag 21*b* in an elevated position. In FIG. 8, the dashed line illustration of the string 23 shows the latter in the wide section 47 while the full line illustration depicts the string in the narrow section 49.

FIG. 9 illustrates another form of cover 19*c* which is identical to the cover 19*b* except that the aperture 45*c* extends continuously to the periphery of the cover. Portions illustrated in FIG. 9 corresponding to structure shown in FIGS. 1-4 is designated with corresponding reference characters followed by the letter *c*. The aperture 45*c* has a wide section 47*c* and a narrow section 49*c* which extends from the wide section radially outwardly to the periphery of the cover 19*c*. It will be noted that the aperture 45*b* terminates radially inwardly from the periphery of the cover 19*b* (FIG. 8).

FIGS. 10 and 11 shows a cover 19*d* which is also similar to the cover 19*b* and corresponding portions are designated with corresponding reference characters followed by the letter *d*. The cover 19*d* is identical to the cover 19*b* except that the former is of laminated construction and includes, for example, a layer 65 of paper and a layer 67 of aluminum foil. The layers 65 and 67 are preferably coextensive and may be secured together in any suitable manner such as an adhesive. The aperture 45*d* extends through both of the layers 65 and 67 and is identical to the aperture 45*b*. If desired, the layer 65 of paper may be impregnated with a suitable material.

FIG. 13 illustrates a new form of cover 69 which includes an end wall 71 of a suitable material. A tea bag 73 is attached by a string 75 to the end wall 71. Preferably, the string extends through the end wall 71 and terminates on the upper face of the end wall. A tag 77 preferably constructed of paper includes an attachment section 79 and a gripping section 81 hingedly interconnected. The attachment section 79 is suitably secured to the end wall 71 by a staple 83. The string 75 is clamped between the upper surface of the end wall 71 and the lower surface of the attachment section 79 by the staple 83. In this manner, the tea bag 73 is fixedly attached to the end wall 71. The gripping section 81 is pivotable between the down position shown in full lines in FIG. 13 and an elevated position shown in dashed lines. With the gripping section in the elevated position, the user may grasp same to move the cover 69.

The construction shown in FIG. 3 may be utilized with any conventional teapot body. Thus, the end wall 71 is sized to close the opening of the teapot and be supported by the teapot. With the end wall 71 thus supported, the tea bag 73 which is suspended from the string 75 can extend into the water within the tea making chamber of the teapot. When the tea has been brewed to the satisfaction of the user, he merely removes the cover 69 with the tea bag 73 by lifting upwardly on the gripping section 81.

Although exemplary embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, many changes, modifications and substitutions may be made by one having ordinary skill in the art without necessarily departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. In a cover and tea bag holder for use with a teapot having an opening therein above a tea making chamber, the combination of:

a teapot cover mountable on the teapot to at least partially close the opening therein, said teapot cover having an aperture therein;

a tea bag;

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an elongated element attached to said tea bag and slidably receivable in said aperture to permit movement of said tea bag downwardly into the chamber and elevation thereof upwardly to an elevated position above the liquid level in the chamber, said aperture being shaped to permit generally lateral movement of said element relative to said teapot cover when the tea bag is in the elevated position; and

means responsive to lateral movement of said element in said aperture relative to said cover when said tea bag is in said elevated position to automatically retain said tea bag in said elevated position.

2. In a cover and tea bag holder for use with a teapot having an opening therein above a tea making chamber, the combination of:

a teapot cover mountable on the teapot to at least partially close the opening therein, said teapot cover having an aperture therein, said aperture having a relatively wide section and a relatively narrow section;

a tea bag;

an elongated element attached to said tea bag, said elongated element being sized to be slidably receivable in said relatively wide section of said aperture to permit movement of said tea bag downwardly into said chamber and elevation thereof upwardly to an elevated position above the liquid level in the chamber; and

said elongated element being sufficiently wider than said relatively narrow section of said aperture so that said cover grips and retains said elongated element when said elongated element is in said relatively narrow section of said aperture whereby movement of said elongated element from said wide section to said narrow section with the tea bag in the elevated position causes said cover to retain the tea bag in the elevated position.

3. The combination as defined in claim 2 wherein said aperture extends continuously to the periphery of the cover to facilitate insertion of the elongated element therein.

4. A combination as defined in claim 2 wherein said narrow section of said aperture is in the form of an elongated slit.

5. In a teapot for use with a tea bag having a substantially flexible strand affixed thereto, the combination of: a teapot body defining a tea making chamber, said teapot body having an opening therein adjacent the upper end thereof for providing access to said chamber;

a cover mountable on said teapot for selectively opening and closing said opening;

said cover having an aperture therein, said aperture having a relatively wide section and a relatively narrow section;

said wide section of said aperture being of sufficient size to slidably receive the strand to permit movement of the tea bag downwardly into said chamber and elevation thereof upwardly to an elevated position above the liquid level in said chamber; and

said relatively narrow section of said aperture being narrower than a predetermined section of the strand which is adjacent the aperture in the elevated position whereby movement of the strand from the wide section to the narrow section with the tea bag in the elevated position causes the cover to retain the strand with the tea bag in the elevated position.

6. A combination as defined in claim 5 including interlockable means on said cover and said teapot for removably mounting the cover on the teapot with the cover closing the opening thereof.

7. A combination as defined in claim 5 wherein said cover includes an end wall for closing the opening and a peripheral wall and said teapot body includes a surface defining said opening, said opening being sized to receive the peripheral flange of the cover, the combination also including interlocking means on said flange and said sur-

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face for removably mounting the cover on the teapot with the flange projecting into said opening.

8. A cover as defined in claim 5 wherein said relatively wide section of said aperture is located generally centrally in said cover and said relatively narrow section includes a narrow slit in said cover extending generally radially of the wide section.

9. In a cover and tea bag holder for use with a teapot having an opening therein above a tea making chamber, the combination of:

- a teapot cover mountable on the teapot to at least partially close the opening therein;
- a tea bag;
- an elongated at least substantially flexible element attached to said tea bag and to said cover to thereby affix said tea bag to said cover;
- a tag including an attachment section, a gripping section and means for hingedly joining said attachment section and said gripping section; and

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means for attaching said attachment section to said cover with said gripping section being pivotable to facilitate grasping thereof by a user.

10. A combination as defined in claim 9 wherein said elongated element projects through said cover and is clamped between said cover and said attachment section.

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