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(54) **SOLAR POWERED LIGHT ASSEMBLY TO PRODUCE LIGHT OF VARYING COLORS**

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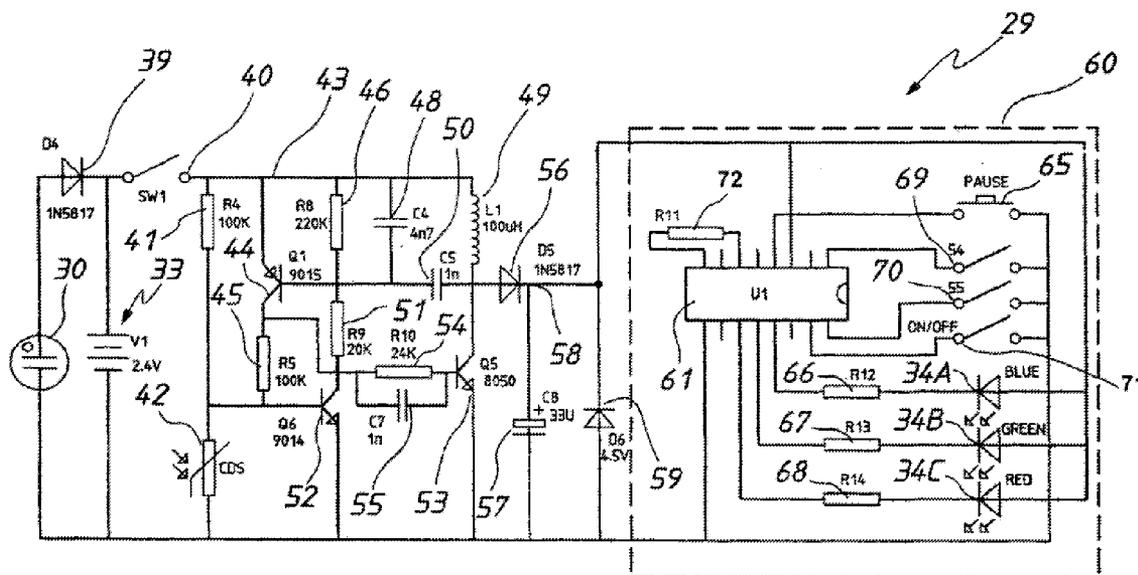
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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/751,665, filed on Jan. 28, 2013, now abandoned, which is a continuation of application No. 12/978,358, filed on Dec. 23, 2010, now Pat. No. 8,362,700, which is a continuation of application No. 12/286,553, filed on Sep. 29, 2008, now abandoned, which is a continuation of application No. 11/102,229, filed on Apr. 7, 2005, now Pat. No. 7,429,827, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 10/789,488, filed on Feb. 26, 2004, now Pat. No. 7,196,477.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A garden light having a body with a post, the lower end of which is provided with a spike. The upper end of the post receives a lens assembly. Secured to the lens assembly is a cap assembly that has three LEDs that are activated to produce a varying colour light.



