A basket-like, open-work cover, generally rectangular, adapted to snap onto the top of a conventional produce basket to protect the contents of the basket.

2 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures
BASKET PROTECTIVE COVER

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION AND INVENTION

It has been conventional practice to market at retail strawberries, cherries, tomatoes, and other produce, in small baskets about 4 inches square and about 2½ inches deep. Such baskets originally were formed of thin wood, but more recently have also been formed of thin plastic material in an open-work pattern and usually injection molded.

Such plastic baskets normally are provided with an outwardly extending rim or flange around their open tops, and it has been conventional to provide an open-work plastic cover, generally basket-like in form, which can be snapped onto the rim or flange of such a plastic produce basket to protect the contents of the basket against handling and displacement, the cover being readily removable to permit access to the contents of the basket. Such conventional plastic covers on the market have been difficult to snap onto a mating basket, and have been uncertain of retention on the basket, frequently becoming separated inadvertently from the basket, due to an ineffective and poorly designed connection between the cover and the basket.

It is a primary object of this invention to provide such a plastic cover having an improved corner construction that will permit the cover to be snapped onto a mating basket easily and quickly, guiding the movement of the cover onto the basket to a locking position, providing a more secure lock between the cover and the basket to prevent inadvertent removal of the cover from the basket, yet permitting ready manual separation of the cover from the basket.

THE DRAWING

Referring to the drawing, which is for the purpose of illustration only:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of a conventional basket having the cover of this invention connected thereto;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary cross-sectional view taken on the line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a vertical sectional view taken on the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary perspective, exploded view of a corner of a basket and a corresponding corner of the cover; and

FIG. 5 is a view similar to FIG. 4 but showing the corner of the cover latched to the corner of the basket.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

Referring to the drawing, FIG. 1 shows a conventional basket 10, usually formed of a thin open-work deformable or resilient plastic material, having an outwardly extending horizontal lip 11 around its upper open end, and a cover 12, including the present invention, preferably also formed of a thin open-work deformable or resilient plastic material.

The basket 10 is conventionally square or rectangular in shape, as viewed from above, to provide it with four 90° corners at its open upper end, like the corner 13. The cover 12 is of generally similar shape and has four corners corresponding to the four corners 13, each of which is like the corner 14.

Each of the cover corners 14 includes a sloping post member 15, which is generally U-shaped, having a narrow upper portion 16, a tab 17, and a wider lower portion 18, the lower portion 18 being thicker than the upper portion 16, as shown in FIG. 3. The tab 17 is thicker than either the upper or lower portions 16 and 18, and is provided with a substantially horizontal slot 19, the inner lower edge of the slot being provided with a radius 20, best illustrated in FIG. 3 and a flat 21.

To assemble the cover 12 on the basket 10, they are held substantially parallel and spaced apart, as illustrated in FIG. 4, and the cover is then moved toward the basket, or vice versa, to the assembled position illustrated in FIG. 5. During such relative movement, the basket corners 13 contact the inner sides of the lower portions 18 of the post members 15, and, due to the curvature of such lower portions 18, the basket corners 13 are guided into the corresponding slots 19, the radii 20 on the slots facilitating smooth movement of the basket corners 13 into their slots, and the flats 21 limiting such relative movement of basket and cover. In the assembled position, shown in FIGS. 1, 2, 3, and 5, the cover 12 is securely latched to the basket 10 against inadvertent separation. However, they may be readily disengaged by pressing upwardly on any cover corner 14 which distorts the thin, resilient plastic material of which cover and basket are made to permit the corresponding basket corner 13 to ride downwardly over the associated radius 20, following which the cover may be moved sidewise relative to the basket to disengage the other basket corners from the associated cover corners.

When assembled, as illustrated in FIG. 1, the latching connection between the cover 12 and the basket 10 is sufficiently secure to permit the assembly when filled with produce to be lifted by the cover without inadvertently breaking the latching connection therebetween.

We do not desire to be limited to the specific preferred embodiment shown and described herein, which are for the purpose of illustration only, but desire to be afforded the full scope of the following claims:

We claim as our invention:

1. As an article of manufacture, a one-piece rectangular open-work basket-like cover formed of thin strips of a deformable plastic material to include a flat rectangular top bordered by a continuous upper rim strip around its perimeter the sides of which are connected by a plurality of thinner cross-strips, a rectangular open bottom formed by a continuous lower rim strip around its perimeter, the area of said bottom being greater than the area of said top, and side walls formed by a plurality of sloping strips interconnecting said upper and lower rim strips and including a corner post interconnecting each corner of said upper rim strip with the corresponding corner of said lower rim strip, each corner post including an upper portion connected at its lower end to a generally U-shaped tab member generally parallel with the adjacent corner of said lower rim strip and having a generally horizontal slot therein, such corner post also including a lower portion interconnecting said tab member with said lower rim strip, said tab member being semicircular in cross-section.

2. A device as set forth in claim 1, in which at least a central portion of the lower edge of each slot is provided with a radius and at least a portion of the central portion of the edge of each slot is provided with a substantially horizontal flat.