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Kaufman et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2009/0250479 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 8, 2009**(54) **METHOD & DEVICE FOR ENHANCING
AROMA FROM BEVERAGE CUP**(52) **U.S. Cl. 220/713**(76) Inventors: **Larry Kaufman**, Honolulu, HI
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HONOLULU, HI 96821 (US)(21) Appl. No.: **12/099,440**(22) Filed: **Apr. 8, 2008****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
A47G 19/22 (2006.01)(57) **ABSTRACT**

An aroma enhancing method and device for use when drinking from a beverage cup has a receptacle member with a porous surface for holding a sample of fresh beverage material therein, and a mounting member for mounting on or near the rim of the beverage cup in proximity to the user's nose to smell the aroma of the fresh beverage material when sipping a liquid beverage from the cup. A first embodiment is formed as a two-part lid for a cup with outer and inner receptacle covers that nest together. A second embodiment is formed as a plastic top with a receptacle pocket and a hinged cover member that can be swung to cover the pocket. A third embodiment is formed as a clip-on container attachment with a spring clasp for mounting on the rim of a mug. Providing the aroma of the fresh grounds or tea leaves provides the beverage drinker with a richer flavorful experience.

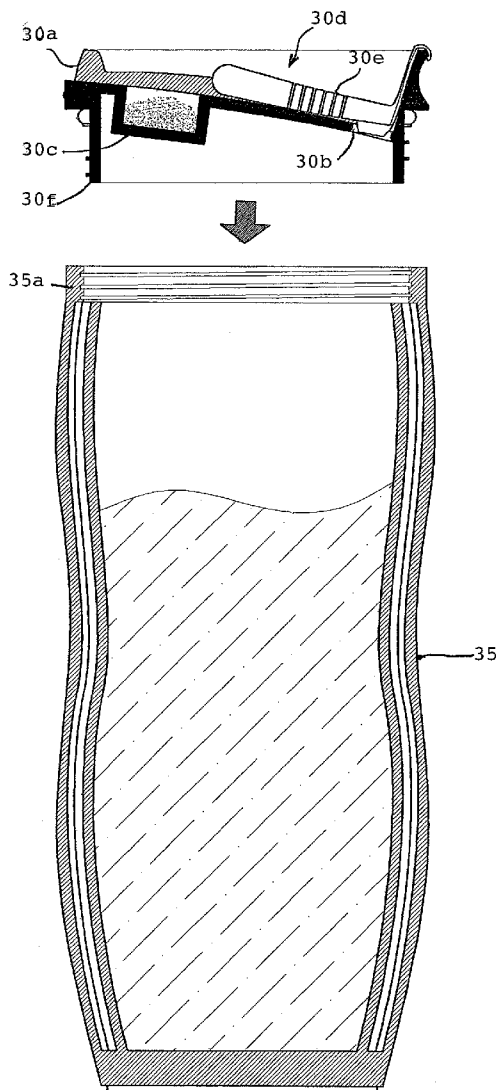


FIG. 1A

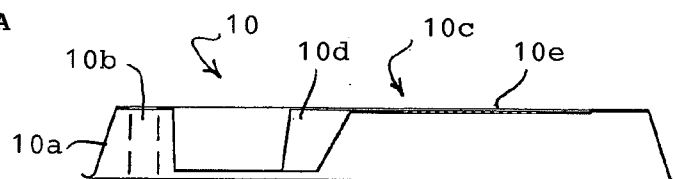


FIG. 1B

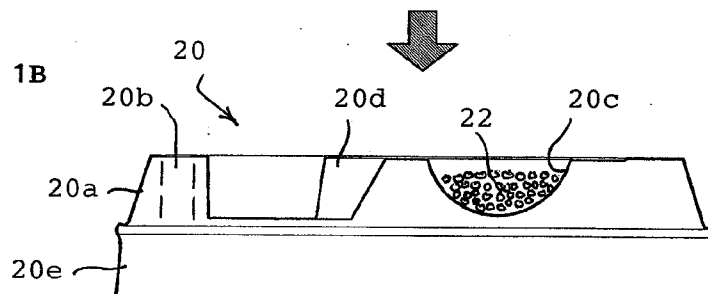
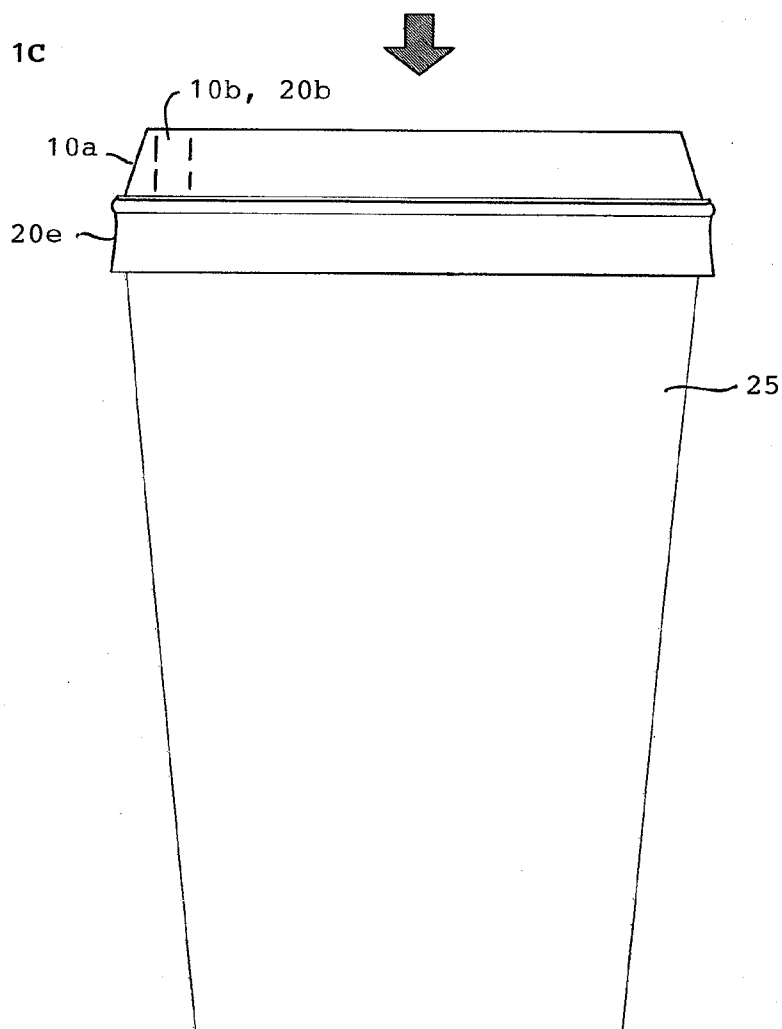


