Nov. 5, 1940. P. H. WOLF 2,220,190

INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNICATING PLURALITY COMPARTMENT CONTAINER

Filed Feb. 20, 1939

FIG. 1

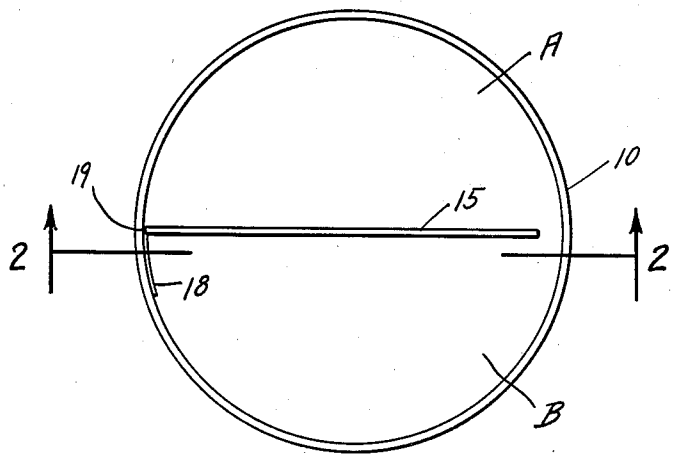
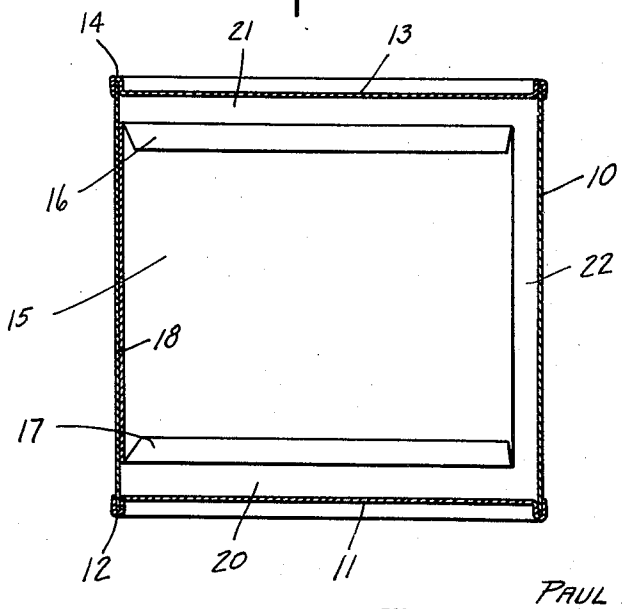


FIG. 2



INVENTOR.
PAUL H. WOLF.

BY Lockwood, Goldsmith & Galt,
ATTORNEYS.

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INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNICATING PLURALITY COMPARTMENT CONTAINER

Paul H. Wolf, Morristown, Ind.

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2 Claims. (Cl. 220—22)

This invention relates to the method of and a container arrangement for the packaging of whole fruit and the like.

This application is a continuation-in-part of the copending application, Serial No. 212,664, filed June 9, 1938.

The chief object of the invention is to provide a container arrangement which may be filled with whole fruit and the like which, by means of container sustained partition means, is adapted to maintain the several fruits in segregated relation.

The chief feature of the inventiton consists in providing a container with partition means maintained in approximately predetermined relation but which is capable of limited movement whereby the whole fruits and the like are segregated and maintained in that relation, thereby preventing mutilation and deformation thereof until ready for use. Such partition means is also effective in the filling and emptying of the container all as hereinafter more fully pointed out.

Other objects and feataures of the invention will be set forth hereinafter.

The full nature of the invention will be understood from the accompanying drawing and the following description and claims:

In the drawing Fig. 1 is a top plan view of the container embodying the invention and prior to filling and capping thereof.

Fig. 2 is a vertical sectional view taken on line 2—2 of Fig. 1 and in the direction of the arrows and of a sealed container, the contents not being illustrated therein.

In the drawing 10 indicates a tubular body portion and 11 the bottom of a can, the two having a crimped connection 12, conventional to food containing cans or containers. When filled, the can is provided with a similar end closure 13 which has a similar connection 14, the same constituting the seal for the can.

In this disclosure there is illustrated and there will be described, the simplest form of the invention. A dividing plate 15 may, if desired, have its upper and lower edges partially reenforced and protected by a downturned flap 16 and an upturned flap 17. The free side edge, although not illustrated herein, may be similarly provided. Portions 16 and 17 or either of them may be omitted.

The metal 15 is extended as at 18 and forms a flap or flange that is suitably secured as by spot-welding, or the like, to the interior of the tubular body portion 10. The connecting portion 19 constitutes a hinge, as it were, permitting the dividing plate to have limited swinging movement for the purpose hereinafter to be described.

