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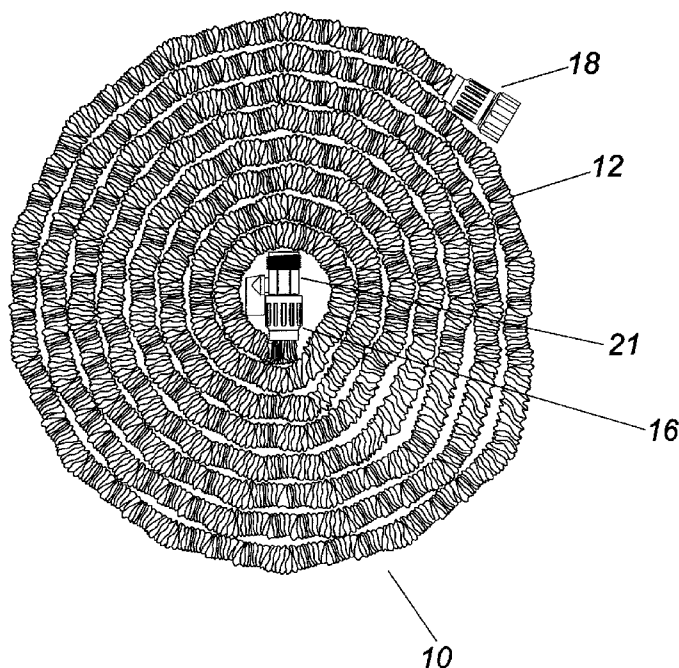


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: A flexible hose (10) having an inner tube member (14) made from a thermoplastic elastomer material and an outer tube member (12) made from a non-elastic polyester material. The inner tube member (14) is secured to the outer tube member (12) only at an inlet coupler (18) and an outlet coupler (16). The inlet coupler (18) is constructed to secure to a water supply provided from a conventional household water spigot. The outlet coupler (16) incorporates a flow restrictor (21) allowing the inner tube member to equalize in pressure with pressurized water received from the water supply. Pressurized water expands the elongated inner tube member longitudinally along a length of the inner tube member and laterally across a width of the inner tube member thereby substantially increasing the length of the hose to an expanded condition wherein the hose contracts to a substantially decreased length when there is a decrease in pressurized water.

AUTOMATICALLY EXPANDABLE HOSE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of water hoses and in particular to a hose that expands when
5 pressurized water is introduced and modulated by a flow restrictor positioned at the outlet of the hose.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventional hoses are typically constructed from rubber or other resilient flexible material such as
10 synthetic rubber, thermo plastic rubber or the like photochemical derivatives. A notable problem encountered with conventional garden hoses relates to the storage of the hose when not in use. Garden hoses can be stored on a hose reel, placed within a storage container, or simply
15 left on the ground. While storage devices are practical in certain situations, in many instances the consumer cannot use or has no desire to employ a storage container. For example, a consumer may live in an apartment or small condo and would like to have the benefit of a garden hose for plant watering, car washing,
20 or the like but does not have room for a garden hose storage device. The hose might be left in the trunk of a vehicle or coiled up in the corner of a patio with an effort to consume as little space as possible. Another
25 example would be the owner of a boat, RV or plane who may wish to leave the hose with the vehicle. Such places are impractical for hose storage containers.

There are many situations where it is beneficial to store a hose in as little a space as
30 possible. If the consumer does not have a device for storing the hose then they must try to organize the hose on the ground in a way as to not entangle the hose within itself. If improperly organized, the hose will tend to

kink when uncoiled. This problem is typically encountered by the average homeowner who uses the hose infrequently wherein improper storage of a hose can result in the development of kinks. Garden hoses can be
5 made with thick sidewalls to prevent kinking but result in heavy and cumbersome water hoses. Fiber reinforcements can also be used, such as woven tapes or knitting followed by the addition of an outer coating, all of which add to the weight of a garden hose and do
10 not have a shortened length for storage. For this reason, it is of great benefit to have a garden hose that is light in weight, contractible in length, and kink resistant.

Retractable hoses are known to use steel wires
15 formed in a coiled shape with a vinyl tube, the steel wires wind through the vinyl tube so that it will normally be in a coiled or rolled configuration when not in use. When pressurized water is introduced into the hose, the hose is unwound. When the pressurized water is
20 removed, the water hose is recoiled to a rolled position. Examples of such hoses include U.S. Patent No. 2,814,529; U.S. Patent No. 3,035,779 and U.S. Patent No. 3,966,121.

U.S. Patent 6,523,539 discloses a self elongating oxygen hose for stowable aviation crew oxygen
25 mask. The supplemental gas assembly such as used for aircraft crews is provided which includes a mask adapted to fit over at least the nose and mouth of a wearer, together with a flexible, self-elongating hose assembly and a stowage box for receiving the mask and hose
30 assembly.

The transition zone between a garden hose and pressurized source of water, or the garden hose and delivery point, is accomplished by a coupling. Conventional couplings provide a fluid connection between

a spigot and a garden hose. However the prior art fails to disclose a coupling capable of attaching to a flexible garden hose having an expandable inner tube member made of a flexible fluid carrying material and an outer sleeve
5 made of a fixed length fabric material. For instance, U.S. Patent No. 4,895,185 discloses a flexible hose reinforced by armature layers made of flexible cables disposed helically and is attached at least at one end by compression of said layers against rigid pieces,
10 characterized by the supporting elements and gripping elements, which are coaxial, having non-adhesive conical compression surfaces which diverge toward the end and by at least one wedge provided with slits being driven between reinforcing layers to ensure compression. The
15 tubular sleeve is attached to a rigid assembly wherein ends of the layered pairs are engaged in the conical annular space between the coaxial supporting element and gripping elements.

U.S. Patent No. 5,816,622 discloses a garden
20 hose having a protective shell section and a flexible strain relief section releasably attached to the shell section. The hose is sealably attached to a stem portion of a coupling by a brass ferrule, the manner by which the hose is attached to the stem portion is stated as being
25 well known in the art. After the end of the hose having the ferrule slipped over the stem portion so that the end of the hose abuts the receive portion, a device is inserted into the stem portion for expanding it thereby sandwiching the hose between the stem portion and the
30 ferrule for locking the hose to the coupling.

U.S. Patent No. 5,894,866 discloses a garden hose assembly having a deformable section that allows a portion of the hose to be coiled around a support for holding the end of the hose in a desired position.

Connectors have coupling stems which are inserted within a base tube and such coupling stems are then radially expanded into ferrules or corrugations.

U.S. Patent No. 6,209,800 discloses a flexible
5 tube formed so that adjacent coils are formed while in a contracted position, the tube is extendible by straightening of the coils. A fitting is formed from an elongate, substantially cylindrical externally barbed portion and a disk shaped head. A bore extends through
10 the fitting which is smaller than the inner diameter of the tubing. The fitting portion is inserted into an end of the tube and held therein by an interference fit with barbs inhibiting removal axially of the tube.

U.S. Patent No. 6,568,610 discloses a flexible
15 water spray wand for connection to a standard garden hose, having a housing connectable at a lower end to the garden hose and at an upper end to a flexible tube assembly connected at an opposite end to a spray nozzle. The flexible tube has an outlet fitting which comprises
20 an externally barbed portion and an externally threaded portion with an annular shoulder therebetween. The barbed portion fits snugly within outlet end portion of the hose with annular shoulder which abuts an outlet end portion of the ribbed tube, which can be affixed by
25 silver soldering or adhesives.