FIG. 1C



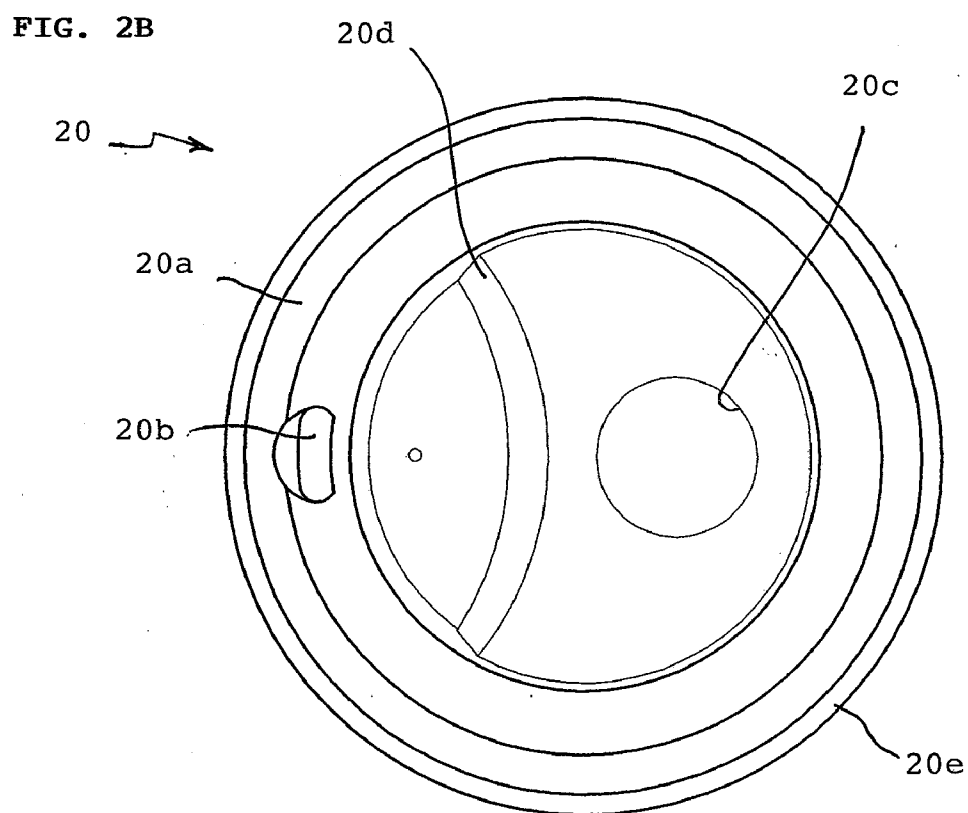
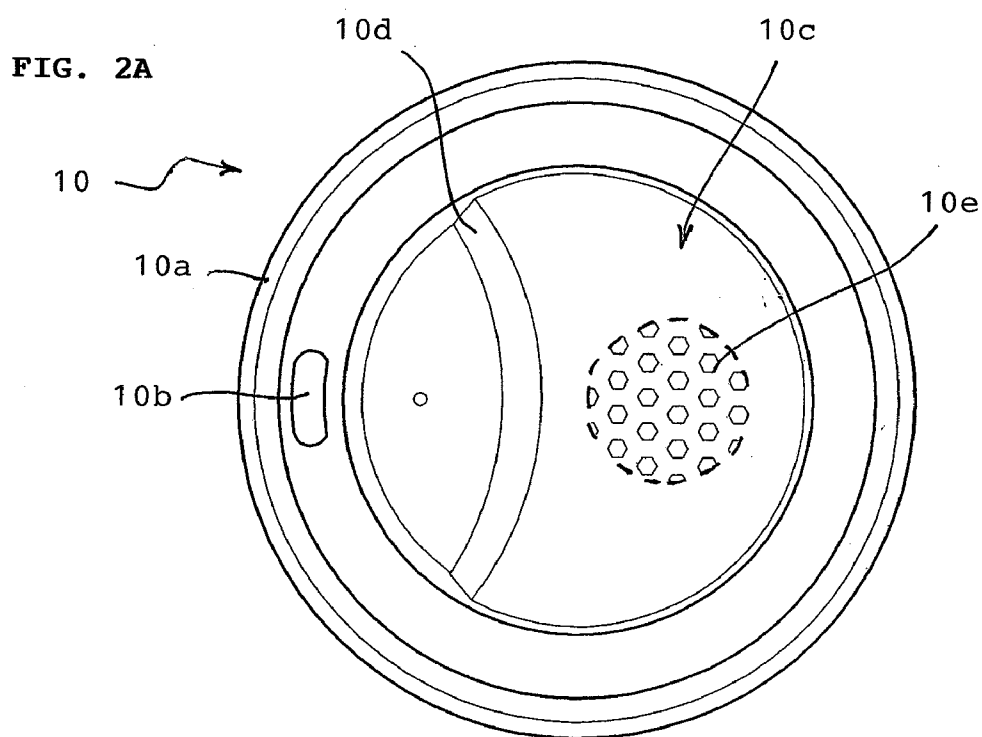