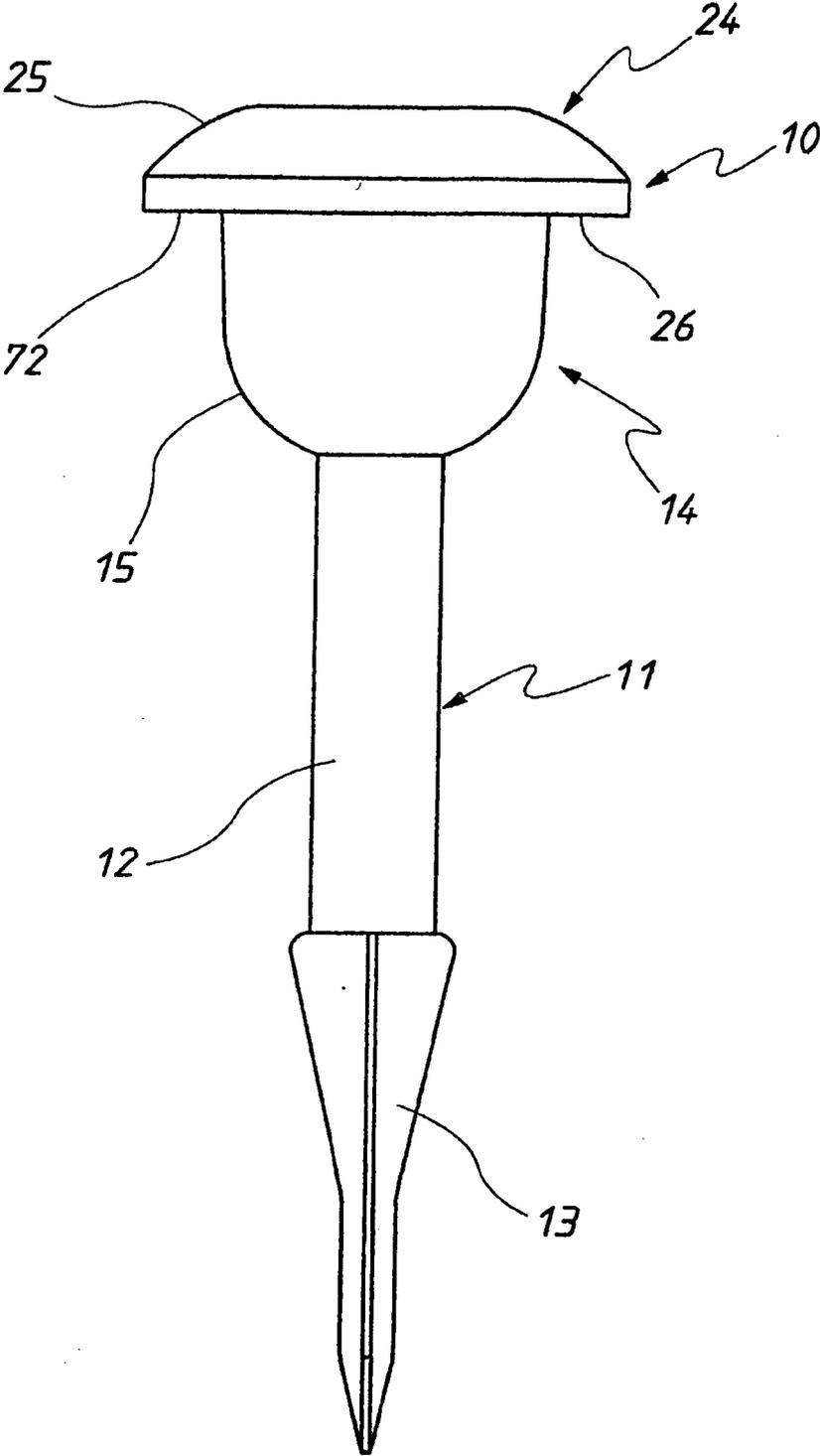


FIG. 1

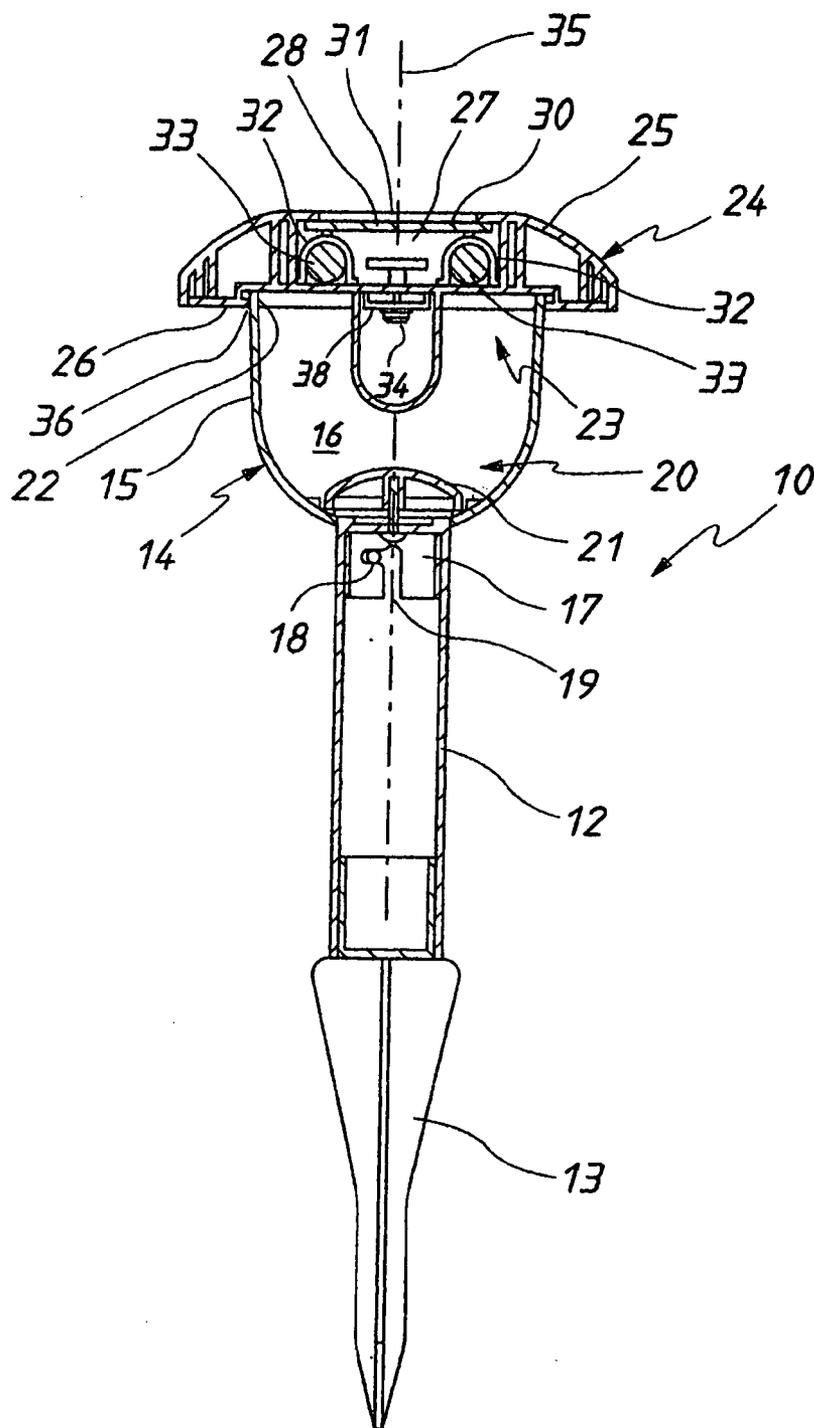


FIG.2

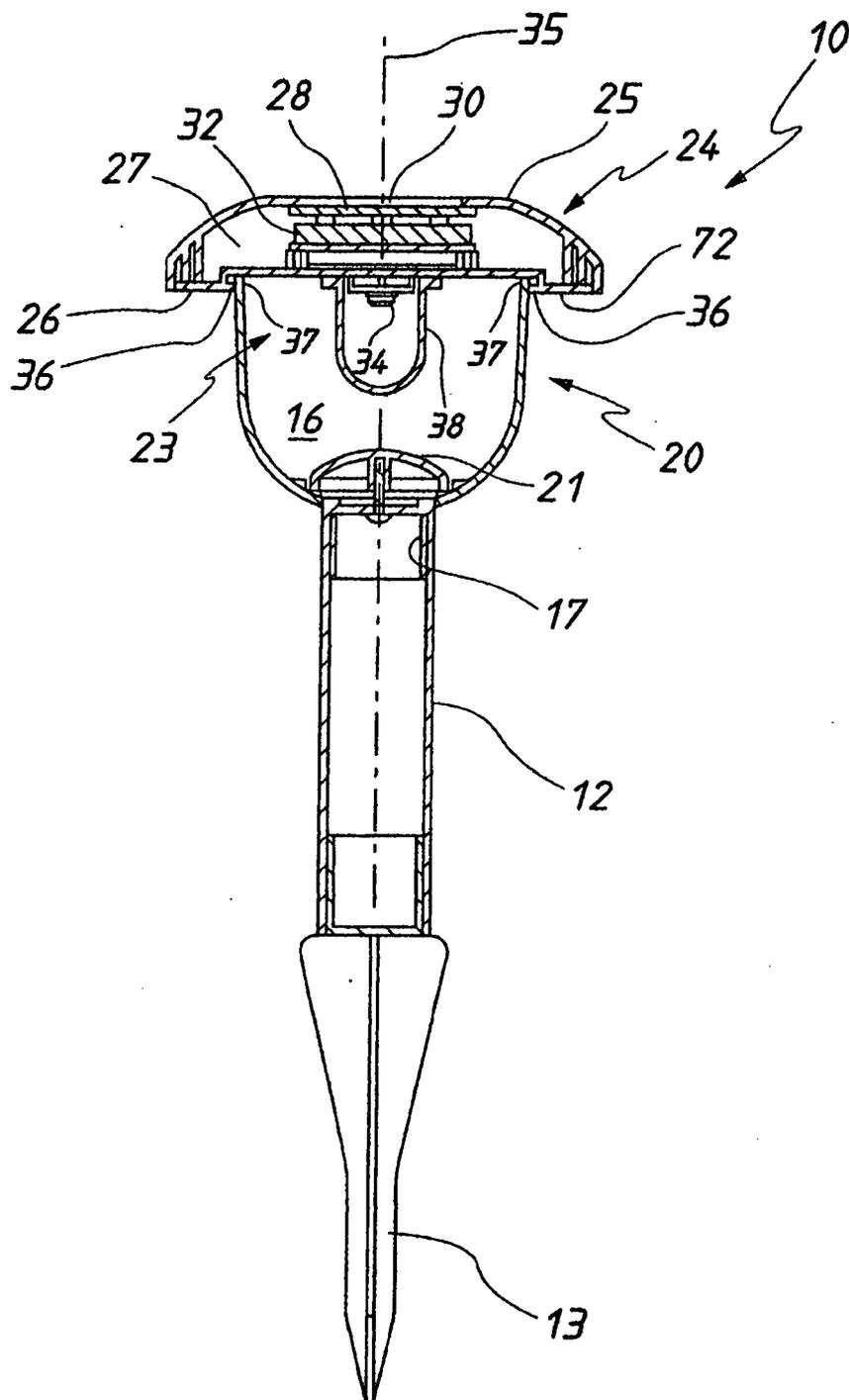


FIG. 3

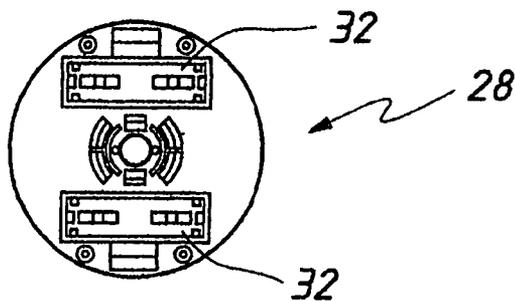


FIG. 4

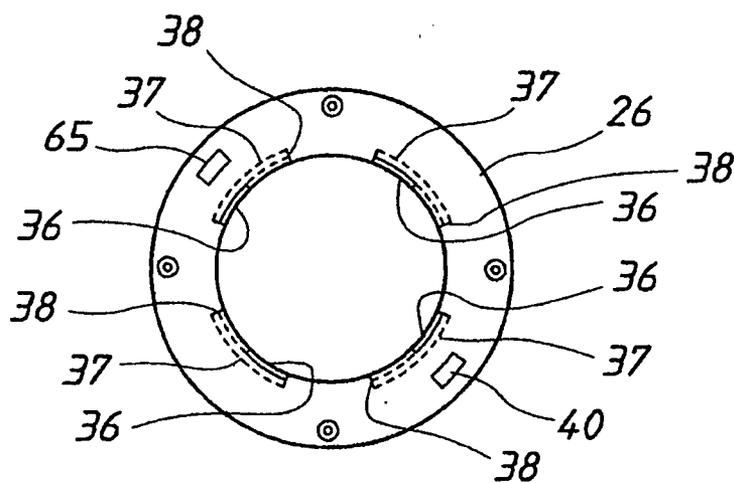


FIG. 5

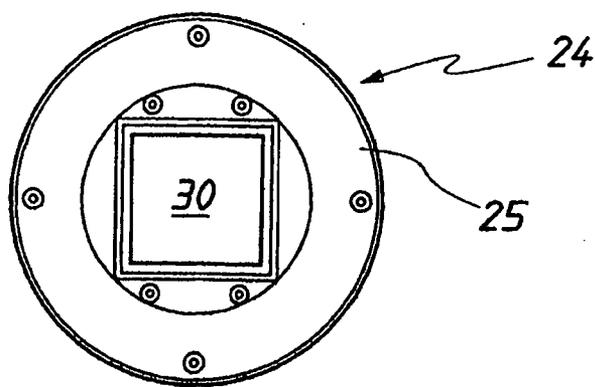


FIG. 6

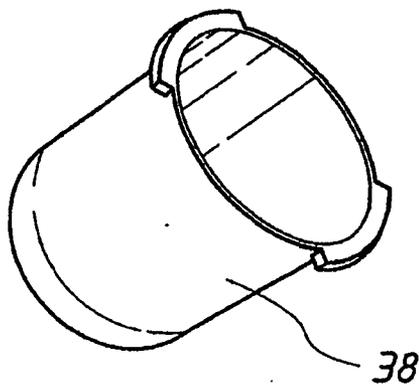


FIG. 7

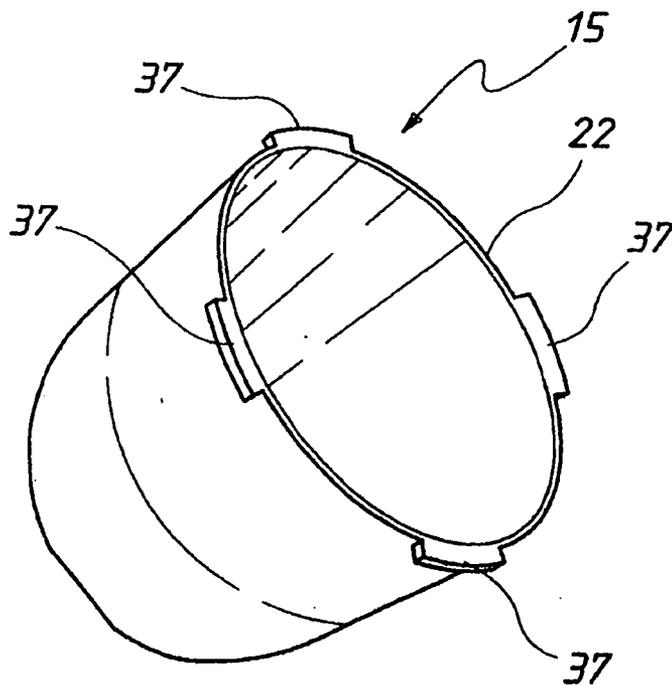


FIG. 8

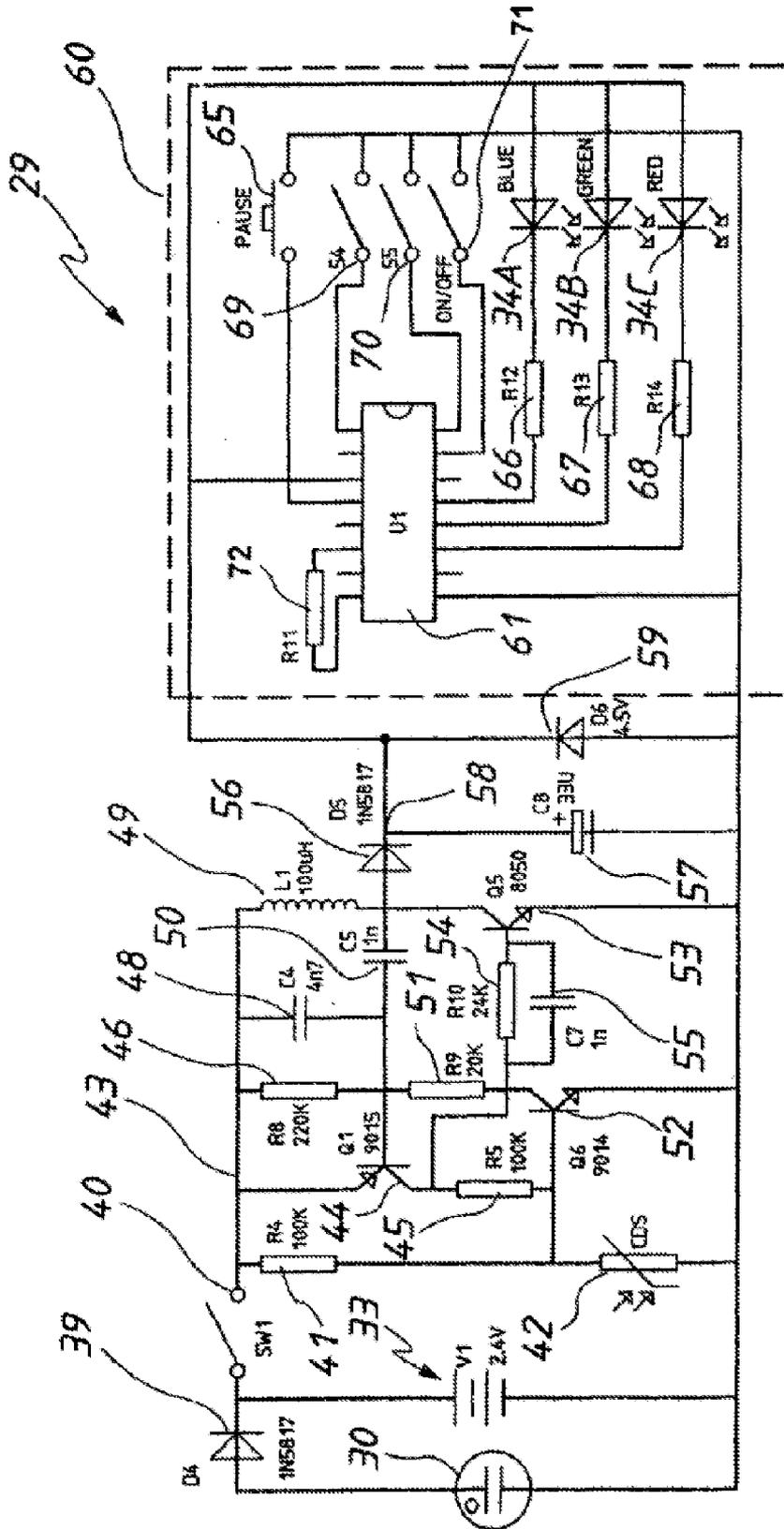


FIG. 9

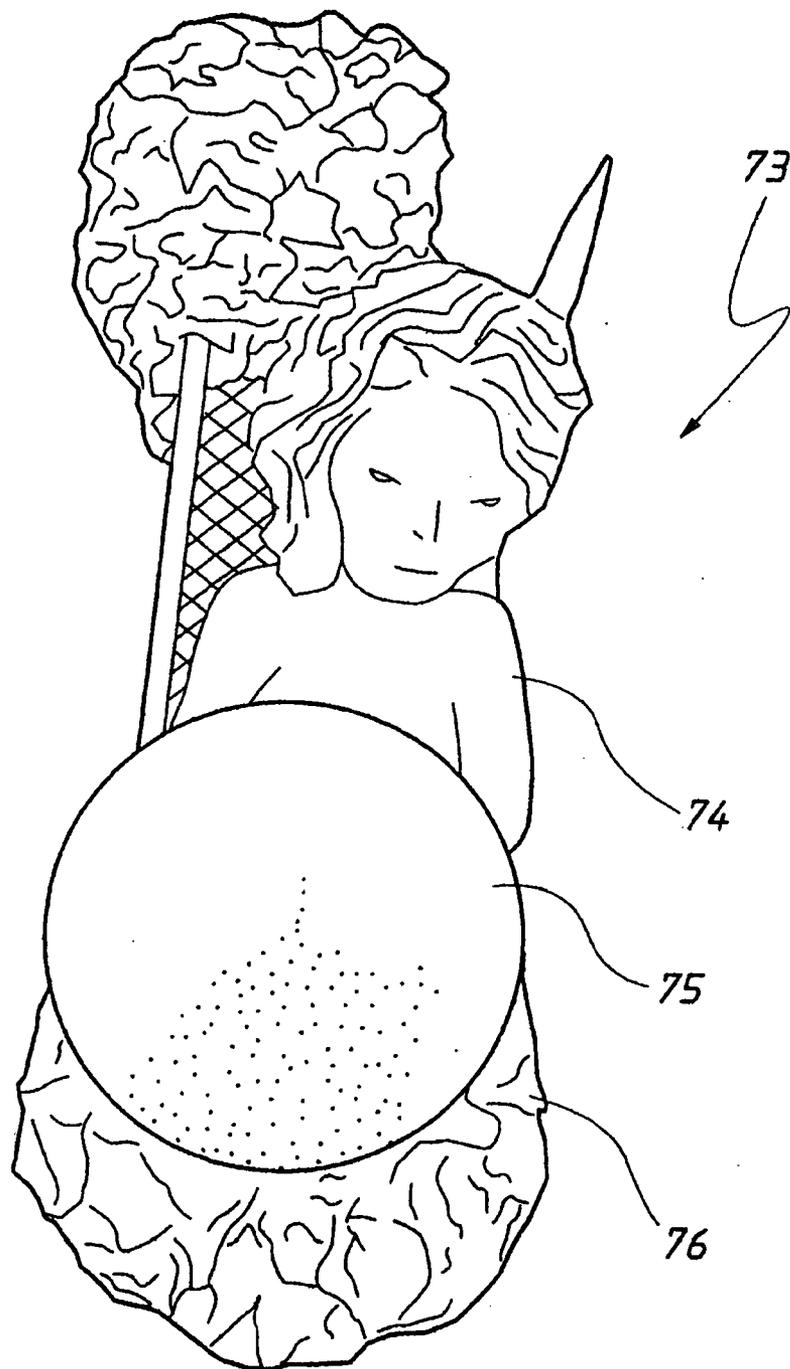
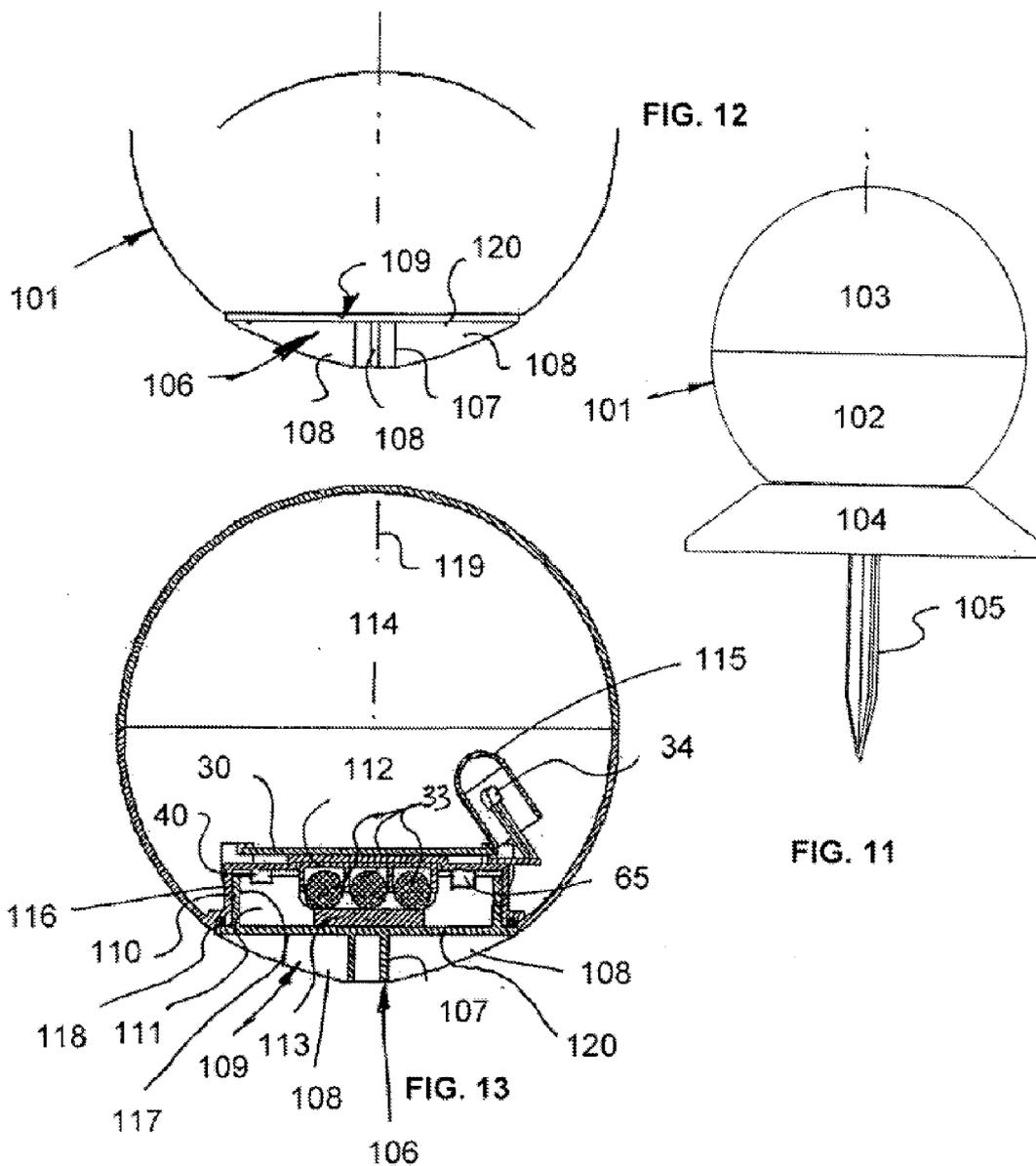


FIG. 10



SOLAR POWERED LIGHT ASSEMBLY TO PRODUCE LIGHT OF VARYING COLORS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/751,665 filed on Jan. 28, 2013, which is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/978,358 filed on Dec. 23, 2010, which issued on Jan. 29, 2013 as U.S. Pat. No. 8,362,700, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/286,553 filed on Sep. 29, 2008 (now abandoned), which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/102,229 filed on Apr. 7, 2005, which issued on Sep. 30, 2008 as U.S. Pat. No. 7,429,827, which is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/789,488, filed on Feb. 26, 2004, which issued on Mar. 27, 2007 as U.S. Pat. No. 7,196,477, which claims priority to Australian Patent Application No. 2003271383, filed on Dec. 23, 2003, which are all incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to solar powered lights and more particularly but not exclusively to solar powered lights that produce a light of varying colour.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Light devices that employ light emitting diode (LED) systems to produce a variable colour are known. Examples are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,459,919, 6,608,458, 6,150,774 and 6,016,038. It is also known to have "garden lights" that are solar powered. For example such garden lights include a body providing a spike that is driven into a ground surface. At the upper end of the spike there is mounted a diffuser surrounding a lamp, with the lamp being driven by rechargeable batteries and a solar cell.

