

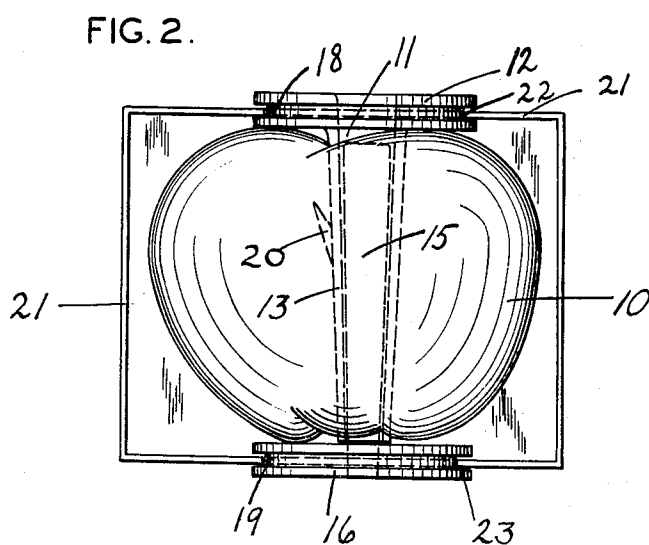
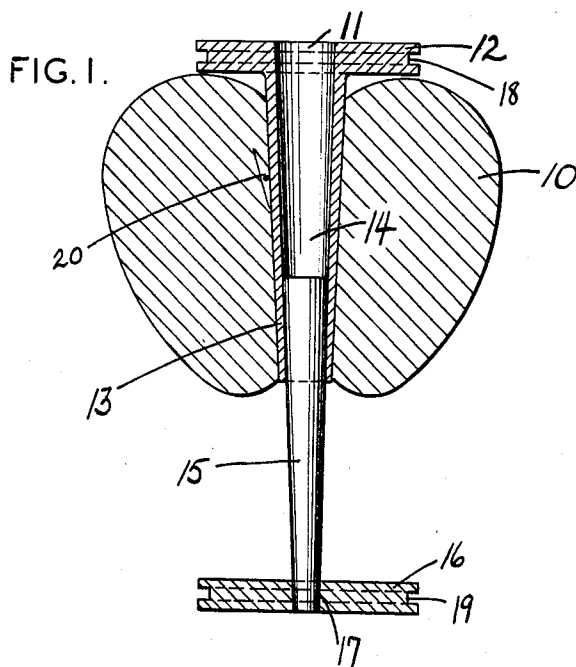
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ARTICLE PACKAGING AND HANDLING DEVICE

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ARTICLE PACKAGING AND HANDLING DEVICE

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1 Claim. (Cl. 206—46)

This invention relates in general to means for packaging and handling articles which are extremely delicate and which have an outer surface which must be maintained protected and undamaged during transport and display.

More particularly this invention is applied to confections such as caramel coated apples, coated confections of all kinds, and bakery goods such as cream puffs, which must be maintained in perfect condition before consumption.

The present invention provides skewer means for piercing and gripping such articles as an early step in the process of their manufacture. These means remain in the articles during their subsequent coating or filling, and in fact provide a convenient attachment by which such articles may be picked up, dipped, moved about and passed through similar operations necessary to complete their manufacture.

One of the principal objects of this invention is to provide a sanitary package for awkwardly shaped and delicate confections, which will be extremely compact but which will, at the same time, make it impossible to damage the confection.

A further object of the invention is to provide a convenient, economical and simple telescoping handle means which can be used to grip the article during its consumption, but which will fold into a recessed position during shipping.

Other objects and uses of these means will appear from a detailed analysis of the invention as exemplified by the particular embodiment illustrated in the accompanying drawings, which show the invention applied to a candied apple. In these drawings:

Figure 1 is a section through the apple, pierced by the skewer and showing the telescoping handle extended to its fullest position, ready for consumption of the apple.