FIG. 3B

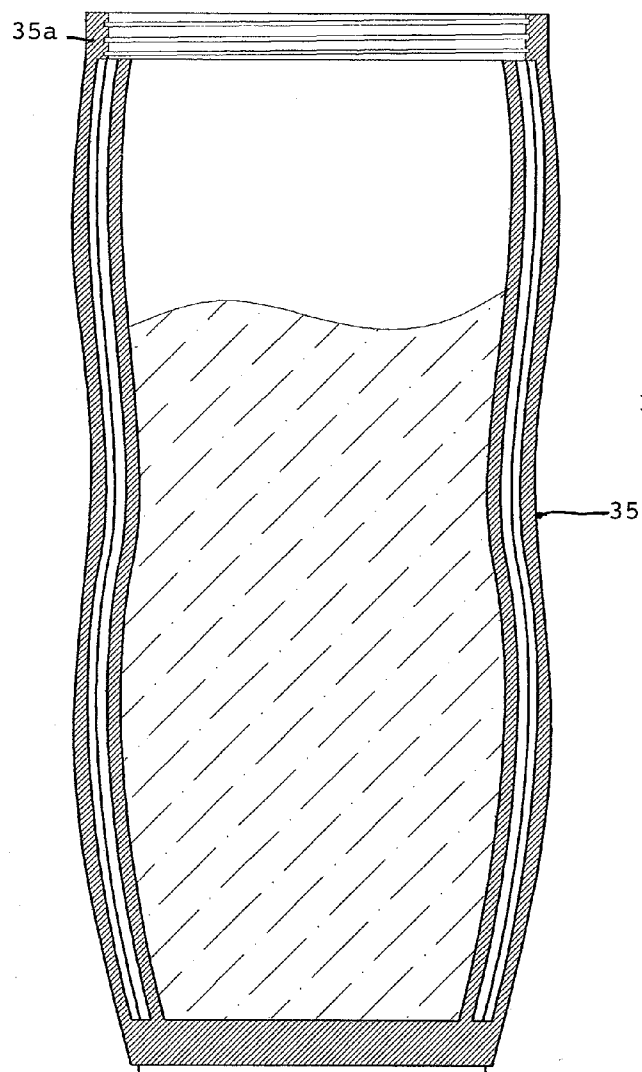
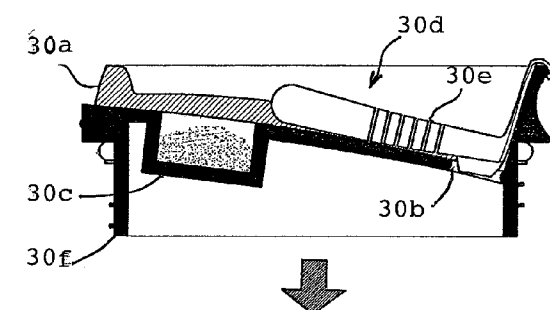