[0004] The abovementioned lighting apparatus have a number of disadvantages including difficulty in adjusting the various lighting functions and not producing a uniform desired colour when required to do so.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is the object of the present invention to overcome or substantially ameliorate at least one of the above disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] There is disclosed herein a lighting device to produce light of varying colour, said device including:

- [0007] a body;
- [0008] a lens mounted on the body and generally enclosing a chamber having an upper rim surrounding a top opening, and a bottom region;
- [0009] a reflector mounted in the bottom region;
- [0010] a cap assembly including securing means to releasably engage the rim so that the cap assembly can be selectively removed from the lens; said assembly including:
- [0011] a base;
- [0012] a circuit having at least two lamps of different colours which are activated to produce a desired colour including a varying colour, the lamps being mounted to direct light into said chamber, a solar cell mounted on an exposed surface of the assembly and rechargeable batteries to power

the circuit, a light sub-circuit connected to the lamps to deliver electric power thereto so that the lamps produce said desired colour, and a switch operable to deliver electric power from the batteries and cell to said sub-circuit, the switch being exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0013] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sensitive switch that renders the circuit operation at low light levels.

[0014] Preferably, said switch is on an exposed downwardly facing surface.

[0015] Preferably, said circuit includes three lamps, each of a different colour.

[0016] Preferably, said lens is a first lens, and said device includes a second lens, said second lens being attached to said base and providing a cavity into which the LEDs direct light, with the light leaving said second lens then passing through said first lens.

[0017] Preferably, the first and second lenses diffuse light.

[0018] Preferably, said body includes a post having opposite first and second ends, with a spike attached to said first end, and said first lens attached to said second end.

[0019] Preferably, said second lens is detachably secured to said post.

[0020] Preferably, said switch is a first switch, and second sub-circuit includes an integrated circuit and a second switch connected to said integrated circuit, the second switch being exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0021] Preferably, said second switch activates said integrated circuit to select a desired colour.

[0022] Preferably, said second switch is on said exposed surface.

[0023] There is further disclosed herein a lighting device to produce light of varying colour, said device including:

- [0024] a body;
- [0025] a lens mounted on the body and generally enclosing a chamber;
- [0026] a circuit having at least two lamps of different colours to produce a desired colour including a varying colour, the lamps being mounted to direct light into said chamber, connections for at least one rechargeable battery to power the circuit and a solar cell mounted on an exposed surface of the assembly and operatively associated with the connections to charge the battery, and a switch operated to control delivery of electric power from the battery to operate said circuit, the switch being exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0027] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sensitive switch that renders the circuit operative at low light levels.

[0028] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit connected to the lamps to deliver electric power thereto so that the lamps produce said desired colour, with said switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the batteries to said sub-circuit.

[0029] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit having an integrated circuit operable to select a desired fixed colour, with said switch being connected to said integrated circuit and operable to select said desired fixed colour.

[0030] Preferably, said circuit includes a sub-circuit, said switch is a first switch said first switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the battery to said sub-circuit, and said sub-circuit includes an integrated circuit and a second switch connected to said integrated circuit, the second switch being operable to select a desired fixed colour and exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0031] Preferably, said second switch is on said exposed external surface.

[0032] There is further disclosed a lighting device to produce light, said device including:

[0033] a base;

[0034] a lens mounted on the base and generally enclosing a chamber;

[0035] a circuit having at least one lamp to produce a light, the lamp being mounted to direct light into said chamber, connections for at least one rechargeable battery to power the circuit and a solar cell exposed to said chamber so as to receive light passing through said lens and operatively associated with the connections to charge the battery, and a primary switch operable to control to operate said circuit;

[0036] a battery compartment including a cavity to receive said battery and having said contacts;

[0037] a closure member attached to said compartment but movable relative thereto to expose said cavity to provide for insertion of said battery; and wherein

[0038] said switch is exposed to said cavity so that upon movement of said closure member to expose said cavity, a user has access to said switch to operate the switch.

[0039] Preferably, device has at least two lamps to produce light of a desired colour including a varying colour.

[0040] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sensitive switch that renders the circuit operative at low light levels.

[0041] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit connected to the lamps to deliver electric power thereto so that the lamps produce said desired colour, with said switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the batteries to said sub-circuit.

[0042] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit having an integrated circuit operable to select a desired fixed colour, with said switch being connected to said integrated circuit and operable to select said desired fixed colour.

[0043] Preferably, said circuit includes a sub-circuit, said switch is a first switch said first switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the battery to said sub-circuit, and said sub-circuit includes an integrated circuit and a second switch connected to said integrated circuit, the second switch being operable to select a desired fixed colour and exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0044] Preferably, said second switch is on said exposed external surface.

[0045] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit connected to the lamps to deliver electric power thereto so that the lamps produce said desired colour, with said primary switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the batteries to said sub-circuit.

[0046] Preferably, said circuit includes a light sub-circuit having an integrated circuit operable to select a desired fixed colour, with said integrated circuit being connected to a sub-circuit switch, the sub-circuit switch being operable to select said desired fixed colour.

[0047] Preferably, said circuit includes a sub-circuit, said primary switch is a first switch said first switch being an on/off switch to deliver electric power from the battery to said sub-circuit, and said sub-circuit includes an integrated circuit and a second switch connected to said integrated circuit, the second switch being operable to select a desired fixed colour and exposed to provide for access thereto by a user.

[0048] Preferably, said second switch is exposed to said chamber.

[0049] Preferably, said lens is fixed to said battery compartment and said battery compartment threadably engages said closure member so that relative rotation between the closure member and said compartment moves said closure member between an open position exposing said cavity and a closed position closing said cavity.

[0050] Preferably, said closure member includes a socket, and said device includes a spike engaged in said socket and projecting therefrom to provide for the spike to be inserted in a ground surface so that the device is supported thereby.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0051] A preferred form of the present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0052] FIG. 1 is a schematic side elevation of a lighting device;

[0053] FIG. 2 is a schematic sectioned front elevation of the device of FIG. 1;

[0054] FIG. 3 is a schematic sectioned side elevation of the device of FIG. 1;

[0055] FIG. 4 is a schematic plan view of a moulding employed in the device of FIG. 1;

[0056] FIG. 5 is a schematic plan view of a base member of the device of FIG. 1;

[0057] FIG. 6 is a schematic to plan view of a cap assembly employed in the device of FIG. 1;

[0058] FIG. 7 is a schematic isometric view of a lens employed in the device of FIG. 1;

[0059] FIG. 8 is a schematic isometric view of a second lens employed in the device of FIG. 1;

[0060] FIG. 9 is a circuit diagram of the circuit of the board of FIG. 4;

[0061] FIG. 10 is a schematic perspective view of an ornamental garden light.