It will be apparent from the aforesaid that there is a space, indicated by the numeral 20, between the bottom end closure 11 and the bottom edge of the dividing plate. Similarly, there is a space 21 between the top edge of the dividing plate and the top 13 of the container. Also, there is a space 22 between the free side edge of the dividing plate and the adjacent side of the tubular container or body portion 10.

Herein, see Fig. 2, this dividing plate extends diametrically across from one portion of the side wall of the can to the other portion thereof but terminates short of meeting engagement. This dividing plate, as stated, if not inherently resilient, which it usually is, although not necessarily so, does have hinging movement about the axis of the hinge portion 19.

In the packaging of the fruit, reference will be had to tomatoes. A can about 3½" in diameter and of like height, is adapted to receive two whole tomatoes. Tomatoes after being properly and preliminarily processed, are inserted in the two compartments, designated by the letters A and B—see Fig. 1—and the container is filled with tomato juice or other compatible liquid. In the case of other fruits, this liquid may be the sweetened fruit juice. Such liquids are termed liquors.

In the event the tomatoes are not of equal size and one tomato be slightly larger than the other and not readily insertable into the compartment, the packer by engaging the upper edge of the divider plate may swing the same to one side or the other a sufficient amount to receive the tomato and without deformation of the latter. Naturally, the divider plate is then released from the constraint and tends to assume normal division position. Then the other tomato is placed in the other compartment and slight pressure may be exerted in the opposite direction without deforming the fruit to permit ready insertion of the fruit in the other compartment. Thereafter the liquid or juice is added, the can mechanically sealed and then the product in the can suitably processed, if desired, according to well known canning practice.

The division plate prevents the fruit from having material movement during the handling of the can between the time it is filled until it is emptied. Thus the wholeness or unity of the fruit is maintained until the housewife or cook opens the can. The can may be opened in the usual manner by cutting out the top completely

or almost completely and then turning the severed portion upwardly. Either end may be so effected with the present embodiment of the invention. When this is performed the juice may be poured off and retained and used as an appetizer, there being sufficient juice for two persons in a can of this character and size. No claim is made for retaining the solid contents of the can and draining therefrom while the solid contents are therein, the juice or liquid from the can since that is an old and well known expedient and has been utilized as long as canned fruits, vegetables and the like have been commercially available.

The division plate, however, now becomes of fundamental desirability for the following reason: Each compartment of the can contains a whole fruit of such size that it has very limited movement. The housewife's or cook's problem therefore, is to remove the whole fruit from the can without deforming or mutilating the same. It, of course, will be understood slight pressure can be applied to the whole fruit without permanently deforming the same so that the housewife by engaging the edge of the dividing plate may move the same slightly to one side or the other, as desired, and thereupon the removal of fruit in the compartment, that is thus enlarged by this dividing plate movement, may be readily effected without the use of any instrument since the fruit will readily slide out from the can, the fingers in the meantime retaining the other fruit in the can, at the same time holding or constraining the partition as aforesaid. When one fruit has been removed, the operation is reversed and the other fruit is similarly removed. Thus there is provided tomatoes, for example, and entirely whole which are suitable for salad purposes and may be utilized for same.

If the can preliminary to opening has been cooled, the juice or liquid poured therefrom may be served as a chilled appetizer while the cold tomatoes, for example, may be used for chilled salad purposes and at the same meal.

While the invention has been described in great detail and a specific form thereof has been illustrated, the same is to be considered illustrative only and various modifications, some of which have been pointed out hereinbefore as well as others which will readily suggest themselves to persons skilled in this art, all are considered within the broad scope of this invention, as defined by the appended claims, subject, however, to the admission that the division of a container into a plurality of compartments is old in the art but the same has been effected by providing division means rigidly connected to the container interior and being incapable of slight relative movement for the purpose described herein.

The invention claimed is:

1. A solids and liquid packaging container adapted for whole fruit and the like packing including a tubular body portion having closed ends, a dividing plate positioned therein and hingedly secured at one edge to the container and terminating at other edges adjacent to and substantially parallel with the opposite side and ends respectively of the container and free therefrom at all other edges to form a plurality of compartments in the container permitting liquid flow between compartments and preventing solids passing therebetween, said dividing plate being capable of slight swinging and bodily movement when forcibly constrained and about the plate and container connection as a hinge axis for compartment volume variation for solids packing and unpacking and solids form retention when packaged.

2. A container arrangement as defined by claim 1 characterized by the dividing plate being of semi-flexible and metallic character and including a portion angular of the body portion of the plate for container anchorage purposes, the junction of the body and angular portions constituting the hinge connection and including the hinge axis.

PAUL H. WOLF.