FIG. 3A

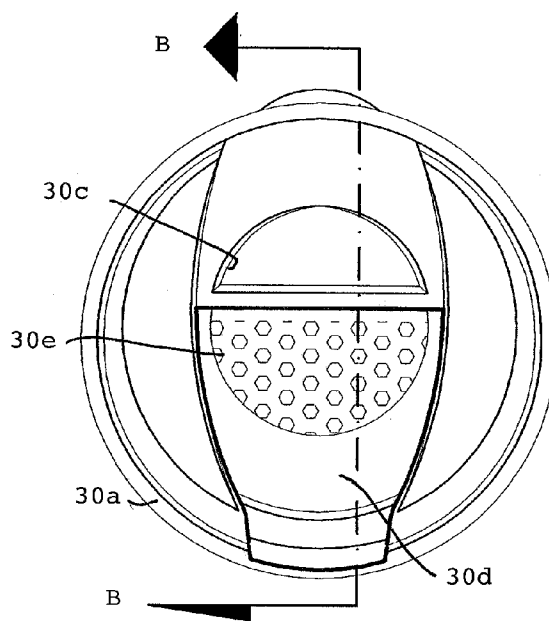


FIG. 3C

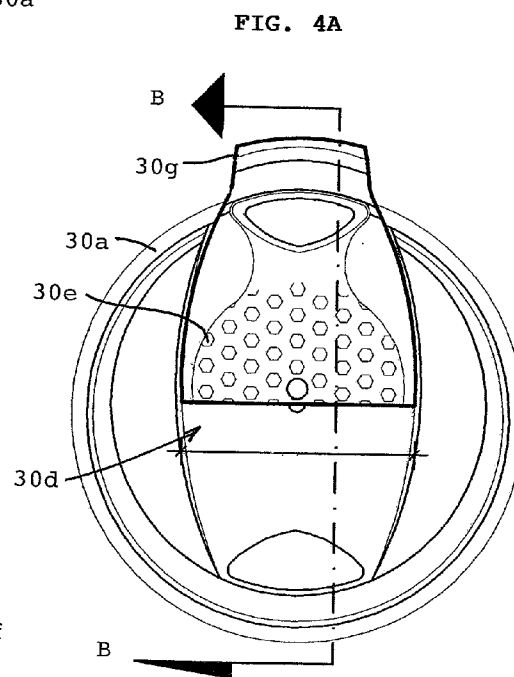
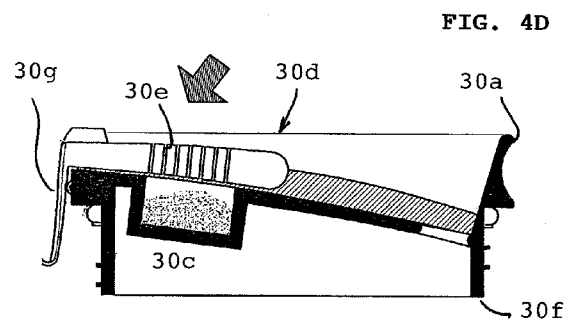
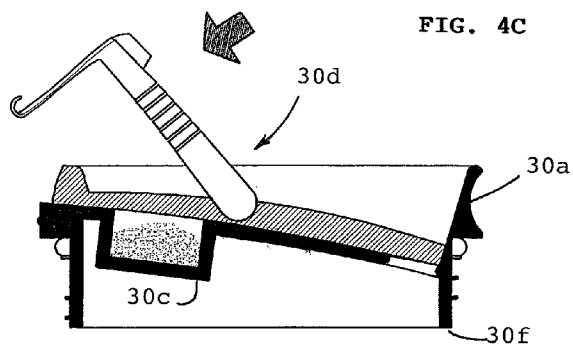
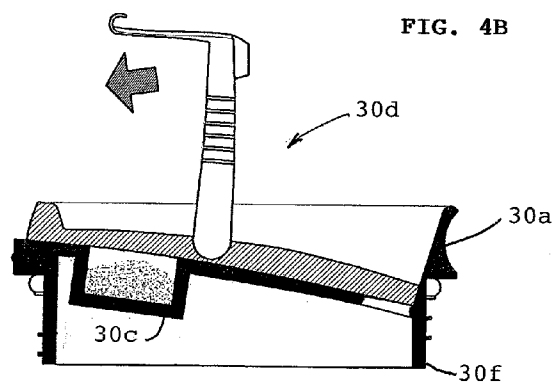


