

May 9, 1944.

W. G. McLELLAN ET AL

2,348,488

CONTAINER

Filed Aug. 28, 1940

Fig. 1

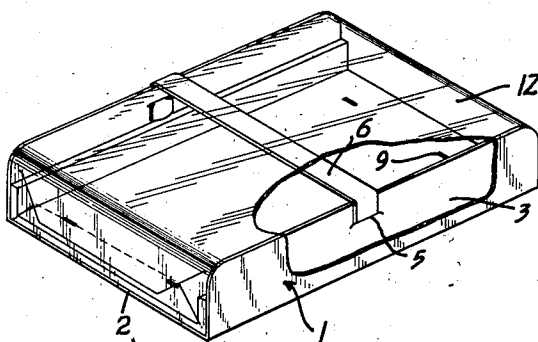


Fig. 2

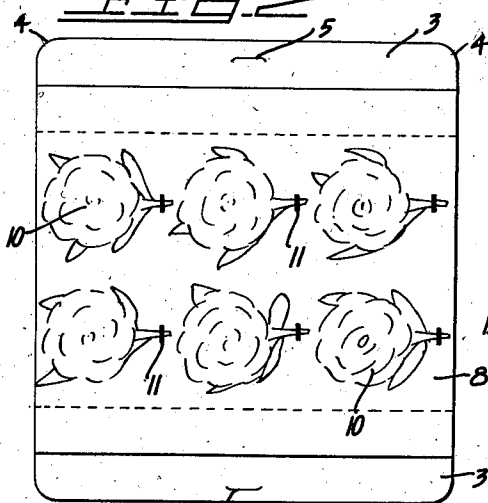


Fig. 4

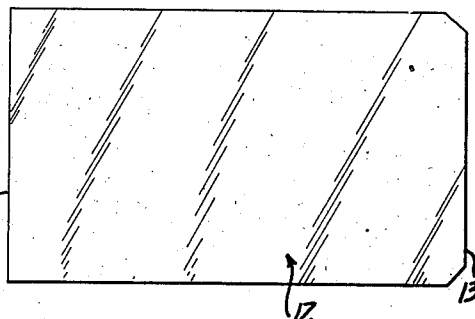


Fig. 5

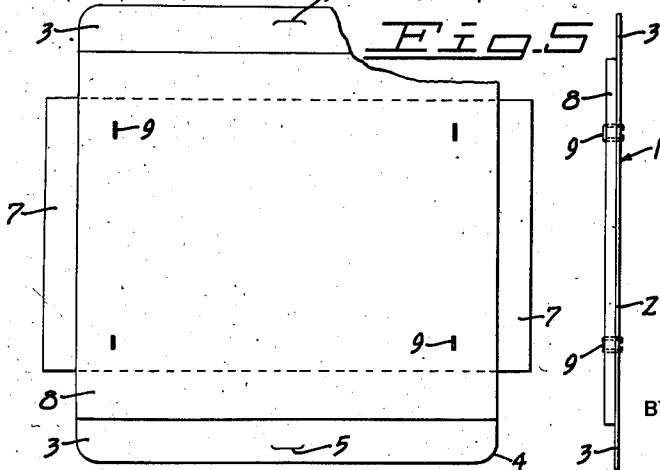


Fig. 3

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CONTAINER

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Application August 28, 1940, Serial No. 354,552

3 Claims. (Cl. 312—31)

This invention relates to a container for preserving and transporting fresh cut flowers, particularly gardenias, camellias, etc.

One of the objects of our invention is to provide an air and moisture proof package enabling fresh cut flowers to be kept fresh and unwilted over substantial periods of time.

Another object of the invention is to provide an attractive package for such fresh flowers which is adapted to display said flowers without opening or breaking the package.

Still another object of our invention is to provide an air and moisture proof package in which said flowers are visible and which encloses a body of moisture laden air around said flowers creating a vapor pressure within said package, thereby preserving the flowers in a fresh and unwilted condition.

A further object is to provide a package for flowers which is durable and strong and will not break open while it is being transported and handled and yet fully displays the flowers through its wrappings. Other and further objects will appear in the drawing and description attached hereto.