U.S. Patent No. 6,948,527 and U.S. Patent No. 7,549,448 disclose a linearly self-actuated hose for use in transporting fluids. A hose has a biasing spring that extends along the full length, and can comprise single or
30 multiple springs and/or multiple diameter spring coils. The spring is covered with hose cover material on the outside and hose cover material on the inside to form a sealed hose and are bowed inward or outward radially between the individual spring coils depending on the

intended use of hose. On the end of the hose is mounted a nozzle end which can be designed with standard garden hose threads. The nozzle end comprises an inner crimp ring, and outer crimp ring which also provides threads, and a water restriction ring. The hose can be trapped between crimp rings to provide a compression fit. Crimp rings are also crimped onto each other so that they form a right unit that will not fall apart during use.

U.S. Patent No. 6,955,189 discloses a garden hose assembly that includes an elongated and flexible tubular member that includes an open first end, an open second end and a peripheral wall extending between the first and second open ends. A cross-section taken transversely to a longitudinal axis of the tubular member has a generally oblong shape when the tubular member is filled with a fluid and a substantially flattened shape when the tubular member is not filled with a fluid. Male and female couplers are defined as conventional hose couplers.

Therefore, what is needed in the art is a commercial grade flexible hose that can be coupled to a conventional water spigot and will extend in length when water is introduced into the hose and pressurized at an outlet of the hose.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Disclosed is a flexible hose that attaches to a conventional water spigot and will expand upon the presence of water that is pressurized within the hose, the expansion made possible by control of the water through use of a restrictor formed integral to the outlet of the hose. The hose can expand longitudinally by use of an elastic water proof inner tube member positioned within a soft fabric outer tube member.

Accordingly, it is an objective of the present invention to provide a hose that automatically expands longitudinally and automatically expands laterally upon the application of water pressure as controlled by a flow
5 restrictor positioned along an outlet of the hose.

It is a further objective of the present invention to provide a hose that automatically contracts upon release of water pressure from within the hose.

It is yet another objective of the present
10 invention to provide a hose that is relatively light compared to a conventional non-expanding/non-contracting hose of a similar length.

It is a still further objective of the present invention to provide a hose that will not kink or become
15 entangled upon itself when in use.

It is still a further objective of the present invention to provide a commercial grade coupling that is made of metal so that the coupling will operate under adverse working conditions.

20 Still a further objective of the present invention to provide a commercial grade coupling wherein a flow restrictor is formed integral with the metal outlet coupling.

Other objectives and advantages of this
25 invention will become apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with any accompanying drawings wherein are set forth, by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments of this invention. Any drawings contained herein constitute a part of this
30 specification and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIGURE 1 is a plane view of a coiled flexible hose of the instant invention;

FIGURE 2 is a longitudinal side view of the present invention in a contracted position;

FIGURE 3 is an end view of the outlet coupling;

FIGURE 4 is a longitudinal view of the present invention in an expanded position;

FIGURE 5 is an end view of the inlet coupling;

FIGURE 6 is a cross sectional view, perspective view of a section of the hose of the present invention taken along line 6-6 in Fig. 4;

FIGURE 7 is a cross sectional view, perspective view of a section of the hose of the present invention taken along line 7-7 in Fig. 2;

FIGURE 8 is a pictorial view of the hose with an integral flow restrictor in a contracted state concealing indicia placed on the outer sidewall;

FIGURE 9 is a pictorial view of the hose in an expanded state with an integral flow restrictor and a spray nozzle further illustrating viewable indicia on the outer wall;

FIGURE 10 is an exploded view of the male outlet coupling with an integral flow restrictor;

FIGURE 11 is an exploded view of the female inlet coupling;

FIGURE 12 is a cross section view of the inner and outer hose attached to a coupling;

FIGURE 13 is a side view of the male outlet coupling with a handle placement to allow water flow; and

FIGURE 14 is a side view of the male outlet coupling with a handle placement to inhibit water flow.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

While the present invention is susceptible of embodiment in various forms, there is shown in the drawings and will hereinafter be described a presently preferred, albeit not limiting, embodiment with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered an exemplification of the present invention and is not intended to limit the invention to the specific embodiments illustrated.

Referring in general to the Figures, set forth is an expandable hose of the present invention. The hose is self-expanding upon the introduction of pressurized water within the hose, and self-contracting upon release of water from within the hose. The hose 10 is composed of two separate and distinct tubes, an inner tube member 14 formed from a thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) which can expand 2 to 6 times its relaxed or unexpanded length, and outer tube member 12 formed from a non-elastic, relatively soft and bendable polyester fabric tubular webbing material. In the preferred embodiment the inner tube member 14 is a thermoplastic elastomer having elastic properties. The inner tube member 14 expands radially outwardly or laterally, with respect to its length. The radial expansion of the inner tube member 14 is constrained by the maximum diameter of the non-elastic outer tube member 12. The preferred materials used to form the non-elastic outer tube member 12 are braided or woven polyester. The requirements of the outer tube member 12 material is that it be soft, bendable, non-elastic, and should be strong enough to withstand internal pressures to accommodate the highest water pressures typically found in a pump or municipal water supply with a safety factor of about 2.5. For example, while conventional pressure supplies are in the range of

30-60 psi, it is possible for a pump system to provide up to 100 psi. For this reason it is recommend that the inner and outer tube combination be capable of handling pressures up to 250 pounds per square inch, (psi). In the preferred embodiment, the thickness of the polyester outer tube member 12 is about .5mm (.02inches) with a range of about 25% on thickness. Further, the diameter of the outer tube member 12 when expanded is about 18-20mm (.07-.082 inches) again with a range of about 25%.

10 The hose 10 employs a female inlet coupler 18 at a first end for connecting to a conventional water spigot and an outlet coupler 16 at a second end having an integrally formed flow restrictor and also connectable to a spray nozzle. The coupler members are constructed from metal and are designed to be assembled without tools. In the preferred embodiment the inlet coupler 18 includes a metal female threaded portion 28 rotatably attached to a first threaded metal annular collar 71. The female threaded portion 28 is constructed to receive the male threads of a conventional water spigot 23, faucet or the like valve typically found on the exterior of a building. Most water faucets on buildings employ a standard size male coupler or fitting. A silicone gasket, not shown, can further provide a seal between the female threaded portion 28 and the water connection. The annular coupler 71 includes a metal inlet tubular extension section 36 extending therefrom having an end 73 insertable into a first open end of the inner tube member 14. A flow thru aperture 38 within the inlet coupler 18 allows water to flow through the coupler. The end 73 has an angular face that allows for ease of inserting into the first open end of the inner tube member 14 and may include a barb 75 that provides frictional engagement to the interior wall of the inner tube member 14. In addition

to the barb 75, the use of an annular rib 77 enhances the engagement between the first end of the inner tube member 14 and the inlet tubular extension section 36. In the preferred embodiment, the coupler is constructed from
5 brass, stainless steel, or the like materials

Upon placement of the first open end of the inner tube member 14 onto the inlet tubular extension section 36, a first ABS plastic ferrule 79 having an inner wall 81 adapted for placement over a portion the
10 first open end of the inner tube member 14 is positioned over inlet tubular extension section, preferably over the annular rib 77. In the preferred embodiment the ferrule is a collet having a cylindrical inner surface and a conical outer surface. The ferrule includes opposing
15 tabs 80 protruding from its outer surface. The tabs are constructed to engage corresponding slots 72 located on the annular collar 71. An outer wall 83 of the first ferrule 79 is sized for placement with a first open end of the outer tube member 12. In a preferred embodiment
20 the first ferrule 79 include kerf cuts 85 that allow for ease of compression of the first ferrule 79 onto the inner tube member 14 when first metal collar member 87, having an inner surface 89 constructed and arranged to thread onto the annular collar 71, crimps the first open
25 end of the outer tube member 12 between the first ferrule 79 and the collar member 87. Further, the collar member 87 engages the first ferrule 79 providing a frictional engagement to seal the first open end of the inner tube member 14 to the inlet tubular extension section 36
30 allowing the hose assembly to be pressurized with water without leakage. The female inlet coupler 18 employs conventional threads commonly employed for the water hose fitting.