[0062] FIG. 11 is a schematic side elevation of a further lighting device;

[0063] FIG. 12 is a schematic side elevation of the lens portion of the device of FIG. 11; and

[0064] FIG. 13 is a schematic sectioned side elevation of portion of the device of FIG. 11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0065] In FIGS. 1 to 9 of the accompanying drawings there is schematically depicted a lighting device 10. The device 10 of this embodiment is configured as a “garden light”. The device 10 includes a body 11 including a post 12 from the lower end from which there extends a spike 13. The spike 13 is driven into a ground surface so that the post 12 is exposed above the ground surface.

[0066] Attached to the upper end of the post 12 is a lens assembly 14. The lens assembly 14 includes a lens 15 that encompasses a chamber 16. The lower end of the lens 15 has fixed to it a “bayonet” fitting 17 that engages a shaft 18 fixed to the upper end of the post 12. The fitting 17 includes an “L” shaped slot 19 through which the shaft 18 passes to secure the lens assembly 14 to the upper end of the post 12.

[0067] The chamber 16 includes a lower portion 20 within which there is mounted an arcuate reflector 21 that is concave.

[0068] The lens 15 has a rim 22 surrounding the upper opening 23 of the lens 15.

[0069] Removably attached to the rim **22** is a cap assembly **24**. The assembly **24** includes a cover **25** fixed to a base **26**. The base **26** is located beneath the cover **25** and is shielded thereby. The base **26** and cover **25** encompass a chamber **27** within which there is a mounted moulding **28**. The moulding **28** is provided with battery compartments **32**. The components of the circuit **29** are located within the chamber **27**, while the upper surface of the assembly **27** is provided with the solar cell **30**. The cell **30** is exposed through a central rectangular aperture **31** of the cap **25**.

[0070] Mounted within the chamber **27** via battery compartments **32** are rechargeable batteries **33** which are used to energise three LEDs **34**. The LEDs **34** when illuminated produce red, green and blue light.

[0071] The cap assembly **24** is generally circular in configuration so as to provide the device **10** with a generally vertical longitudinal axis **35**.

[0072] The base **26** has radially inward projecting flange segments **36** that engage with radially outward extending flange segments **37** of the rim **22** to be secured thereto. By angular movement of the cap assembly **24** about the axis **35**, the segments **36** and **37** engage or disengage to secure or to release the assembly **24** with respect to the lens **15**. As can be noted from FIG. **5**, the flange segments **37** have end abutment portions **38** against which these segments **36** engage when the assembly **24** is secured to the lens **15**.

[0073] As can be noted from FIG. **6**, mounted on the under surface of the base **26** is a second lens **38**. Accordingly, the LEDs **34** when activated have their light preferably diffused by the lens **38** and then further diffused by the lens **15**. This in particular aids in producing a more evenly coloured light when the LEDs **34** are activated.

[0074] The circuit **29** powers and controls the lighting device **10** in accordance with an embodiment of this invention. The circuit **29** consists of a number of interconnected sub-circuits, including a power supply circuit, a light operated circuit, a boost-up circuit, a rectifier circuit, and a light circuit.

[0075] The power supply circuit comprises a solar cell **30** connected in series to a forward biased diode **39**, which is in turn connected to a positive terminal of a battery **33**. A negative terminal of the battery **33** is then connected to the solar cell **30** to complete the power supply circuit. In this example, the diode **39** is a model number IN5817 Schottky diode and the battery comprises two rechargeable 1.2 volt battery cells. It will be apparent to a person skilled in the art that other diode and battery configurations may be utilised without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

[0076] When the solar cell **30** is exposed to sufficient light, the solar cell converts some of the solar energy to electrical energy and creates a current that passes through the diode **39** to charge the battery **33**. Thus, during the day the solar cell **30** converts energy from the sun to charge the battery **33**. The diode **39** prevents the battery **33** from expending any power on the solar cell **30**.

[0077] The power supply circuit is connected in parallel to the light operated circuit, which is connected across the terminals of the battery **33**. The positive terminal of the battery **33** is connected to a switch **40**, which is in turn connected to a 100 k Ω first resistor **41**. The first resistor **41** is connected in series with a second, light-dependent resistor **42**. The second resistor **42** connects to the negative terminal of the batteries **33** to complete the light operated circuit. The value of resistance of the second resistor **42** depends on the amount of light to which the second resistor **42** is exposed. When there is not

much light, such as occurs during the night, the value of the second resistor **42** increases. During the daytime, when there is sufficient light, the value of the second resistor **42** decreases. Accordingly the resistor **42** allows the lighting device to operate only when there is insufficient light, ie night.

[0078] The boost-up circuit is connected to the light operated circuit, in parallel with the first resistor **41** and the second, light-dependent resistor **42**. A first circuit node **43** is defined between the switch **40** and the first resistor **41**. Connected to the node **43**, is an emitter terminal of a first triode **44**. A collector terminal of the first triode **44** is connected in series with a 100 k Ω third resistor **45**. The third resistor **45** is then connected to a point between the first resistor **41** and the second resistor **42**.

[0079] A 220 k Ω fourth resistor **46** is connected to node **43** across the emitter and base terminals of the first triode **44**. In parallel with the fourth resistor **46**, and also connected across the emitter and base terminals of the first triode **44**, is a 4.7 nF first capacitor **48**. Further connected to node **43**, across the emitter and base terminals of the first triode **44** and in parallel with each of the fourth resistor **46** and the first capacitor **48**, is a 100 μ H inductor **49** in series with a 1 nF second capacitor **50**. The second capacitor is then connected to the base terminal of the first triode **44**.

[0080] A 20 k Ω fifth resistor **51** is connected across the base and collector terminals of the first triode **44**. Connected across the terminals of the third resistor **45** are the collector and base terminals, respectively, of a second triode **52**. The emitter terminal of the second triode **52** is connected to the negative terminal of the batteries **33**.

[0081] Connected between the inductor **49** and the second capacitor **50** is the collector terminal of a third triode **53**. The base terminal of the third triode **53** is connected via an intermediary circuit to the collector terminal of the second triode **52**. The intermediary circuit consists of a 2.4 k Ω fourth resistor **54** in parallel with a 1 nF third capacitor **55**. The emitter terminal of the third triode **53** is connected to the negative terminal of the battery **33**.

[0082] Also connected between the inductor **49** and the second capacitor **50** is the rectifier circuit. A forward biased second diode **56** is connected to a point between the inductor **49** and the second capacitor **50**, and then to a positive terminal of a 33 μ F fourth capacitor **57**. The negative terminal of the fourth capacitor **57** is connected to the negative terminal of the battery **33**. A second circuit node **58** is defined between the second diode **56** and the fourth capacitor **57**. Connected in parallel with the fourth capacitor **57**, between the second node **58** and the negative terminal of the battery **33** is a reverse biased 4.5V third diode **59**. The second diode **56**, the fourth capacitor **57** and the third diode **59** comprise the rectifier circuit. Further connected to the second circuit node **58**, in parallel with each of the capacitor **57** and the reverse diode **59**, is a light circuit **60**.