In the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of our invention.

Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the blank from which the tray is formed with the absorbent material and the flowers in position.

Fig. 3 is an edge view of the tray in Fig. 2, without the flowers.

Fig. 4 is a transparent envelope which may be used with our invention.

Fig. 5 is a top plan view of a blank from which another form of tray provided with end pieces can be formed.

Heretofore, particularly in the wholesale flower business, where from six to three dozen individual flowers have been sold to retailers in a single container, the packaging of said flowers has been done in ordinary cardboard boxes or the like, sometimes provided with a layer of moist absorbent material below and above the blooms. These methods of packing were both clumsy and unsatisfactory for the reason that the moisture in the box readily dried out due to the box not being properly enclosed or air tight as well as the necessity of opening the box frequently to display the flowers to prospective buyers. Further difficulties were introduced by virtue of the fact that the absorbent material or box was in direct contact with the petals of the flowers, causing them to color and lose their sale value. Then, too, since the flowers were not exposed to view or permanently positioned in the box,

they often came in contact with one another for long periods of time which caused additional coloring and wilting. This condition would remain for considerable periods merely because it was not noticeable through the non-transparent packing, then being used.

Briefly described, our invention consists of a rectangular tray made of some flexible material such as cardboard, provided with two or more sides, whichever may be more convenient, having in either case, an open top so that the flowers are visible at all times. Over the bottom of the tray and extending part way up on the sides, we provide a relatively thin layer of absorbent material, such as cotton, which is adapted to absorb water and to protect the petals of the flowers from the box. Across the top of this tray, extending from one side to the other, a thin strip of the material from which the tray is formed, may be positioned to hold the sides perpendicular to the bottom of the tray and to keep the transparent wrapping from coming in contact with the flowers. The flowers are placed in the box on the absorbent material in positions so as not to touch the other flowers or the box. The tray and flowers are wrapped in a sheet of moistureproof transparent material and the edges and ends of which are heat sealed to prevent any moisture or air from escaping from the box. Envelopes of this transparent material with one open end may also be used into which the full tray is slipped, after which the ends may be sealed as is the sheet described above.

In detail, the device illustrated in the drawing is formed from a sheet of flexible material, preferably cardboard, cut to the proper size to form the tray 1. The sheet is formed with a rectangular center or bottom 2, which serves as a bottom of the tray, and along the long sides of this center portion are two generally rectangular strips or sides 3 adapted to be folded up along the edges of portion 2 to positions at right angles to the bottom, 2, of the tray. The outside corners of the strips or sides 3 may be rounded as at 4 to enhance the appearance of the box and make it easier to insert in the transparent envelope 12, if it is used. Located centrally between the ends of strips or sides 3 and near the upper or outer edge, slits 5 may be formed to receive the ends of a long narrow strip 6 of material, out of which the tray is formed. Thus, when the sides 3 are folded to positions perpendicular to the bottom 2 of the tray 1, one end of the strip 6 may be inserted through one of the slits 5 from the outside and the remaining portion of strip 6 carried up, over and across the

tray and folded down through the other slit 5, as shown in Fig. 1.

If desirable, the tray 1 may be formed with rectangular end pieces 7 (Fig. 5) which are formed at the smaller ends of bottom 2 of tray 1, so that they may be folded up perpendicular to the bottom 2 in the same manner as strips 3. End pieces 7, however, are not adapted to extend as far up from the bottom 2 in their perpendicular positions as are strips 3.

A relatively thin layer of absorbent material 8, as cotton, is cut to fit the bottom 2 of tray 1 and is of sufficient size so that it extends part way up sides 3 when they are in a position perpendicular to bottom 2. (Figs. 1 and 2.) The other edges of the absorbent material 8 are formed to be flush with the ends of bottom 2 whether or not end pieces 7 are provided. This absorbent material 8 may be clamped to tray 2 by means of clamps 9 or may be laid loosely in the tray and clamped or tied simultaneously with the flowers 10 as indicated at 11. Likewise, the flowers 10 may be attached to the absorbent material before it is placed in the tray.