The female inlet coupler 18 may include a hex shaped wall 19 to allow for ease of holding the inlet coupler 18 while the inner tube member 14 is being installed on the inlet tubular extension section 36, as well as the tightening of the second collar member 87 so as to prevent marring of the coupler member during installation or removal. The use of a box shaped, triangular shaped or the like shaped wall to provide a gripping surface is contemplated by this disclosure.

10 The male outlet coupler 16 is formed from a metal threaded coupling section 20 housing a flow restrictor 21, a metal annular coupler 24, and a metal outlet tubular extension section 32 extending therefrom. A flow thru aperture 31 is centrally disposed along a longitudinal axis of the male outlet coupler 16 having a handle 61 operated ball valve for use in restricting the flow of water. The end 37 of the outlet tubular extension section 32 is insertable into a first open end of the inner tube member 14 for securement thereto. In a preferred embodiment, the end 37 includes a barb 39 having an angular face that allows for ease of inserting into the second open end of the inner tube member 14 yet provides frictional engagement to the interior wall of the inner tube member 14. In addition to the barb 39, 25 the use of an annular rib 41 enhances the engagement between the inner tube member 14 and the outlet tubular extension section 32 providing a watertight seal. Upon placement of the second open end of the inner tube member 14 onto the outlet tubular extension section 32, a second ABS plastic ferrule 43 having an inner wall 45 adapted for placement over the second open end of the inner tube member 14 that is positioned over the rib 41. 30

In the preferred embodiment the ferrule is a collet having a cylindrical inner surface and a conical

outer surface with one or more kerf cuts along its length when squeezed. The ferrule includes opposing tabs 50 protruding from its outer surface. The tabs are constructed to engage corresponding slots 26 located on the annular collar 24. An outer wall 47 of the second ferrule 43 is sized for placement within the second open end of the outer tube member 12 thereon. In a preferred embodiment the second ferrule 43 include cuts 49 that allow compression of the ferrule 43 onto the inner tube member 14 by use of a collar member 51 having an inner surface 53 constructed and arranged to thread onto the annular coupler 24 thereby crimping the outer tube member 12 between the ferrule 43 and the collar member 51. Further, the second metal collar member 51 engages the ferrule 43 sealing the inner tube member 14 to the outlet tubular extension section 32 allowing the hose assembly to be pressurized with water up to 250 psi. The collar member 51 can include an outer surface texture to allow ease of assembly upon threading of the collar member 51 to the annular coupler 24. The threaded coupler section 20 employs conventional threads commonly employed for a water hose. The flow thru aperture 31 allows for uninterrupted water passage and the threaded coupling section 20 includes an integrally formed flow restrictor 21 that is capable of preventing the flow of water via an on/off valve 33, while the male outlet coupler 16 is also connectible to a conventional spray nozzle 25.

The male outlet coupler 16 may include a hex shaped wall 17 to allow for ease of holding the male outlet coupler 16 while the inner tube member 14 is being installed on the outlet tubular extension section 32, as well as the tightening of the second collar member 51 so as to prevent marring of the outlet coupler during installation or removal. The use of a box shaped,

triangular shaped or the like shaped wall to provide a gripping surface is contemplated by this disclosure.

During assembly, the non-elastic outer tube member 12 is attached and connected to the inner tube member 14 only at the first end and second end by the male outlet coupler 16 and the female inlet coupler 18. The outer tube member 12 is otherwise unattached, unconnected, unbonded, and unsecured to the elastic inner tube member 14 along the entire length of the inner tube member 14 between the first end and the second end and thus the outer tube member 12 is able to move freely with respect to the inner tube member 14 along the entire length of the inner tube member 14 when the garden hose expands or contracts.

The hose 10 of the present invention is illustrated in its contracted condition in Figs. 1, 2, 7 and 8. In this condition, the inner tube member 14, which is elastic, is in a relaxed contracted condition wherein there are no forces being applied to the inner tube member 14 to expand or stretch it. The amount of water that may reside in the tube in its contracted condition is much less than while in its expanded condition. Also it should be noted that the outer tube member 12 is not in a bonded contact with the inner tube member 14 when the hose is in this contracted condition, there will be a space 15 between the inner tube member 14 and the outer tube member 12. As illustrated in Fig. 7, the thickness of the wall of the inner tube member 14, in the contracted position, is relatively large compared to the thickness of the inner tube member 14, in the expanded position, Fig. 6. The expansion of the elastic inner tube member 14 laterally, is the result of an increase in the water pressure within the inner tube member 14. This increase in water pressure also results

in the expansion of the length of the elastic inner tube member 14. The expansion of the inner tube member 14, both laterally and longitudinally, results in a decrease in the wall thickness of the inner tube member 14, an
5 increase in the diameter of the inner tube member 14 thus increasing the volume of water that can flow through the inner tube member 14. This decrease in wall thickness is illustrated in Fig. 6, wherein the inside diameter of the inner tube member 14 has been expanded and extended
10 because of an increase of the water pressure and volume within the inner tube member 14.

In the expanded or extended condition, illustrated in Figs. 4, 6 and 9, the inner tube member 14 is expanded or stretched. In this expanded condition the
15 non-elastic outer tube member 12 constrains the lateral expansion of inner tube member 14. The outer tube member 12 is also taut, smooth, and relatively flat along its length in this extended condition. Since the outer tube member 12 will not expand laterally or longitudinally,
20 the actual length and width of the outer tube member 12 determines the maximum length and maximum width of the hose 10 in its expanded condition. Thus the diameter and length of the outer tube member 12 determines the diameter and length of the water hose of the present
25 invention upon the application of water pressure to the interior of the elastic inner tube member 14. This diameter and length of the non-elastic outer tube member 12 is the final diameter and the final length of the hose 10 when it is in its expanded condition and in use to
30 transport or deliver water.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the hose 10 can automatically expand from 2 to 6 times its contracted length upon the introduction of pressurized water into the tube, the pressure would need

to be at least 20 psi. For example, in one embodiment a ten foot hose in a contracted condition would automatically expand to 20 feet when pressurize water is supplied to the interior of the inner tube member 14 of the hose. In another embodiment, a ten foot hose in a contracted condition would automatically expand to 60 feet when pressurize water is supplied to the interior of the inner tube member 14 of the hose.

The water pressure within the hose is accomplished by introducing water under pressure into the inlet of the hose and restricting the flow of the water out of the outlet of the hose by use of an integrally formed flow restrictor. In a preferred embodiment the flow restrictor is formed integral with the fitting as illustrated in Figures 12 and 13 wherein a metal on/off ball valve 33 is mounted within the housing for use in restricting the water. Two opposing polytetrafluoroethylene gaskets 34 form a watertight seal on each side of ball valve 33. When the handle 61 is turned in-line with the flow through aperture the ball valve 33 allows water to pass. When the handle 61 is turned perpendicular to the flow through aperture the ball valve 33 prohibits water flow.