FIG. 5A

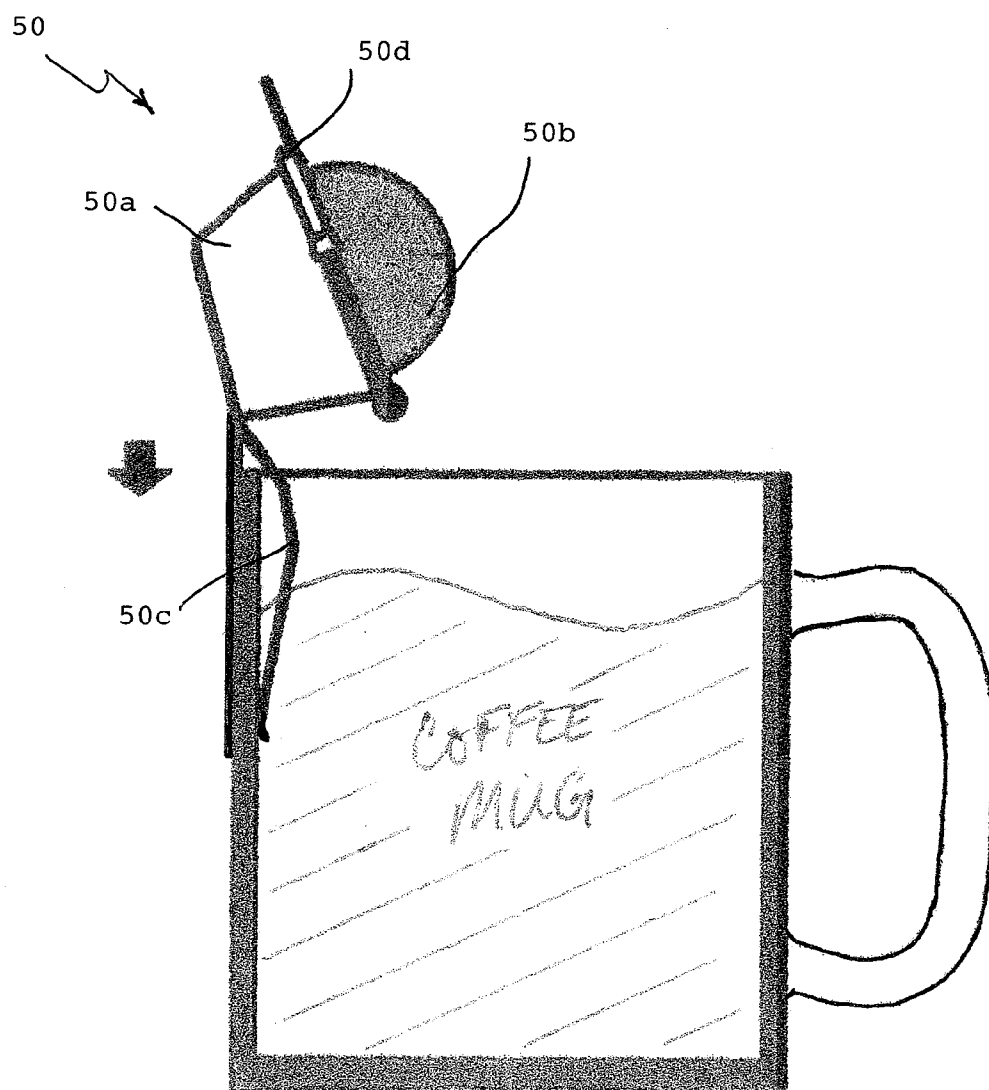


FIG 5B

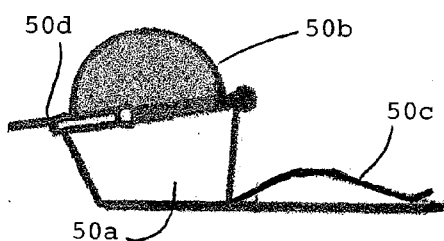


FIG. 5C

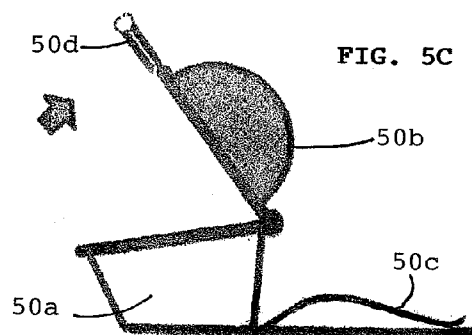


FIG. 5D

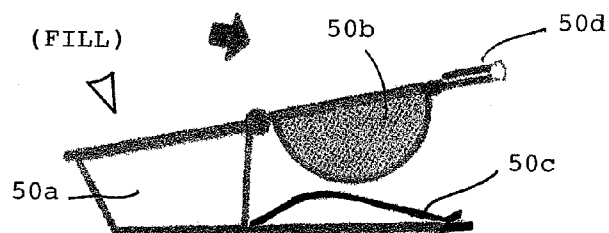
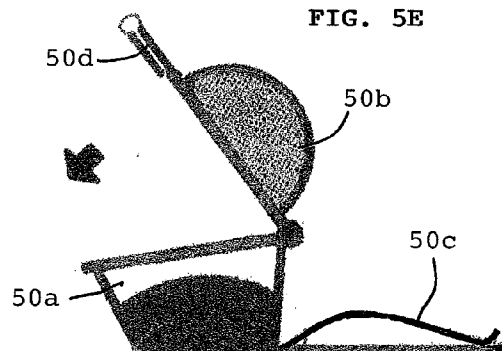


FIG. 5E



METHOD & DEVICE FOR ENHANCING AROMA FROM BEVERAGE CUP

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a method and device for enhancing the aroma of a beverage sipped from a beverage cup, such as for brewed coffee or tea.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] The prior art has shown various types of cup devices for enhancing a taster's experience of a brewed beverage. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,450 to DiGiorgio discloses a cup lid in which coffee grounds are held in a containment pocket between upper and lower filter screens for pouring hot water through and drip-brewing coffee into the cup while retaining the grounds in the pocket near the drinker's nose for inhaling its aroma while sipping.

[0003] Other types of devices similarly enable a tea bag or sachet used for steeping coffee or tea in a cup to be retained in a position on the lid where its aroma can be smelled, as described for example in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,460,725, 6,464,099, 6,729,494, 6,742,670, 7,140,510, and 7,299,940, and in U.S. Published Patent Applications 2003/0031759, 2003/0057216, 2004/0217119, and 2006/0273093. German Patent Application DE20103241 to Herbig discloses a cup having a receptacle on top of its handle near the rim for holding a tea or coffee bag where its aroma can be smelled. U.S. Pat. No. 6,889,859 and Published Application 2008/0000921 to Leon disclose a cup lid with perforations to allow the aroma of a beverage inside the cup to reach the user's nose.