A transparent wrapping or envelope 12, preferably made from 300 M. S. T. Cellophane, is adapted to be placed around the tray and enclosed flowers. It is important to note that this transparent material must be both moisture and waterproof and capable of being heat sealed in the conventional manner at its edges 13. As has been explained above, the tray may be wrapped in a sheet, or formed envelopes may be purchased, which eliminates the hermetic sealing at all but one end.

From the above description, it is evident that the tray 2 is folded into shape and the absorbent material 8 is placed in position. The sides 3 are then folded up perpendicular to bottom 2 and strip 6, if it is to be used, is inserted in slits 5. End pieces 7 are also folded upwardly, if they are used. The absorbent material 8 is moistened if this was not done before it was placed in tray 2. As explained above, the flowers 10 may be attached either before or after the absorbent material is placed in the tray. The tray is then wrapped in the transparent sheet or slipped into a transparent envelope, all the edges of which are hermetically sealed to prevent leakage of moisture and water vapor.

It will be easily seen that our package forms an enclosure which insures that a layer of moist air and water vapor surrounds the flowers at all times and yet the flowers may be easily seen without disturbing the box, both from the top and from the ends when end pieces 7 are not provided. It is no longer necessary to remove the lid to display them to prospective customers causing rapid evaporation of both the moisture in the absorbent material 8 as well as the water which is continually being given off by the flowers themselves. Thus, the flowers, by retaining their internal moisture are enabled to remain fresh for very long periods of time because (1) there is a layer of water vapor surrounding them at all times, creating a pressure within said container, reacting against further water being given off by said flowers; and (2) they are not frequently in contact with ordinary dry air.

Our invention provides in addition to a moistureproof container, an attractive display package which need not be opened to allow a customer to inspect the flowers. This advantage is of particular value when the package is used by the retailer in selling to the public. Not only are

the flowers easily seen, but no longer is it necessary that they be completely wrapped in moist materials to keep them fresh. Any such wrapping, coming into contact with the petals, causes the flower to wilt and color, which objections have been entirely eliminated by our invention.

The particular kind of transparent enclosure used in our invention is adapted to be hermetically heat sealed and is, as well, a tough, pliable material which will stand rough handling without tearing or breaking. It is obvious that any material which is subject to tearing or cracking would be of no value both from the point of view of maintaining an air and moistureproof package and offering an attractive display package to a customer.

The material from which the tray is formed should preferably be a non-absorbent, moistureproof material.

Having described our invention, we claim:

1. A package comprising: a substantially rectangular blank of cardboard or the like; a sheet of moisture absorbent material secured to a side of said blank; a plurality of spaced flowers separately secured to said sheet of absorbent material on the side thereof opposite said blank and in positions with their blossoms facing outwardly of said sheet; single means securing each of said flowers to said sheet and securing said sheet to said blank; and a hermetically sealed, transparent container enclosing said sheet and said flowers, said sheet being moistened for producing moisture of evaporation within said container, the walls of said container being relatively thin, flexible material.

2. A container for fresh flowers comprising a channel-like tray formed from a rectangular sheet of cardboard bent along parallel lines to provide the two opposed side walls and bottom wall of such channel, said bottom wall being adapted to support flowers thereon between said side walls, a pair of oppositely positioned slits respectively formed in said side walls, a strip having opposed end portions integral therewith substantially parallel with said side walls and extending through said slits with the central portion of said strip extending between the free edges of said side walls that are remote from said bottom wall, and an envelope enclosing said tray and said strip and holding said end portions of said strip from removal from said slits.

3. A container for fresh flowers comprising a channel-like tray formed from a rectangular sheet of cardboard bent along parallel lines to provide the two opposed side walls and bottom wall of such channel, said bottom wall being adapted to support flowers thereon between said side walls, a pair of oppositely positioned slits respectively formed in said side walls, a strip having opposed end portions integral therewith substantially parallel with said side walls and extending through said slits with the central portion of said strip extending between the free edges of said side walls that are remote from said bottom wall, and an envelope enclosing said tray and said strip and holding said end portions of said strip from removal from said slits, a pad of absorbent material covering said bottom wall and extending over the portions of said side wall adjacent said bottom wall.

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