As depicted in Figure 9, the outlet coupler 16 is preferable attached to a spray nozzle 25. The female inlet coupler 18 of the present invention 10 is secured to a water spigot 23 such as that found on the exterior wall of a building. The flow restrictor 21 is then placed in an off position by rotation of the ball valve 33 so that water cannot pass. When the spigot 23 is opened the pressurized water enters the hose 10 and is prevented from exiting the flow restrictor while in the ball valve is in a off or closed position, wherein the hose is expanded to its predefined length as limited by

the outer tube member 12. For instance, a relatively normal pressure for municipal water is about 60 psi wherein the water within the hose is equalized to the same pressure. The flow restrictor 21 is integrally
5 formed to the outlet coupler 16 which can then be directly attached to a spray nozzle 25. The spray nozzle 25 can be a conventional water spray nozzle which varies the rate and spray pattern of water exiting from the nozzle but can also be capable of shutting off the exit
10 of pressurized water. Many spray nozzles are L-shaped so as to be able to be comfortably gripped and used by an individual and have a pivoting on-off handle which operates an internal flow restrictor valve. A spray nozzle provides various amounts of restriction of water
15 at the end of the hose depending on how large the opening in the nozzle is. The smaller the opening in the nozzle, the more the nozzle restricts the release of water at the end of the hose, and the higher the pressure and water volume inside the hose. The larger the opening in the
20 nozzle, the less the nozzle restricts the release of water at the end of the hose, and the lower the pressure and water volume inside the hose. If the flow of water at the other end of the present invention was turned off and totally restricted, the psi inside the inner tube
25 member would be the same as the pressure coming from the house, 60 psi. At this pressure, the inner tube member 14 and the outer tube member 12 in the present invention would expand to its maximum length. As the water at the end of the hose is released, the pressure becomes reduced
30 inside the hose and the hose begins to contract. However, the present invention will remain fully expanded even when the pressure at the opposite end is reduced below the typical pressure of 60 psi coming from a house. In one example, the water pressure coming from the house

was 60 psi and the water pressure exiting the nozzle at the other end of the water hose was 35 psi. This 35 psi of pressure inside the elastic inner tube member 14 was enough pressure to cause the inner tube member 14 to expand laterally and longitudinally until its lateral and longitudinal expansion became constrained by the non-elastic outer tube member 12 and expanded to the maximum length and width of the non-elastic outer tube member 12. In a preferred embodiment, the hose 10 expands from ten feet in length in its contracted condition to fifty feet in length in its expanded condition. When used in combination with a spray nozzle 25 the flow restrictor 21 allows the user to immediately turn off water to the spray nozzle.

Fig. 12 illustrates how the coupler is secured to the hose wherein the inner tube member is placed over end 73 having an angular face that allows for ease of inserting into the inner tube member 14 yet provides frictional engagement to the interior wall of the inner tube member 14. Barb 75 enhances the engagement between the inner tube member 14 and the inlet tubular extension section 36 providing a watertight seal. Upon placement of the end of the inner tube member 14 onto the inlet tubular extension section 36, a first ferrule 79 is positioned over inner tube member 14. Outer tube member 12 is placed over the outer surface of the first ferrule 79. Collar member 87 is constructed and arranged to thread onto an annular collar thereby sandwiching the outer tube member 12 between the first ferrule 79 and the collar member 87. Further, the collar member 87 engages the first ferrule 79 providing a frictional engagement to prevent the inner tube member 14 from separating from the inlet tubular extension section 36 allowing the hose assembly to be pressurized with water without leakage.

A feature of the present invention is the savings in weight of the hose. The hose 10 in its contracted condition is relatively light, and upon expansion the weight of hose does not increase, only the weight of the water within the hose changes the dynamics. This savings in weight enables the hose of the present invention to be easily carried, easily dragged, easily handled and easily used by anyone who uses the hose but especially by individuals who do not possess exceptional strength or do not want to drag, carry or lug around heavy, bulky, conventional rubber hoses.

Another feature of the present invention is that the outer tube member 12 is reduced or decreased in length when there is no pressure within inner tube member 14. With no pressure or volume in the elastic inner tube member 14 the inner tube member automatically contracts. The condition of the outer tube member 12 when the inner tube member 14 is in the contracted condition is illustrated in Figs. 1, 2, and 8. Because the outer tube member 12 is unsecured to the inner tube member 14 along the entire length of the hose between the first end and the second end, the soft fabric material of the outer tube member 12 can move freely with respect to the inner tube member 14. The fact that the outer tube member 12 can move freely with respect to the inner tube member 14 along the entire length of the hose enables the outer tube member 12 to become folded, compressed and tightly gathered around the outside of the circumference of the inner tube member 14 along its length in the contracted condition when there is not water pressure within the inner tube member 14. This folded, compressed and tightly gathered condition of the outer tube member 12 prevents the hose 10 from kinking and also helps prevent it from becoming entangled upon itself. Thus, an empty

hose 10 in the contracted condition is easily stored without worry of the hose kinking or becoming entangled, as most conventional hoses do. This tendency of the hose 10 to not become kinked or entangled enables a user to
5 store the hose 10 in a very small space with no worry of having to untangle or unkink the hose when it is removed from storage and used. A user of the present invention can take hose 10 from a stored condition, secure the hose 10 to a water faucet and turn on the water without the
10 fear of the hose becoming entangled or kinked or without the need to untangle or unkink the hose.

After they are used conventional water hoses are normally carried or dragged back to their place of storage and are stored on a reel or coiled up upon
15 themselves and laid on a flat surface. This requires time to carry and drag the hose and to properly store the hose and also requires an expense to purchase the hose reel. The hose 10 of the present invention automatically and quickly contracts to its original place of storage
20 and can then be easily folded up, rolled up, or coiled up and stored in any container, even very small containers, or on any surface, thus saving time and expense for the owner of the hose.

The outer tube member 12 is relatively smooth
25 in the expanded condition, as seen in Figs. 4, 6 and 9. This smooth surface enables the hose 10 to be used and manipulated with relative ease. In addition, the expanded elastic inner tube member 14 and the smooth surface of the outer tube member 12 prevent the hose from
30 kinking. Also the smooth surface enables indicia to be placed on the outer surface. Indicia placed on the outer tube member 12 can be concealed while the tube is in a contracted state, and become readable upon expansion. An example of this indicia is illustrated in Fig. 8 and 9,

wherein the words "XHose™" is placed on the outer tube member 12, when the hose is in a contracted state such as Figure 8 the indicia 13 cannot be read. When the hose is in an expanded state such as Figure 9 the indicia 13 can be easily read. All types of indicia can be placed on the exterior of the outer tube member 12, such as letters, numbers, patterns, designs, and/or pictures. Any type of indicia that can be affixed to the outer tube member 12 can be used. The indicia can be any color also including black or white. The material from which the outer tube member 12 is formed can also be any color.

The preferred embodiment of the present invention utilizes water to fill and expand the hose 10. Because the inner tube member 14 is elastic it can expand if the water within the tube freezes. For example, if a hose of the present invention were left outside in the winter, the water contained therein would freeze causing an expansion. A conventional hose would split due to the internal expansion, the flexible hose of the present invention would expand because the inner tube member is elastic without damage.

All patents and publications mentioned in this specification are indicative of the levels of those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains. All patents and publications are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

It is to be understood that while a certain form of the invention is illustrated, it is not to be limited to the specific form or arrangement herein described and shown. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes may be made without departing from the scope of the invention and the

invention is not to be considered limited to what is shown and described in the specification and any drawings/figures included herein.