[0004] However, these prior devices limit the user's experience to inhaling the smell of already steeped grounds or leaves, which is not as flavorful as the aroma of fresh coffee grounds or fresh tea leaves. It would be desirable to provide a device for a beverage cup in which the user can smell the aroma of fresh coffee grounds or tea leaves same as used to brew the beverage in the cup.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0005] In accordance with the present invention, an aroma enhancing device for use when drinking from a beverage cup comprises a receptacle member mountable by a mounting member on or near the rim of the beverage cup in proximity to the user's nose when sipping a liquid beverage from the cup, said receptacle member having a receptacle body for holding a sample of fresh beverage material therein and provided with a receptacle cover adapted to be opened to expose the receptacle body to receive the sample of fresh beverage material therein and to be closed during use of the receptacle member when the user sips liquid beverage filled into the cup, wherein the receptacle cover has a porous surface provided with perforations or screen holes having a hole size small enough to retain the fresh beverage material in the receptacle body but porous enough to allow the aroma of the fresh beverage material to be released therefrom during use, in order to thereby allow the user to smell the aroma of the fresh beverage material held in the receptacle member mounted by the mounting member in proximity to the user's nose while sipping the liquid beverage filled into the cup. The invention also encompasses the related method of using the receptacle member and mounting member for enhancing aroma when a user sips liquid beverage filled into a cup.

[0006] In a first embodiment of the aroma enhancing device, the receptacle member is formed as a two-part lid for a cup. An outer receptacle cover has a sip hole formed through the cover on one side and a covering portion on an opposite side of the cover. An inner receptacle cover has a matching sip hole similarly formed through it on one side and a receptacle pocket on an opposite side. The receptacle pocket is used to hold a small amount of fresh beverage material. The covering portion of the outer receptacle cover has perforations (or a screen mesh) over an area that overlies the receptacle pocket of the inner receptacle body. The perforations (or screen holes) allow the user to smell the aroma of fresh beverage material in the receptacle pocket while sipping liquid beverage in the cup through the aligned sip holes.

[0007] In a second embodiment of the aroma enhancing device, a plastic top is formed with a sip hole on one side and a receptacle pocket on an opposite side, and a hinged cover member that can be swung from one side to the other. The hinged cover member has an area perforated with through-holes for releasing the aroma of fresh beverage material held in the receptacle pocket. The plastic top has a lower part for attaching to the top of a plastic beverage cup. When a sample of fresh beverage material is placed in the receptacle pocket, the hinged cover member is swung to the side covering the receptacle pocket. The end of the hinged cover member has a clasp which snaps over the outer edge of the plastic top to retain the hinged cover member in the covering position.

[0008] In a third embodiment of the aroma enhancing device, a clip-on container attachment is mounted with a spring clasp onto the rim of a standard shaped mug for drinking hot beverages. The container attachment has a container body and a screen top with a swivel locking device that can be unlocked for loading a small sample of fresh beverage material into the container body and locked to retain the screen top in its cover position over the container body.

[0009] Other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will be explained in the following detailed description of the invention having reference to the appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0010] FIGS. 1A to 1C show a first embodiment of the aroma enhancing device of the present invention in the form of a two-part lid for a cup.

[0011] FIGS. 2A and 2B show top views of the outer receptacle cover and inner receptacle body, respectively, of the two-part lid of the first embodiment.

[0012] FIGS. 3A to 3C show a second embodiment of the aroma-enhancing device in the form of a plastic lid as the receptacle member.

[0013] FIGS. 4A to 4D show the progression of swinging the hinged cover member to expose the sip hole and cover the receptacle pocket after fresh beverage material is loaded into it.

[0014] FIGS. 5A to 5E show a third embodiment of the aroma enhancing device formed as a clip-on container attachment to a standard shaped mug for drinking hot beverages.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

[0015] In the following detailed description of the invention, certain preferred embodiments are described in order to provide specific details of examples of their implementation. However, it is to be recognized that the detailed examples are

provided for purposes of illustration only and not in any way limiting the scope of the disclosed principles of the invention.

[0016] Referring to FIGS. 1A, 1B, and 1C, a first embodiment of the aroma enhancing device has a receptacle member formed as a two-part lid for a cup including an outer receptacle cover 10 with annular walls 10a (with truncated cone cross-section) that fit onto similar annular walls 20a of an inner receptacle body 20. The outer receptacle cover 10 has a standard type of crescent-shaped sip hole 10b formed through the cover on one side (left side of the figure) and a covering portion 10c on an opposite side (right side of the figure) of the cover. The inner receptacle body has a matching sip hole 20b similarly formed through it on one side and a receptacle pocket 20c on an opposite side therefrom. The outer receptacle cover 10 is shaped with an upper surface contour similar to that of the inner receptacle body 20 so that the two parts can nest tightly together when positioned one on top of the other. The receptacle pocket is sized to hold a small amount of fresh beverage material 22, such as fresh coffee grounds or fresh tea leaves.

[0017] As shown in top views in FIGS. 2A and 2B, the outer receptacle cover 10 is formed with a ridge 10d that is offset from its center axis and provides a lip space on one side of the sip hole 10b. The ridge 10d is used to align the outer receptacle cover 10 with a similar ridge 20d formed on one side of the sip hole 20b of the inner receptacle body. The covering portion 10c of the outer receptacle cover 10 is formed with perforations 10e (or a screen mesh) over an area that overlies the receptacle pocket 20c of the inner receptacle body 20. The perforations (or screen holes) have a hole size small enough to retain the fresh beverage material in the receptacle pocket during use.