[0083] The light circuit **60** contains an integrated circuit (IC) **61** for controlling lighting effects provided by the lighting device **10**. In the embodiments shown, the IC **61** is a 16-pin, three colour LED IC for controlling first, second and third light emitting diodes (LEDs) **34A**, **34B** and **34C**. Each of pins **1**, **15** and **16** is connected in series to respective switches **69**, **70**, **71**. Each of the switches **69**, **70** and **71** is then connected to the negative terminal of the battery **33**. In one embodiment, the switches **69**, **70**, **71** correspond to the LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C** to enable or disable a particular colour range. In another embodiment, the switches **69**, **70**, **71** deter-

mine the frequency of a colour changing effect. In a further embodiment, the switches **69**, **70**, **71** determine the intensity of light emitted by each of the LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C**. Various combinations of the frequency and intensity of light are also possible. The switches **69**, **70**, **71** can be made accessible to a user to create custom lighting effects. Alternatively, the switches **69**, **70**, **71** are set according to a predetermined configuration and are not readily accessible by a user.

[0084] Pin **4** of the IC **61** enables an optional pause function. In this embodiment, pin **4** connects to a push button **65** that is, in turn, connected to the negative terminal of the batteries **33**. Pin **3** of the IC **61** connects to the second circuit node **58**.

[0085] Connected to the second circuit node **58**, and in parallel with one another, are the first second and third forward biased light emitting diodes (LEDs) **34A**, **34B** and **34C**. The first LED **34A** is connected in series with a sixth resistor **66** that is connected to pin **13** of the IC **61**. The second LED **34B** is connected in series with a seventh resistor **67** that is connected to pin **12** of the IC **61**. The third LED **34C** is connected in series with an eighth resistor **68** that is connected to pin **11** of the IC **61**. In this example, the first LED **34A** is blue, the second LED **34B** is green and the third LED **34C** is red.

[0086] Pins **6** and **8** of the IC **61** are tied to one another via a ninth resistor **72**, which in the embodiment shown is a 20 k Ω resistor. The value of the ninth resistor **72** determines the frequency of a colour change created by the IC **61**. Accordingly, using different resistor values for the ninth resistor **72** produces colour changes of different frequencies. Pin **9** of the IC **61** is tied to the negative terminal of the battery **33**.

[0087] During the day, the solar cell **30** charges the battery **33**. The value of the second resistor **42** is low and, consequently, small amounts of current flow through the boost-up circuit, rectifier circuit and light circuit. As night falls, the amount of energy converted by the solar cell **30** decreases. The resistance of the second resistor **42** increases and more current flows into the boost-up circuit, rectifier circuit and light circuit. This activates the LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C** in the light circuit and the light device **10** produces a changing light effect.

[0088] The integrated circuit **61** controls each of the first, second and third LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C** to produce a changing light effect for the light device **10**. The integrated circuit varies the frequency and intensity of light emitted by the LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C** to produce a constantly changing kaleidoscopic effect. The light device **10** displays a constantly changing lighting effect that cycles through the light spectrum by ramping up and ramping down the intensity of light displayed by the LEDs **34A**, **34B**, and **34C**.

[0089] Connecting the optional pause function of pin **4** of the IC **61** to the push button **65** enables a user to stop the changing light effect and maintain a constant colour. In this manner, a user can select a preferred colour for a lighting effect. The user observes the changing colour effect and when a desired colour is displayed, the user depresses the pause button **65**.

[0090] The colour displayed at the time that the button is pressed then remains on. Preferably, the circuit retains sufficient charge such that a user selected colour is retained during the day and is displayed again when the light is reactivated the following evening. In this manner, the user does not have to reselect a desired colour each night. To reinstate the changing

light effect, the user presses the push button **65** again and the changing light effect resumes.

[0091] In the embodiment shown in FIG. **9**, the battery **33** powers the light circuit **60** during the night to produce light of varying colours and the user can optionally select a desired colour by pushing the push button **65**. A selected colour is retained by memory in the IC **61**. The memory may be a switch. Whilst the battery is powering the light circuit **60**, the fourth capacitor **57** stores charge. As stated above, it is desirable for a selected colour to be retained and displayed on successive nights. As the battery **33** discharges, the output voltage of the battery **33** decreases. When the output voltage of the battery **33** is less than the stored voltage of the capacitor **57**, the capacitor **57** discharges. Due to the presence and arrangement of the diodes **56** and **59**, the capacitor **57** discharges through the light circuit **60**.

[0092] The IC **61** preferably includes a cut-off circuit that is voltage dependent. As the capacitor **57** discharges, the voltage across the cut-off circuit decreases. Once the voltage across the cut-off circuit reaches a predetermined threshold value, the cut-off circuit prevents further power being consumed by the LEDs. As no power is being consumed by the light circuit **60**, the capacitor **57** retains a residual charge. The residual charge maintains a voltage across the IC **61**, which enables the selected colour to be retained by the memory in the IC **61**.

[0093] During the next day, the solar cell **30** recharges the battery **33**. As night falls, the resistance of resistor **42** again increases and the battery **33** provides sufficient power to the light circuit **60** to increase the voltage across the cut-off circuit above the predetermined threshold value. The LEDs are activated and the selected colour, as retained in the memory of the IC **61**, is displayed. The voltage provided by the battery **33** is more than the stored charge of the fourth capacitor **57**, so the capacitor **57** again begins to store charge.

[0094] It will be readily apparent to a person skilled in the art that there are many circuit variations possible for enabling and controlling the lighting display, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

[0095] The switch **40** and/or switch **65** is/are mounted on the base **26** so as to be on a downwardly facing external surface of the base **26**. This enables a user to control the device via readily accessible switches, without needing to remove the cap assembly **24**. The switches **40** and **65** are each operable to control delivery of electric power from the batteries to the LEDs **34A**, **34B** and **34C**. The circuit **29** is only rendered operative when there is insufficient light, that is, by operation of a light sensitive switch, ie the diode **43**.

[0096] The embodiment of FIG. **10** includes an ornamental garden light **73** having a body or base **74**. The base **74** would be at least partly hollow so as to contain the circuitry of FIG. **9**, except for the solar cell **30**. The solar cell **30** would be mounted so as to be exposed to sunlight. The switches **40** and **65** would be mounted at an external surface of the base **74**.

[0097] The switch **40** and/or switch **65** would be mounted on an external surface of the base **74**, while the diode **42** would be exposed to sunlight.

[0098] The base **74** includes a spherical lens **75** secured to a horizontal portion **76** of the base **74**. The horizontal portion **76** would have mounted in it the LEDs **34A**, **34B** and **34C** so as to deliver light to the interior of the lens **75**.

[0099] In FIGS. **11** to **13** there is schematically depicted a lighting device **100** that is a modification of the previously described lighting devices.

[0100] The lighting device **100** employs the circuit of FIG. 9.

[0101] In this embodiment, the lighting device **100** includes a lens **101** of generally spherical form consisting of a lower portion **102** fixed to an upper portion **103**. A skirt **104** abuts the lower portion **102**.

[0102] The base **106** includes a battery compartment **110** providing a cavity **111** within which a battery holder **112** is located and supports the batteries **33**. The battery compartment **110** is closed by a closure member **109** that acts as a cap or lid closing the cavity **111**. The member **109** includes a pad **113** that abuts the batteries **33** to aid in retaining them in position.

[0103] A spike **105** extending from the closure member **109** and is provided to penetrate an earth surface to secure the device **100** in position.

[0104] The member **109** has a socket **107** within which the upper portion of the spike **105** is slidably received. The spike **105** engages the skirt **104** and holds the skirt **104** abutting the lower portion **102**.

[0105] Flanges **108** extend from the socket **107** and are fixed to an upper flange **120** of the closure member **109** to reinforce the socket **107**.

[0106] The lens **101** encloses a chamber **114** to which the solar cell **30** is exposed so that the solar cell **30** receives light through the lens **101**. Located adjacent the solar cell **30** but not illustrated is a circuit board having the circuit **29**.