One skilled in the art will readily appreciate
5 that the present invention is well adapted to carry out the objectives and obtain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as those inherent therein. The embodiments, methods, procedures and techniques described herein are presently representative of the preferred
10 embodiments, are intended to be exemplary and are not intended as limitations on the scope. Changes therein and other uses will occur to those skilled in the art which are encompassed within the spirit of the invention and are defined by the scope of the appended claims.
15 Although the invention has been described in connection with specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described modes for carrying
20 out the invention which are obvious to those skilled in the art are intended to be within the scope of the following claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

Claim 1. An improved water hose comprising:

a flexible elongated outer tube member having a first end and a second end, an interior of said outer tube member being substantially hollow;

a flexible elongated thermoplastic elastomer inner tube member having a first end and a second end, an interior of said inner tube member being substantially hollow;

a metal inlet coupler secured to said first end of said inner and said outer tube members, said inlet coupler defined by an inlet coupling section rotatably attached to a first threaded annular collar having an inlet flow thru aperture with an inlet tubular extension section extending therefrom and insertable into a first open end of said inner tube member, said inlet coupler having a first ferrule member having an inner wall adapted for placement over said first open end of said inner tube member, said first ferrule member insertable into a first open end of said outer tube member, and a first collar member having a threaded inner surface for releasable securement to said first threaded annular collar sealing said first open end of said inner tube member and securing said outer tube member to said inlet tubular extension section allowing water to flow through said inlet coupler into said inner tube member;

a metal outlet coupler secured to said second end of said inner and said outer tube members, said outlet coupler having an outlet flow thru aperture and an outlet tubular extension section extending therefrom and insertable into a second open end of said inner tube member, said outlet tubular extension section formed

integral to a second threaded annular collar and an outlet coupling section having an integrally formed rotatable flow restrictor positioned between said outlet coupling section and said outlet tubular extension section, a second ferrule member having an inner wall adapted for placement over said second open end of said inner tube member, said second ferrule member insertable into a second open end of said outer tube member, and a second collar member having a threaded inner surface for releasable securement to said second threaded annular collar sealing said second open end of said inner tube member and securing said outer tube member to said outlet tubular extension section allowing water to exit said inner tube member and flow through said outlet coupler;

whereby rotation of said integrally formed flow restrictor creates an increase in water pressure within the hose upon the introduction of pressurized water through said inlet coupler to expand said inner tube member longitudinally along a length of said inner tube member and laterally across a width of said inner tube member thereby increasing a length of said inner tube member to an expanded condition within said outer tube member, wherein said elastic based material of said inner tube contracts to a decreased or relaxed length when there is a decrease in water pressure within the hose causing said outer tube member to be gathered into a contracted state.

Claim 2. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said thermoplastic elastomer inner tube member is made from an elastic material having an elongation ratio between two and six times its contracted or unexpanded length.

Claim 3. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said outer tube member will not kink or become entangled upon itself when said inner and said outer tube members are in their expanded condition.

Claim 4. The hose of Claim 3 wherein said outer tube member is constructed from polyester and is about .5mm thick.

Claim 5. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said outer tube member is expandable to a diameter of about 20mm.

Claim 6. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said integrally formed flow restrictor is an on/off ball valve.

Claim 7. The hose of Claim 6 wherein said on/off ball valve engages at least one polytetrafluoroethylene gasket to form a watertight seal.

Claim 8. The hose according to Claim 1 wherein said inlet coupling section is a conventional female hose thread connector available for coupling to a household spigot having pressurized water.

Claim 9. The hose according to Claim 1 wherein said outlet coupling section is a conventional male threaded hose connector available for attachment to a conventional spray nozzle.

Claim 10. The hose according to Claim 1 wherein each said ferrule is further defined as a collet having a cylindrical inner surface and a conical outer surface with at least one cut along a length allowing said collet to operate as a compression member.

Claim 11. The hose according to Claim 10 wherein each said ferrule has opposing tabs on its outer surface constructed to engage corresponding slots in an annular collar.

Claim 12. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said inlet flow thru aperture is partially hex shaped for receipt of a similar shaped tool for use in assembly of the first collar member.

Claim 13. The hose of Claim 1 wherein said outlet flow thru aperture is partially hex shaped for receipt of a similar shaped tool ease of assembly of the second collar member.

Claim 14. The hose of Claim 1 including indicia on said outer tube member.

Claim 15. A hose for water comprising:

- a flexible non-elastic elongated outer tube having a first end and a second end, an interior of said outer tube being substantially hollow;

- a flexible elastic elongated inner tube having a first end and a second end, an interior of said inner tube being substantially hollow;

- a first coupler secured to said first end of said inner and said outer tubes;

- a second coupler secured to said second end of said inner and said outer tubes;

- said inner and outer tubes being unattached, unbonded, unconnected and unsecured to each other except at the couplers;

- said first coupler coupling said hose to a source of pressurized water, said second coupler coupling said hose to a water flow restrictor;

whereby, when water under pressure is introduced into the first end of the hose, said elongated inner tube expands longitudinally along a length of said inner tube and laterally across a width of said inner tube thereby increasing a length of said hose to an expanded condition; and

wherein the water flow restrictor is configured to vary the amount of restriction of the water under pressure that is released from the water flow restrictor while maintaining the length of the hose in the expanded condition.

Claim 16. The hose of claim 15, wherein the water flow restrictor includes a nozzle and an internal valve that permits, limits, and stops a flow of water through the nozzle.

Claim 17. The hose of claim 15, wherein the water flow restrictor comprises a nozzle the provides various amounts of restriction of water at the second coupling of the hose depending on how large a opening is in the nozzle, a smaller opening decreasing a release of water from the hose with higher water pressure and water volume inside the hose, and a larger opening increasing the release of water fluid from the hose with lower water pressure and water volume inside the hose.

Claim 18. The hose of claim 15, wherein, when the water flow restrictor creates a selected excess water pressure in the hose, the elastic inner tube expands laterally and longitudinally until its lateral and longitudinal expansion became constrained by the non-elastic outer tube to a maximum length and width of the non-elastic outer tube.

Claim 19. The hose of claim 15, wherein each coupler includes a tubular extension which extends into the interiors of the inner tube, the extension having a hollow interior through which water can flow, and a securing device encompasses the outer sleeve and the inner tube for securing them together.

Claim 20. The hose of claim 15, wherein, the outer tube decreases in length when there is no pressure within inner tube.

Claim 21. The hose of claim 15, wherein when the non-elastic outer tube begins to contract from its expanded length, the unattached, unbonded, unconnected and unsecured non-elastic outer tube catches on a rubbery surface of the elastic inner tube causing the outer tube to automatically become folded, compressed and tightly gathered around the outside circumference of the entire length of the contracted inner tube.

