April 27, 1954 E. V. DARPINIAN 2,676,400

FLORIST'S KNIFE

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Fig. 1.

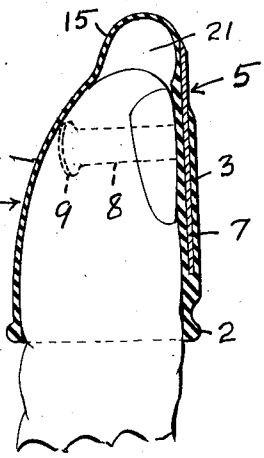



Fig. 4.

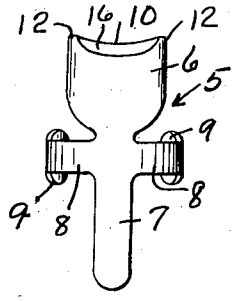
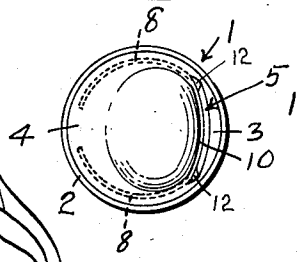



Fig. 3.



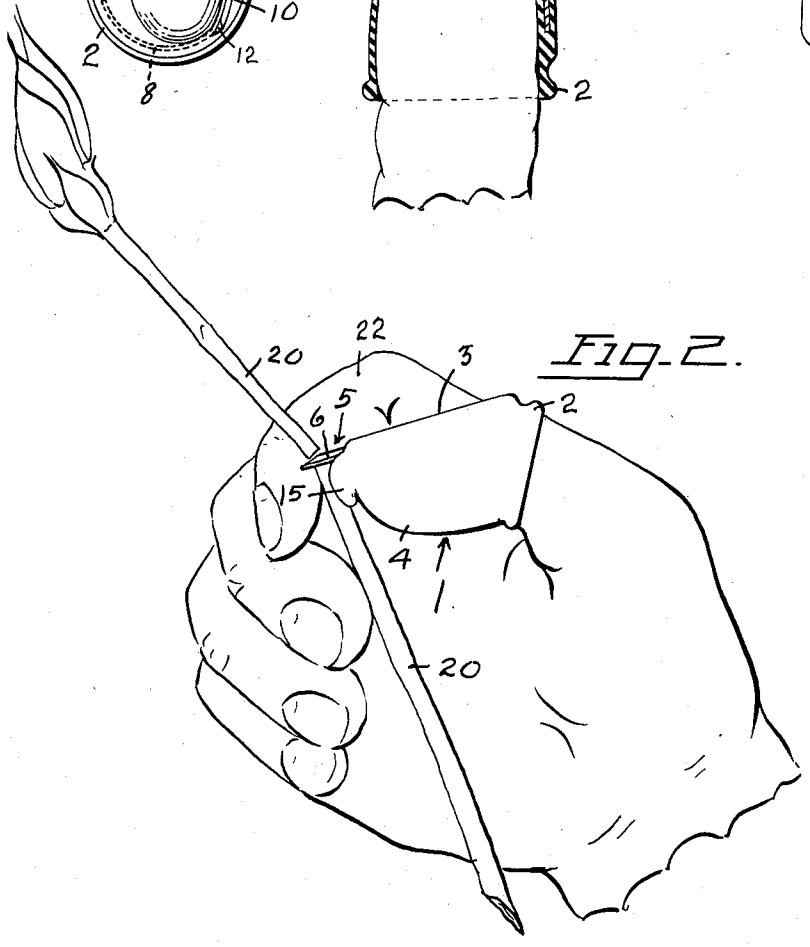




Fig. 2.

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## FLORIST'S KNIFE

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Application February 26, 1951, Serial No. 212,747

2 Claims. (Cl. 30—151)

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This invention relates to a florist's knife. One of the objects of the invention is the provision of a florist's knife that is adapted to be quickly secured on the thumb of the user in a position for cutting stems and for stripping thorns from stems in generally the same motion as would be used were the nail of the thumb being used to cut the stems, pinch off leaves or to strip thorns from the stalks.