[0018] A bottom skirt 20e is provided on a lower part of the inner receptacle body 20. The bottom skirt 20e is a mounting member that fits tightly in a spill-proof manner onto the rim of a cup 25 of a standard size matched to the dimensions of the two-part lid. With the outer and inner receptacle parts nested tightly together, the covering portion 10c covers the receptacle pocket 20c on one side, and the sip holes 10b, 20b are aligned and mated together on the other side so that the user can sip through the aligned sip holes on one side, while sipping through the aligned sip holes on one side, the user's nose is positioned in proximity to the perforated receptacle cover for the receptacle pocket to allow the aroma of the fresh beverage material therein to be smelled.

[0019] The cup may be of a standard type formed of insulated paperboard or styrofoam for hot beverages. The outer and inner receptacle parts can be formed from die-stamped plastic material as is standard for disposable covers in the fast food industry. As an alternative, the sip hole for the outer receptacle cover may be formed as an openable, hinged tab that exposes a sip aperture, and can be re-seated to cover the sip aperture to prevent spilling while carrying the cup. The sip hole for the inner receptacle body in this case is die-cut and removed to expose the inner sip hole.

[0020] The covering portion 10c of the outer receptacle cover 10 has perforations or screen holes of a pore or hole size small enough to retain the fresh beverage material in the receptacle body but porous enough to allow the aroma of the fresh beverage material to be released therefrom during use. For retaining either fresh coffee grounds or tea leaves in the receptacle pocket, the porous surface of the covering portion can be a wire or plastic screen mesh with perforations or mesh holes of a size of about 1.0 mm (100 mesh holes per sq. cm)

or smaller. For a cup lid to be used only for tea beverages, the perforations or mesh holes may be larger such as about 2.0 mm (50 mesh/sq.cm).

[0021] For use of the aroma-enhancing method and device for coffee, a user (or purveyor) first grinds fresh coffee beans for the type of coffee beverage to be made. A portion of the fresh coffee grounds is kept aside in a closed container to retain freshness, while the remainder is used to brew the coffee beverage. To prepare an aroma-enhancing cup, the user or purveyor places a small sample of the fresh coffee grounds that have been retained into the receptacle pocket of an inner receptacle cover, then covers it with a matched outer receptacle cover. After brewed coffee has been filled into the cup, the mated receptacle cover (inner and outer covers nested together) is mounted onto the rim of the cup. As the user sips coffee from the aligned sip hole of the cover, the aroma from the sample of fresh coffee grounds held in the receptacle pocket can be inhaled.

[0022] As shown in FIGS. 3A, 3B, and 3C, a second embodiment of the aroma enhancing device has a plastic top 30 formed with annular walls 30a, a sip hole 30b, a receptacle pocket 30c, and a hinged cover member 30d. The hinged cover member 30d has an area perforated with perforation holes or a screen 30e for releasing the aroma of fresh beverage material held in the receptacle pocket 30c. In FIG. 3A, the hinged cover member 30d is on the side covering the sip hole 30b and exposing the receptacle pocket 30c so that a sample of fresh beverage material 32 can be filled in. Shown in side view in FIG. 3B, taken along view lines B-B in FIG. 3A, the plastic top 30 is attached to the top of a plastic beverage cup 35 by a threaded lower skirt 30f which mates with a threaded rim 35a of the cup 35. The fitted plastic top can thus be screwed into the threaded rim of the cup to cover the cup after brewed beverage has been poured in.

[0023] A sample of fresh beverage material can be placed in the receptacle pocket 30c when the hinged cover member 30d is swung to the side covering the sip hole and exposing the receptacle pocket. The hinged cover member 30d can then be swung to the opposite side to cover the receptacle pocket. In FIG. 4A, the plastic top 30 is shown with its hinged cover member 30d swung to the opposite side so that it covers the receptacle pocket 30c and exposes the sip hole 30b. FIGS. 4B, 4C, and 4D, taken along view lines B-B in FIG. 4A, show the progression of swinging the hinged cover member 30d to cover the receptacle pocket 30c after a sample of fresh beverage material is loaded into it. In its covering position, the perforated or screen area 30e of the hinged cover member 30d overlies and covers the open end of the receptacle pocket 30c. The end of the hinged cover member 30d has a clasp 30g which snaps over a ridge on the outer edge of the annular walls 30a of the plastic top to retain the hinged cover member in the covering position over the receptacle pocket. The plastic top can be formed as a single piece by injection molding, and the hinged cover member can be formed as a separate plastic element and attached to the plastic top by a snap-in groove or detent tabs.

[0024] As shown in FIGS. 5A to 5E, a third embodiment of the aroma enhancing device is formed as a clip-on container attachment 50 to a standard shaped mug for drinking hot beverages. It has a container body 50a covered by a screen top 50b and a flexible spring-type clasp 50c for attaching onto the rim of the mug. The screen top 50b has a swivel locking device 50d that can be unlocked for loading a small sample of fresh beverage material into the container body 50a, and

locked to retain the screen top **50b** in its cover position over the container body, as illustrated in FIGS. **5B** to **5E**. The container attachment is mounted by the spring clasp **50c** onto the rim of the mug in a position of about 90 degrees from the mug handle, so that as the user sips liquid beverage from the mug at an opposite side from the attachment position (270 degrees), the user's nose is in proximity to the container to smell the aroma of the fresh beverage material in the container.