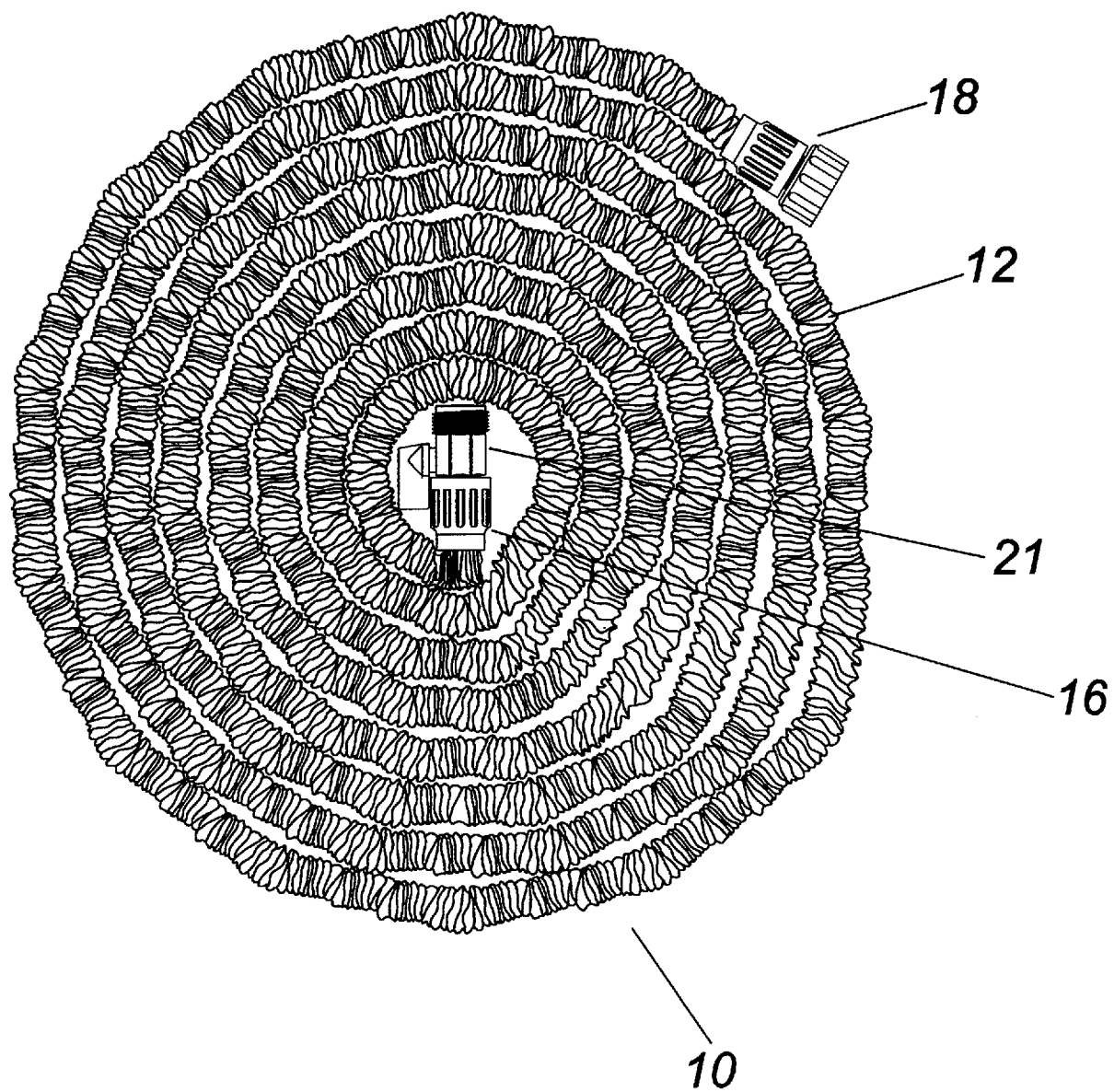
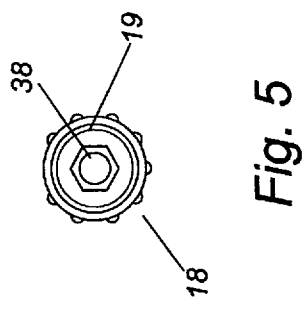
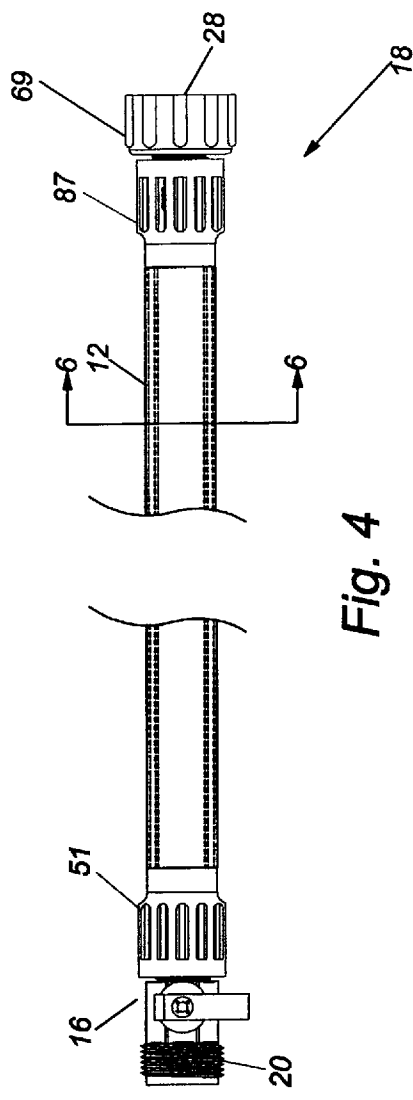
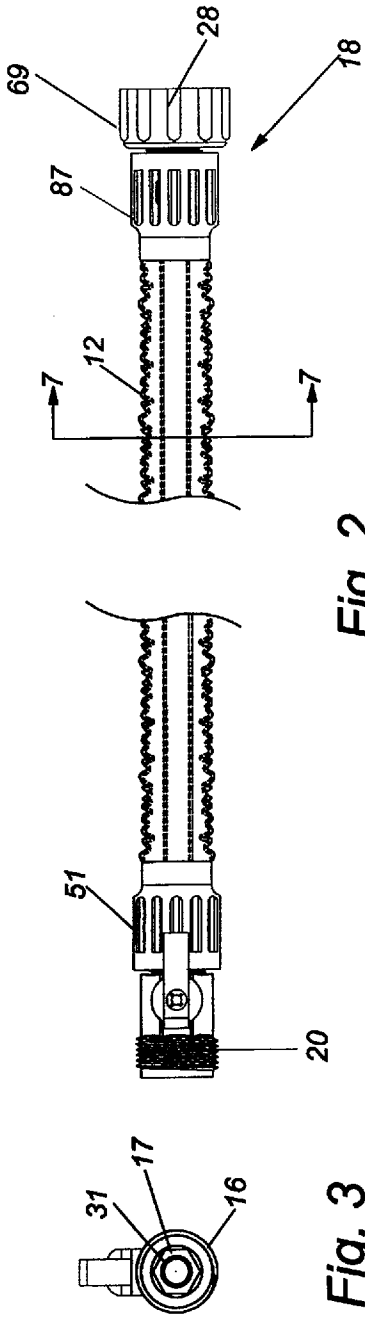