In the florist business the making up of floral pieces is profitable in direct proportion to the speed with which the pieces can be made up. A substantial part of the time required to make up a floral piece is devoted to cutting off the stems of flowers, and removing the leaves and thorns. This work has heretofore been done by use of a knife held in the hand of the user. This means that the fingers of the hand that holds the knife are not usable for wrapping, wiring or arranging the flowers until the knife is laid down. Each period of time that elapses between uses of the knife, when the knife is laid aside and is again picked up, represents a total loss to the florist, and the total of such periods during a day may represent sufficient time to have made up several additional floral pieces.

It is also a common occurrence for a florist to misplace his hand knife or to cover it up with foliage or flowers when it is laid on the work table. Not only is a considerable amount of time lost in finding the knife, under such occurrence, but in many instances the floral arrangement may be disturbed or injured, requiring additional time to replace the disarranged parts.

With the present invention the knife is carried on the thumb of the right or left hand, according to whether the user is right or left handed, or a knife may be carried on both thumbs.

An object of the invention is the provision of such a knife for carrying on the thumb, and which knife will not interfere with the use of the thumb and fingers of the hand in making floral pieces while it is on said thumb, and which knife has safety means associated therewith that automatically prevents accidental cutting of objects when the knife is in use. This safety means automatically moves away from the cutting edge when the knife is used for cutting.

Other objects and advantages will appear in the description and in the drawings.

In the drawings,

Fig. 1 is an enlarged vertical sectional view through the knife and the finger stall showing the same on the thumb and in inoperative position.

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Fig. 2 is an elevational view illustrating a flower stalk held in a hand of the florist and being cut by the knife.

Fig. 3 is a top plan view of the finger stall and knife.

Fig. 4 is a front elevational view of a preferred form of blade that may be used showing a means for holding the blade to the thumb to prevent being swung away from the thumb in a thorn stripping operation or other similar operation.

In detail, the invention as herein shown comprises a finger stall 1 that may be of rubber or of other similar flexible, resilient material, and which may have a reinforcing head 2 around the open end.

Thumb stalls usually substantially conform in cross-sectional contour to the cross sectional contour of the thumb, there being a nail or rear side 3 that is adapted to extend over the nail of the thumb, and a front side 4 that extends over the ball of the thumb.

Carried on the nail side of the present stall, is a knife blade 5 (Fig. 4) having a relatively wide outer end portion 6 that is substantially as wide as the nail of the thumb of the user, and which width is about the width of the thumb.

The blade 5 also includes an elongated shank 7 that projects downwardly therefrom, and lateral extensions 8 that are intermediate the opposite ends of the blade. These extensions 8 may have slightly enlarged outer ends 9, and they are bent to generally follow the transverse cross sectional contour of a thumb, or of stall 1.

The shank 7 and extensions 8 including a part of the enlarged end 6 of the blade are imbedded in the material of stall 1. This may be done at the time the stall is molded. The said shank 7 will extend longitudinally of the stall and down its nail or rear side to about the first joint, and the outer end portion of the enlarged end 6 will project beyond the outer end of the main body of the stall 1.

The words "main body portion" used with respect to the stall 1 is intended to mean the portion that engages the thumb to the outer end of the latter. When the stall is slipped onto the thumb, it will only go on to the point where the main body portion extends partially over the outer end of the thumb to a distance about even with said outer end. It cannot be pulled onto the thumb any further than enough to enclose the thumb in the main body of the stall.

As already mentioned, a substantial part of the enlarged end 6 of the blade 5 extends beyond the main body of stall 1 and the outer edge of the projecting portion extends transversely of the

longitudinal axis of said stall about the width of the thumb. Said outer edge is sharpened thereby forming a cutting edge 10 that is preferably slightly convexly curved linearly thereof. The ends of said edge are not sharp, but merge into the rounded corners 12 of the blade where the blade is full width, so there are no sharp corners that would be likely to accidentally cut outside objects or snag such objects.

The main body of the stall, is formed with an extension 15 that is relatively restricted as compared with the diameter of said main body portion, so the thumb cannot extend into said extension. This extension 15 extends slightly past the cutting edge 10 of blade 5 and lies along said edge in close engagement with the blade. The side of portion 6 that lies closely to the extension 15 is bevelled as at 16 (Fig. 4) to produce said cutting edge, hence the said edge itself is practically in engagement with the extension 15.

