

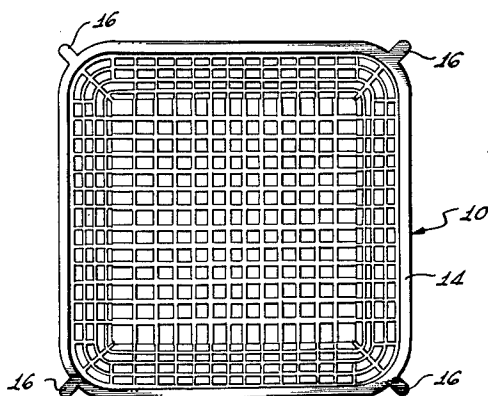
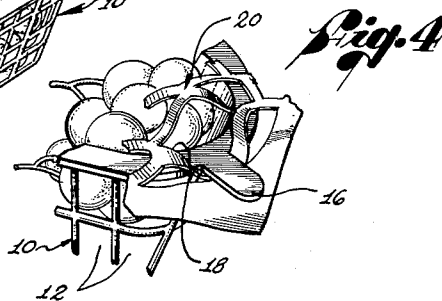
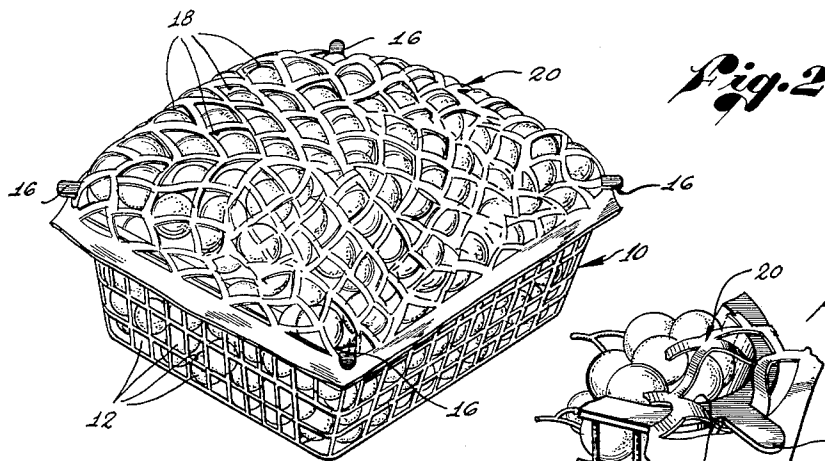
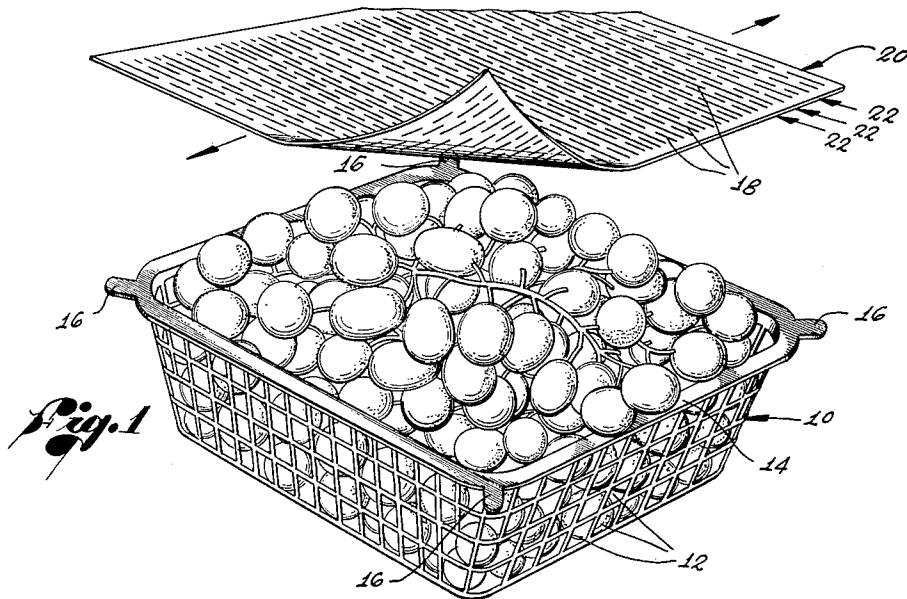
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PRODUCE PACKAGING MEANS

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PRODUCE PACKAGING MEANS

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2 Claims. (Cl. 99—171)

This invention deals generally with the packaging of produce for retail sale and has as its principal object to provide an improved means for attaching a transparent cover film to produce baskets, such as so-called "berry baskets," to contain the produce therein.

A more specific object of the invention is to provide a produce basket and cover film combination in which the film is quickly and simply attached to the basket by engaging extending prongs on the basket in slits formed in the wrapper.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved basket and cover film combination of the character described in which slits in the film allow the latter to stretch into conformance with produce in the basket and in which this stretching of the film acts to retain the latter in engagement with the prongs of the basket.