Fig. 1



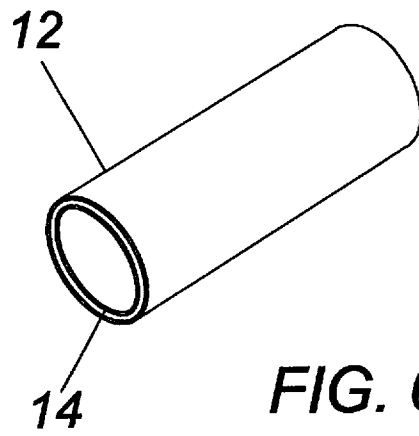


FIG. 6

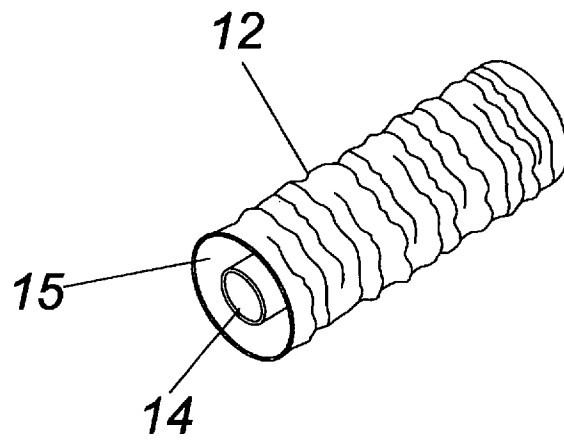


Fig. 7

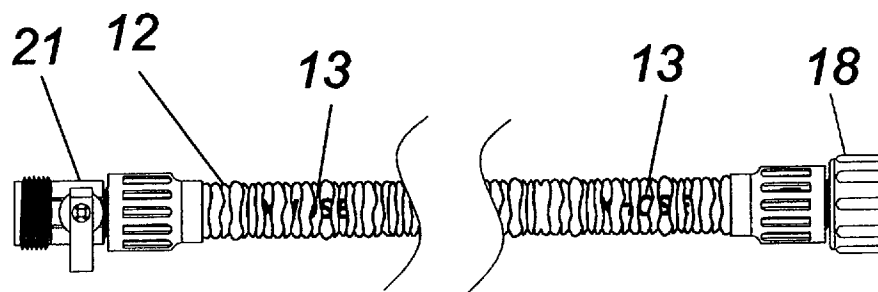


Fig. 8

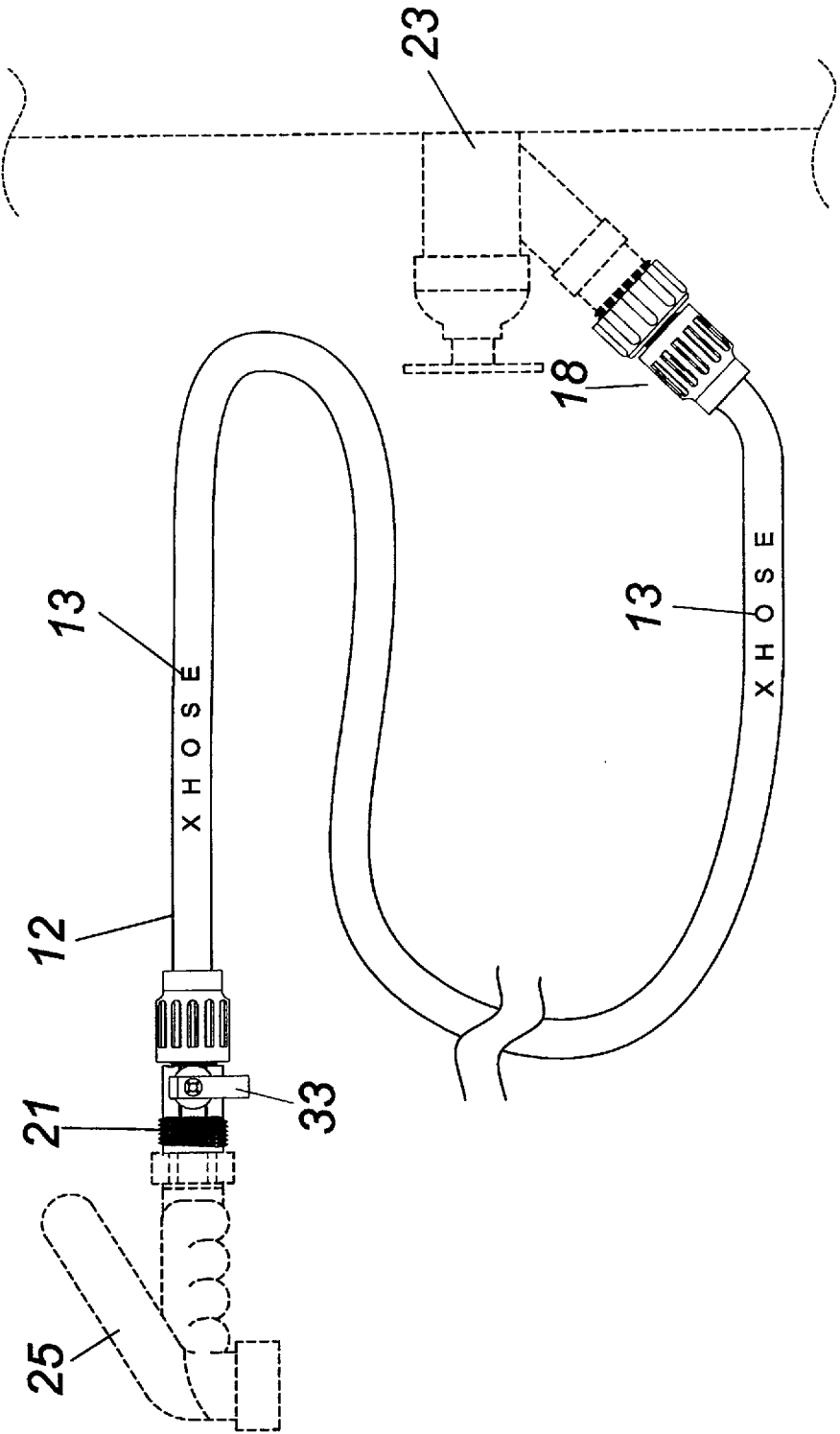


FIG. 9

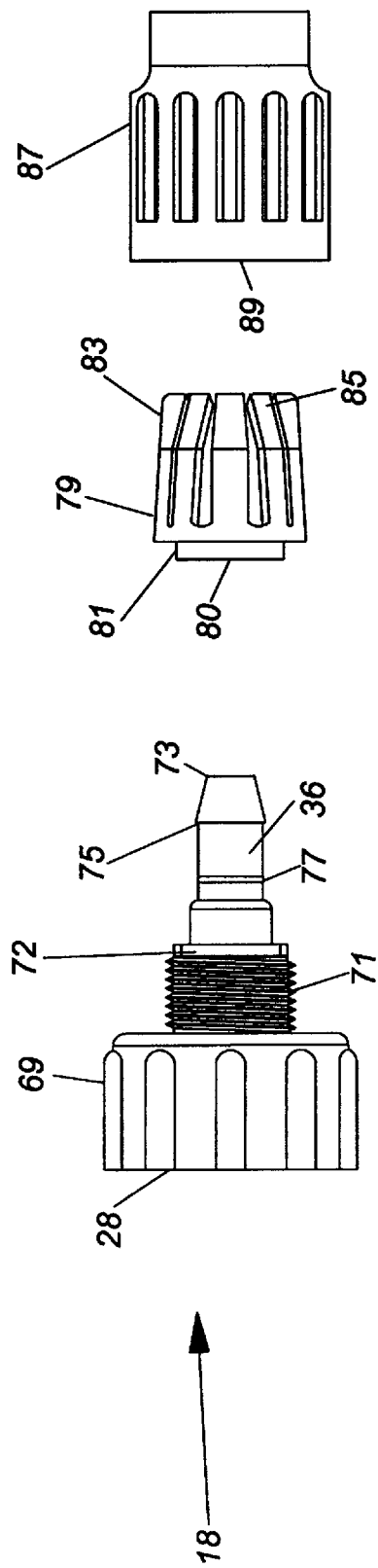


Fig. 11

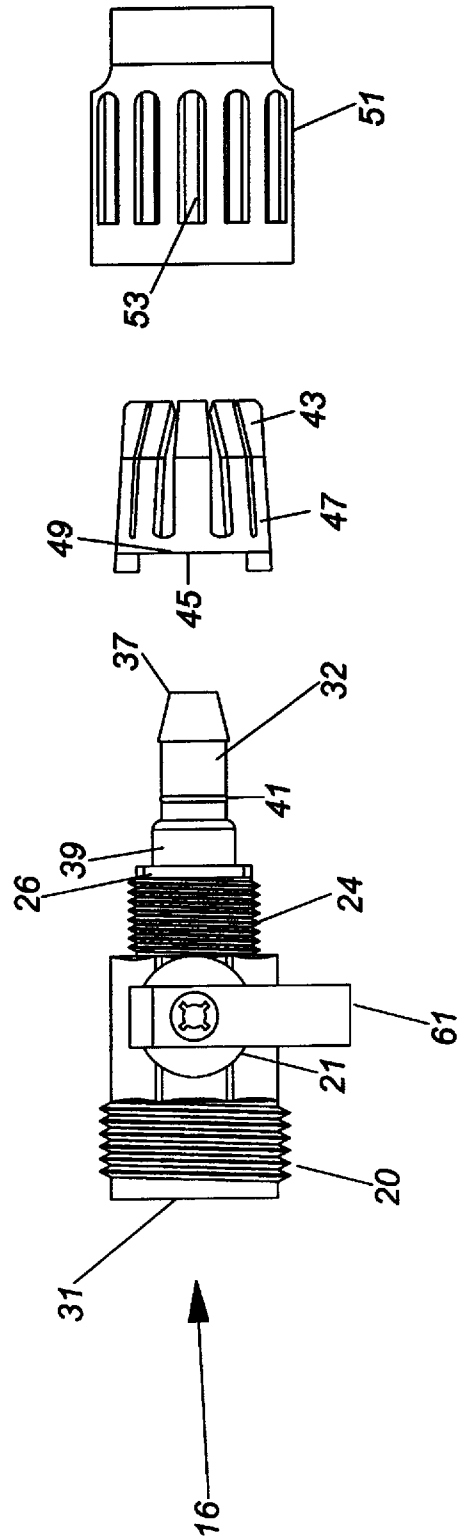


Fig. 10

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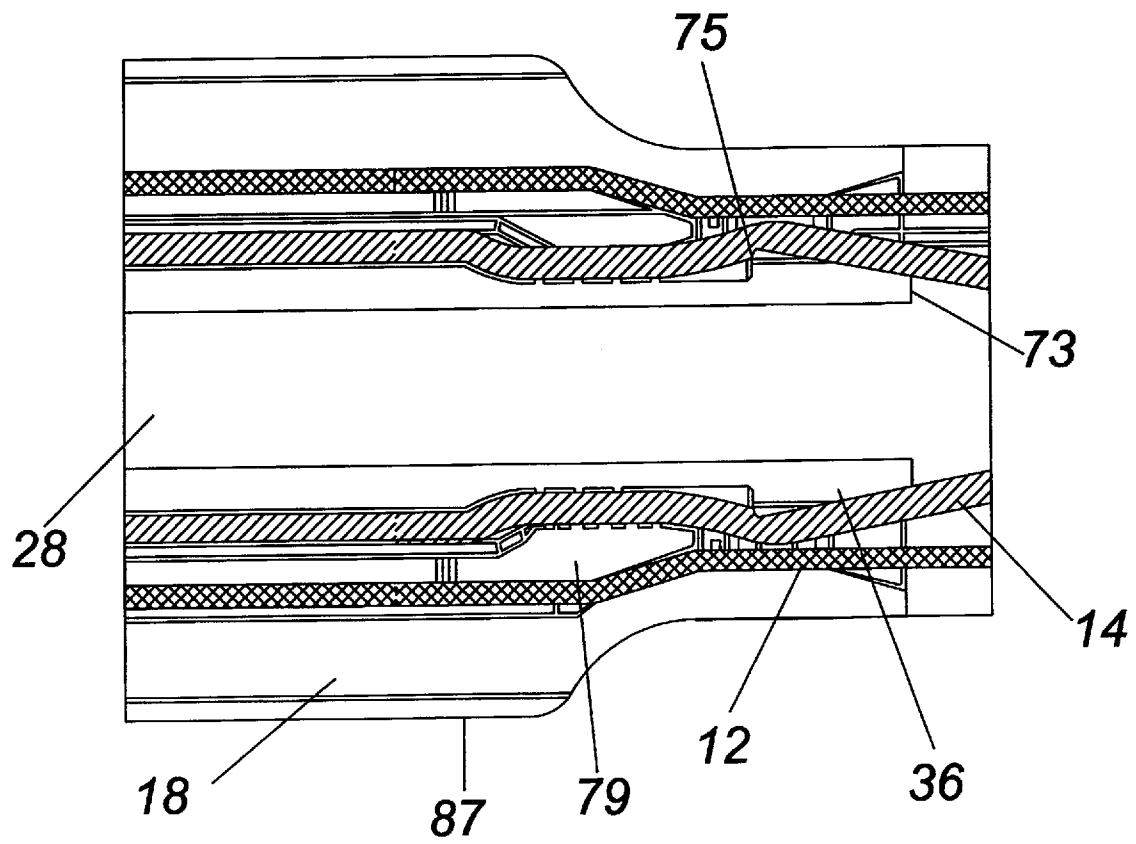


Fig. 12

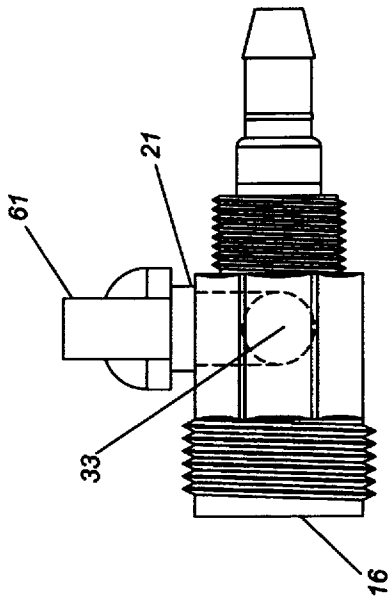


Fig. 14

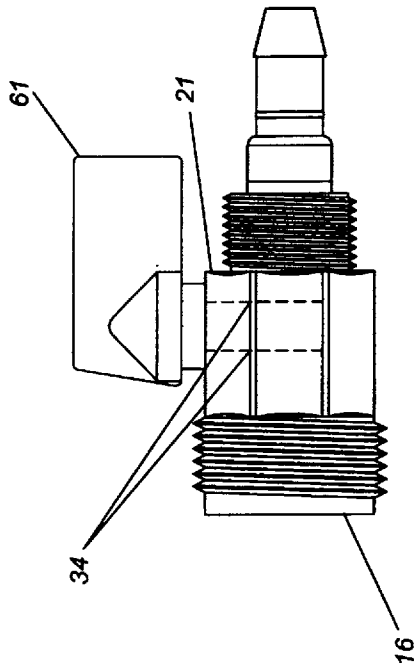


Fig. 13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2014/033533

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. F16L11/10 F16L11/12 F16L11/20 F16L29/02 F16L33/01
F16L33/22

ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

F16L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X,P	US 2013/113205 A1 (BERARDI MICHAEL [US]) 9 May 2013 (2013-05-09) the whole document	1-21
X,P	US 2013/087205 A1 (BERARDI MICHAEL [US]) 11 April 2013 (2013-04-11) the whole document	1-21
X	US 2012/234425 A1 (BERARDI MICHAEL [US]) 20 September 2012 (2012-09-20)	15-21
A	abstract paragraph [0022] paragraph [0043] paragraph [0051] figures	1-14
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

7 July 2014

Date of mailing of the international search report

15/07/2014

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

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Authorized officer

Durrenberger, Xavier

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US2014/033533

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
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International application No

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