By the aforesaid structure, the extension 15, which is hollow and of the same resilient, flexible material as the main body portion of the stall, constitutes a guard for said cutting edge. The stall may be safely carried in the pocket, or may be handled, or brushed against outside objects without fear of accidentally cutting anything, because sufficient pressure must be applied to the extension 15 to move it away from said cutting edge before the cutting edge will cut. A direct axial movement of the blade, as in forcing the cutting edge across a stalk 20 (Fig. 2) will result in collapsing the extension or so compressing it that it will move away from the cutting edge of the blade and the stalk will be cut.

The fact that the extension is hollow will enable it to become an air chamber 21 over the end of the thumb, as seen in Fig. 1, thus trapping air in said chamber, which air contributes its elasticity to that of the material itself for tending to hold the extension in a position guarding said cutting edge, and for returning the extension to guarding position once it has been moved away. It should be added at this point that said elasticity is of great benefit in controlling the knife during a cutting operation as seen in Fig. 2. Were there no other resistance than that existing between the blade and the stalk, the blade might unexpectedly pass through the stalk and cut the finger 22 against which the stalk is pressed. But with the yieldable resistance supplied by the projection 15 and the air trapped therein, the movement of the blade is easily controlled and accidental cutting of finger 22 does not occur.

In a thorn stripping operation, the blade is held in the same position as in Fig. 2, but merely against the stalk having the thorns. The stalk is arranged so that the thorns point downwardly and the blade is then moved downwardly in a scraping manner over the stalk, thereby removing the sharp outer ends of the thorns.

Were the stall 1 alone relied upon to hold the blade during the operation above described, the blade might be pulled away from the thumb or loosened in the stall, or the stall could even be torn.

The purpose of the extensions 8 is to hold the blade to the thumb when a thorn removing operation is done. The extensions in combination with the blade form a partial ring that extends around the thumb, and if the thumb is relatively small, the extensions can be bent to snugly fit the same.

Fig. 3 shows the extensions in such annular arrangement.

It is also pertinent to note that the side 4 of the stall should be relatively thin. This is to enable the operator to wrap, wire and otherwise handle the material going up to form a floral piece without losing the sense of "feel" that is a material part of making up a floral piece.

The rear or nail side, is of course, fairly thick inasmuch as it holds the blade 1 and takes the strain that is placed on the blade.

While the use of the knife has been described with respect to making up floral pieces, it is to be understood that the knife may be used in picking flowers or fruit or wherever the cutting of a stalk or material is desirable in the manner shown in Fig. 2.

I claim:

1. A florist's knife comprising a finger stall of flexible, resilient material having a main body portion adapted to fit over the thumb of a user with one side over and against the nail of said thumb and with the opposite side against and over the ball of said thumb, a blade secured to said one side projecting beyond the outer end of said main body portion and having a cutting edge facing outwardly of the latter, an extension on said stall projecting outwardly of said main body portion and over the end of said thumb when the stall is on the latter and in engagement with said blade along said cutting edge providing a guard to prevent accidental cutting by said edge, said extension being resilient and yieldable under pressure thereagainst to move away from said edge when said extension and said edge are in engagement with an object to be cut and said edge is forced through said object, said opposite side of said stall being elastic and relatively thin to enable the operator to readily feel objects held between the thumb and forefinger, and said one side of said stall being relatively heavy and having a portion of said blade embedded therein.

2. A florist's knife comprising a finger stall of flexible, resilient material having a main body portion adapted to fit over the thumb of a user with one side over and against the nail of said thumb and with the opposite side against and over the ball of said thumb, a blade secured to said one side projecting beyond the outer end of said main body portion and having a cutting edge facing outwardly of the latter, an extension on said stall projecting outwardly of said main body portion and over the end of said thumb when the stall is on the latter and in engagement with said blade along said cutting edge providing a guard to prevent accidental cutting by said edge, said extension being resilient and yieldable under pressure thereagainst to move away from said edge when said extension and said edge are in engagement with an object to be cut and said edge is forced through said object, said extension being hollow and overlying the tip of the thumb to provide an enclosed air chamber when said stall is on said thumb.

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