[0025] In summary, the aroma-enhancing method and device seeks to enhance the aroma that a brewed beverage drinker will smell while drinking a cup of freshly brewed beverage, such as coffee or tea. The receptacle member is used to hold a small sample of the fresh beverage material, such as fresh coffee grounds or tea leaves. The porous covering top retains the fresh beverage material in the receptacle, while allowing the aroma to be released. The receptacle with the sample of freshly ground coffee or tea leaves is mounted on the rim or lid of the cup where the drinker's nose will be in close proximity to smell the aroma of the fresh grounds or tea leaves while the drinker sips from the cup. The aroma of the fresh grounds or tea leaves is stronger and more flavorful than already steeped grounds or leaves, and therefore provides the drinker with a richer flavorful experience.

[0026] It is understood that many modifications and variations may be devised given the above description of the principles of the invention. It is intended that all such modifications and variations be considered as within the spirit and scope of this invention, as defined in the following claims.

1. A method for enhancing aroma when drinking from a beverage cup comprising:

providing a receptacle member having a receptacle body for holding a sample of fresh beverage material therein and provided with a receptacle cover adapted to be opened to expose the receptacle body to receive the sample of fresh beverage material therein and to be closed during use of the receptacle member when the user sips liquid beverage filled into the cup, wherein the receptacle cover has a porous surface provided with perforations or screen holes having a hole size small enough to retain the fresh beverage material in the receptacle body but porous enough to allow the aroma of the fresh beverage material to be released therefrom during use, in order to thereby allow the user to smell the aroma of the fresh beverage material held in the receptacle member; and

mounting the filled receptacle member on or near the rim of the beverage cup in proximity to the user's nose for enhancing the aroma a user experiences when sipping liquid beverage from the cup.

2. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 1, wherein the receptacle member is formed by a covering portion and a receptacle body respectively formed in outer and inner receptacle covers that are nested one on top of the other and attached on the rim of a cup.

3. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 2, wherein the outer and inner receptacle covers are made of die-stamped plastic for attachment to a standard type of styrofoam beverage cup.

4. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 1, wherein the receptacle member is formed in a plastic top having a receptacle pocket and a hinged cover member for covering the receptacle pocket, and a lower portion that is attached to the rim of a cup.

5. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 4, wherein the plastic top is formed of molded plastic and the hinged cover member is formed as a plastic element that is attached to the molded plastic top.

6. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 1, wherein the receptacle member is formed by a container member and a screen top that is locked for covering the container member, and has a clasp for mounting on the rim of a cup.

7. A method for enhancing aroma according to claim 6, wherein the clasp is a flexible spring-type metal clasp that can clip onto the rim of a standard type of beverage mug.

8. A device for enhancing aroma when drinking from a beverage cup comprising:

a receptacle member mountable by a mounting member on or near the rim of the beverage cup in proximity to the user's nose when sipping a liquid beverage from the cup, said receptacle member having a receptacle body for holding a sample of fresh beverage material therein and provided with a receptacle cover adapted to be opened to expose the receptacle body to receive the sample of fresh beverage material therein and to be closed during use of the receptacle member when the user sips liquid beverage filled into the cup, wherein the receptacle cover has a porous surface provided with perforations or screen holes having a hole size small enough to retain the fresh beverage material in the receptacle body but porous enough to allow the aroma of the fresh beverage material to be released therefrom during use; and

a mounting member coupled to the receptacle member for mounting the receptacle member on a beverage cup in proximity to the position of a user's nose while sipping the liquid beverage filled into the cup.

9. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 8, wherein the receptacle member is formed as a two-part lid for a cup having an outer receptacle cover with a sip hole formed on one side and a covering portion formed with perforations holes or a screen on an opposite side thereof, and an inner receptacle cover with a matching sip hole similarly formed on one side and a receptacle pocket on an opposite side thereof which is used to hold a small amount of fresh beverage material therein.

10. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 9, wherein the outer and inner receptacle covers have matching contours adapted to allow them to be nested closely one on top of the other, with the covering portion overlying the receptacle body, and attached on the rim of a cup.

11. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 9, wherein the outer and inner receptacle covers are made of die-stamped plastic for attachment to a standard type of styrofoam beverage cup.

12. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 8, wherein the receptacle member is formed in a plastic top having a sip hole on one side and a receptacle pocket on an opposite side, and a hinged cover member having an area with perforation holes or a screen and can be swung from one side to the other to expose and to cover the receptacle pocket.

13. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 12, wherein the plastic top has a lower part for attaching to the top of a plastic beverage cup.

14. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim 13, wherein the plastic top is formed of molded plastic and the hinged cover member is formed as a plastic element that is attached to the molded plastic top.

15. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim **8**, wherein the receptacle member is formed as a clip-on container attachment that is mounted with a spring clasp onto the rim of a standard shaped mug for drinking hot beverages.

16. A device for enhancing aroma according to claim **15**, wherein the container attachment has a container body and a

screen top with a swivel locking device that can be unlocked for loading a small sample of fresh beverage material into the container body and locked to retain the screen top in its cover position over the container body.

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