[0107] Mounted on the battery compartment **110** are the LEDs **34a**, **34b** and **34c** that are protected by means of a translucent diffuser **115**.

[0108] Mounted on the battery compartment **110** is the switch **40** and/or switch **65** of the circuit **29**.

[0109] The battery compartment **110** includes a generally circular internally threaded flange **116** that threadably engages a circular flange **117** of the base **106**.

[0110] In respect of the above preferred embodiment, the battery compartment **110** is integrally formed with the lower portion **102** and engages the base **106** by means of an annular seal **118** to sealingly connect the base **106** to the battery compartment **110**.

[0111] To provide access to the batteries **33** and switches **40** and **65**, the lens **101** is rotated about the axis **119** relative to the base **106** so there is relative movement between the flanges **116** and **117**. This relative movement removes the base **106** from the lens **101**. Accordingly a user may then manipulate the switches **40** and **65**.

[0112] In the above embodiment, the member **109** is moved relative to the base **106** from a closed position, relative to the cavity **111**, to at least a partly open position providing access to the switches **40** and **65**.

What is claimed is:

1. A solar-powered garden-lamp device to produce light of varying intensity, said device including:

a diffuser;

a circuit including: at least two electrical light sources of different colors mounted to direct light through at least part of said diffuser wherein said at least two electrical light sources include a first electrical light source that emits a first color and a second electrical light source that emits a second color;

an activation sub-circuit to provide power to said at least two electrical light sources only at low ambient light levels;

a light sub-circuit comprising an integrated circuit to independently control delivery of power to each of said at least two electrical light sources so as to ramp up and ramp down the perceived intensity of light emitted over time by said at least two electrical light sources to produce a color changing cycle that varies the perceived color emitted by the diffuser over time and includes a portion of a color spectrum having at least said first color, said second color, and a third color, wherein said third color is produced by said at least first electrical light source and said at least second electrical light source;

connections for at least one rechargeable battery to power said circuit;

at least one solar cell mounted so as to be exposed to sunlight and electrically connected to said connections to charge said at least one rechargeable battery; and
at least one user-operated switch that is accessible by a user to control said circuit, with said switch being accessible by said user thereby enabling said user to manipulate said switch to control delivery of power to said at least three light sources.

2. A lighting device, said device comprising:

a light diffuser;

a circuit comprising:

a plurality of light sources comprising:

at least one light source that emits a first color;

at least one light source that emits a second color; and

at least one light source that emits a third color;

wherein said plurality of light sources are mounted to direct emitted light through at least part of said light diffuser;

a first light sub-circuit to control delivery of power to at least one of said at least one light source that emits said first color, at least one of said at least one light source that emits said second color and at least one of said at least one light source that emits said third color so as to automatically vary the perceived color of light emitted via light diffuser over time;

a second light sub-circuit comprising an integrated circuit to determine the intensity of light emitted by: at least one of said at least one light source that emits said first color, at least one of said at least one light source that emits said second color and at least one of said at least one light source that emits said third color so as to emit a user-changeable constant color of light via said light diffuser;

a memory associated with said integrated circuit, said memory and said integrated circuit causing operation of said second light sub-circuit to produce said user-changeable constant color;

a user-input device connected to said integrated circuit and operable via actions of a user to make a desired selection of said constant color;

an activation sub-circuit to provide power to said plurality of light sources only at low light levels;

connections for at least one rechargeable battery to power said circuit; and

at least one solar cell mounted so as to be exposed to light and operatively associated with said connections to charge said at least one rechargeable battery.

3. The lighting device of claim 2, wherein said memory forms a portion of said integrated circuit.

4. The lighting device of claim 2, wherein said user-input device is a first user-input device and further comprising a

second user-input device operable by a user to control delivery of electric power from said at least one rechargeable battery to at least said first light sub-circuit.

5. The lighting device of claim 4, wherein said user-input device comprises a push-button switch and wherein said second user-input device comprises a second switch.

6. The lighting device of claim 2, further comprising: a voltage-dependent cut-off sub-circuit, wherein upon a voltage across said cut-off sub-circuit reaching a predetermined threshold, said voltage cut-off sub-circuit interrupts any consumption of power by said plurality of light sources such that a retained stored charge in said circuit provides sufficient voltage to power said memory to enable said memory to retain said selection for a period of time.

7. The lighting device of claim 5, further comprising: a voltage cut-off sub-circuit,

wherein upon a voltage across said cut-off sub-circuit reaching a predetermined threshold, said cut-off sub-circuit prevents any of said plurality of light sources from further drawing stored charge from said battery, such that a retained stored charge in said circuit provides sufficient voltage to power said memory to enable said memory to retain said selection for a period of time; and wherein said constant color of light includes a fourth color produced by at least two of said first color, said second color and said third color.

8. A solar-powered garden-lamp device to produce light of varying intensity, said device including:

- a body;
- a diffuser;
- a circuit including: at least three electrical light sources of different colors mounted to direct light through at least part of said diffuser wherein said at least three electrical light sources include a first electrical light source that emits a first color, a second electrical light source that emits a second color and a third electrical light source that emits a third color;
- an activation sub-circuit to provide power to said at least three electrical light sources only at low ambient light levels;
- a light sub-circuit comprising an integrated circuit to independently control delivery of power to each of said at least three electrical light sources so as to ramp up and ramp down the perceived intensity of light emitted over time by said at least three electrical light sources to produce a color changing cycle that includes a portion of a color spectrum having at least said first color, said second color, and said third color, wherein said portion is produced by said first electrical light source, said second electrical light source and said third electrical light source;
- connections for at least one rechargeable battery to power said circuit;
- at least one solar cell mounted so as to be exposed to sunlight and electrically connected to said connections to charge said at least one rechargeable battery; and
- at least one user-operated switch operable to control said circuit, with said switch being accessible by said user

thereby enabling said user to manipulate said switch to control delivery of power to said at least three electrical light sources.

9. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, wherein said first light source is at least one diode that emits red light, wherein said second light source is at least one diode that emits green light and wherein said third light source is at least one diode that emits blue light.

10. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, wherein said diffuser is a lens attached to said body and generally shaped to form an enclosure for a chamber, and wherein said at least three light sources are mounted to emit light through at least a portion of said lens via said chamber.

11. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, further comprising an at least partially vertically-oriented post portion connected to a spike for positioning and elevating said at least one solar cell above a ground surface.

12. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, wherein said diffuser is detachably secured to said body.

13. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, further comprising a user-accessible push button to enable said user to cause the diffuser to emit a user-selected constant color.

14. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 13, wherein said user-selected color is retained in a memory and wherein said user-selected color is displayed again when said diffuser begins to emit light on subsequent activations when the ambient light drops to said low ambient light levels.

15. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 8, wherein said diffuser is a first diffuser generally shaped to form a chamber enclosure for a chamber and further comprising a second diffuser generally shaped to form a cavity enclosure for a cavity and wherein said at least two light sources are mounted to direct light into said chamber via said cavity such that said light produced by said at least two light sources passes through said second diffuser and then said first diffuser.

16. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 15, wherein said second diffuser projects at least partially into said chamber.

17. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 15, further including a diffuser assembly comprises a base, said first diffuser and said second diffuser, and wherein said second diffuser is attached to said base, and wherein said base is removably attached to said first diffuser.

18. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 17, wherein said circuit is at least partially contained in said base.

19. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 17, wherein said second diffuser is removably attached to said base via engagement of extending flange segments of said second diffuser.

20. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 17, wherein said second diffuser has a lower interior surface that has a non-linear cross-section about the vertical axis.

21. The solar-powered garden-lamp device of claim 17 further comprising a post portion for elevating said diffuser above a ground surface.

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