A further object of the invention is to provide an improved produce basket and film combination which provides an inexpensive produce package having an extremely unique and pleasing appearance.

Other objects, advantages and features of the invention will become apparent as the description proceeds.

The invention will be best understood from the following detailed description thereof, taken in connection with the annexed drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 illustrates the present basket and film prior to application of the film to the basket;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view on slightly reduced scale illustrating the film applied to the basket;

FIG. 3 is a plan view of the basket on reduced scale; and

FIG. 4 is an enlarged detail illustrating how the film is engaged with the basket prongs.

In these drawings, the numeral 10 denotes a molded, plastic produce basket of the type which is commonly used to package grapes, berries, and the like for retail sale. The basket has a ribbed construction which provides it with a multiplicity of ventilation openings 12. Extending about the open top of the basket is an outwardly directed rim 14. As shown, the basket and its rim have a generally square shape and rounded corners.

Projecting from each corner of the basket, in the plane of the rim 14, is a prong or tab 16. These prongs have rounded outer ends and are designed to engage in slits 18 in a transparent cover film 20, which is applied over the open top of the basket for confining articles of produce therein.

Film 20 comprises a rectangular sheet of thin pliable transparent plastic. The slits 18 are arranged in generally straight parallel rows 22 extending lengthwise of the film. The slits in each row are arranged in spaced, collinear fashion. The slits in alternate rows are aligned in the transverse direction of the rows while the slits in adjacent rows are offset lengthwise of the rows, as shown. This slitting arrangement is similar to that described in copending application Serial No. 809,391, filed April 28,

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1959, and entitled Wrapper for Packaged Produce, and affords the film 20 with the ability to stretch or expand in the transverse directions of the rows of slits.

The longest dimension of the film 20, measured parallel to the rows 22, is made somewhat greater than the length of one side of the open top of the basket 10. The smaller dimension of the film 20 is made on the order of this length.

When filled, the contents of the basket 10 generally project above the upper rim of the basket, as shown. The film 20 is applied to the basket, to confine the produce therein, by orienting the film with its edges parallel to the sides of the basket. The corners of the film are then drawn downwardly over the corners of the basket to engage the basket prongs 16 in slits of the film. The film is thereby stretched over the produce in the basket and the film slits widen to form ventilation openings and to expose the basket contents to view. This stretching of the film causes the latter to conform to or mold itself about the articles of produce in the basket thereby providing the neat and unique produce package illustrated. It will be observed that the tension forces developed in the film during this stretching aid in keeping the prongs 16 engaged in the film slits so that the film is not prone to accidental separation from the basket.

It will be immediately obvious that the features of this invention may be employed on baskets having shapes other than square, as illustrated. The basket may be rectangular, for example, or circular. In this latter case, the wrapper 20 is preferably slit with a circular pattern, as disclosed in the aforementioned copending application.

It will be apparent, therefore, that the produce basket and wrapper combination hereinbefore described and illustrated is fully capable of attaining the objects and advantages preliminarily set forth.

What is claimed is:

1. A produce package comprising:

a rectangular produce basket having an open top encircled by a rim on the basket and containing a mound of produce rising above said rim,

a prong at each corner of the basket extending outwardly from said rim,

a thin, rectangular, pliable plastic film having generally straight and parallel rows of spaced slits, the slits in alternate rows being approximately aligned in a transverse direction of said rows and the slits in adjacent rows being offset in the lengthwise direction of said rows, whereby said film can be stretched in a transverse direction of said rows, said film being stretched over and into conforming relation to the portion of said produce mound which rises above said rim and said prongs being engaged with slits, respectively, at the corners of said film after the latter has been so stretched to retain the stretched film on the basket,

said slits being widened by said stretching of the film to form ventilation openings and expose said produce to view, and

the tension created in said film by said stretching thereof retaining the film in engagement with said prongs.

2. A produce package comprising:

a rectangular produce basket having an open top en-

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circled by a rim on the basket and containing a mound of produce rising above said rim,
 a generally flat prong at each corner of the basket extending diagonally outwardly from said rim approximately in the plane of the open top of the basket,
 a thin, rectangular, pliable plastic film having generally straight and parallel rows of spaced slits, the slits in alternate rows being approximately aligned in a transverse direction of said rows and the slits in adjacent rows being offset in the lengthwise direction of said rows, whereby said film can be stretched in a transverse direction of said rows, said film being stretched over and into conforming relation to the portion of said produce mound which rises above said rim and said prongs being engaged with slits, respectively, at the corners of said film after the latter has been so stretched to retain the stretched film on the basket,

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said slits being widened by said stretching of the film to form ventilation openings and expose said produce to view, and
 the tension created in said film by said stretching thereof retaining the film in engagement with said prongs.

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