Figure 2 is a plan view of the apple, showing the skewer and telescoping handle compressed together, and carried by a box or container for shipping purposes or for display. The dotted lines of Figure 2 indicate the positions of the skewer and handle means in the interior of the apple.

Referring to Figure 1 of the drawings, the apple is generally indicated at 10. Inserted in the top of the apple is the hollow skewer means 11, which is preferably constructed of plastic. The skewer 11 consists of a circular or cylindrical base 12, integral with the truncated skewer cone 13. The skewer is provided with a tapered opening 14.

In the tapered opening 14 is placed the telescoping handle means 15, which consists of a solid truncated plastic cone of such dimensions that it can be pulled out to the position shown in Figure 1, but no farther. When it is opened out to this position the frictional engagement of the handle means 15 against the inner walls of the

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tapered opening 14, serves to provide a firm and tight fit so that the weight of the apple 10 can easily be supported by the handle 15.

At the lower end of the handle 15 a base 16, corresponding in general shape and outer dimensions to the cylindrical base 12, is provided. The base 16 is attached to the handle 14 by a frictional engagement, or slip fit, through a tapered central opening, 17.

The bases 12 and 16 are respectively provided with circumferential annular slots 18 and 19.

In operation, the skewer 11 is first inserted in the apple. A barb 20, integral with the outer wall of the skewer cone 13, serves to hold the apple on the skewer so that it cannot fall off. After this step, the skewer 11 becomes the part by which the apple is handled, to avoid blemishing or otherwise injuring the fruit. By holding the base 12 in suitably devised grippers, the apple may be automatically washed, dipped, nipped, sprayed, dusted with sugar and submitted to many other appropriate steps.

After such steps as are required to coat the apple or otherwise render it ready for packaging and final transportation to the consumer, the handle 15 is inserted through the central tapered opening 14 in the skewer 11. Then the base 16 is applied to the handle 15.

In order to ship or transport the apple, the handle 15 is pressed back or recessed in the opening 14. This position is shown in Figure 2. In this position both the bases 12 and 16 lie against or immediately adjacent to the ends of the apple.

Next the apple must be placed in a container, either of cardboard or of transparent plastic, for display purposes. The container has dimensions such that it is larger than the apple and consequently nowhere does its walls touch the outer surface, the candied surface of the apple. The container is denoted by the numeral 21 in Figure 2.

Container 21 is provided with circular openings 22, 23 cooperative with the circumferential slots 18, 19 respectively. These openings are of such a size that they fit snugly against the inner edge of the slots, so that the bases 12, 16 cannot fall out of the openings and cause the outer coating of the apple 10 to hit against the walls of the container 21.

It will be noted that when the skewer and handle have been telescoped together as shown in Figure 2, a most compact and sanitary arrangement has been attained for such an awkwardly constructed confection as a candied apple.

When it is desired to consume the candied apple, the sanitary container 21 is removed and the handle 15 is telescoped outward to its fullest extent. This is accomplished by merely pulling the two bases 12 and 16 apart. In this position, see Figure 1, the apple 10 can be held steadily by the handle 15, so that none of the sticky outer surface of the apple comes into contact with the fingers or clothing of the consumer. The barb 20 prevents the apple from turning on the skewer or falling off during consumption.

It is apparent that other modifications of structure may be made without departing from the intent and purpose of my invention; and it is to be understood that the particular embodiment described hereinabove and illustrated in the accompanying drawings is not to be considered as limiting the scope of my invention.

What I claim is:

Means for facilitating the handling of a comestible article, comprising: a container larger than the article and provided with mutually perpendicular walls, two base elements each projecting through the center of one of

two parallel and opposite walls of said container, circumferential slots in said base elements cooperative with the walls of said container to hold the base elements in fixed centered spatial relationship in and through said two parallel and opposite walls, a tubular tapered skewer means integral with one of said base elements whereby the article is supported, a telescoping tapered handle means slidably disposed within said skewer means and integral with the other base element, and barb means integral with said tubular tapered skewer means.

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