CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A collapsible crate comprising:

a supporting surface;

a receptacle comprising a first track and a second track below the supporting surface, the first and second tracks each including locking recesses and a first track surface and second track surface extending from the locking recesses; and

a first side frame having a first leg slidable along the first track surface of the first track and a second leg slidable along the second track surface of the second track to removably stow the first side frame on the first and second track surfaces of the receptacle, wherein the first leg and second leg include end portions that are removably insertable into the locking recesses of the first and second tracks to secure the first side frame in an upright position relative to the supporting surface when removed from the first and second track surfaces of the first and second tracks.

2. The collapsible crate of claim 1 wherein the locking recesses of the first and second tracks include support walls that engage the end portions of the first leg and second leg when inserted into the locking recesses to inhibit the first side frame from pivoting.

3. The collapsible crate of claim 2 wherein the first and second tracks include ramped surfaces extending from the locking recesses to the first and second track surfaces of the receptacle to guide the end portions of the first and second legs between the locking recesses and the first and second track surfaces.

4. The collapsible crate of claim 1 wherein the end portions of the first leg and second leg remain below the supporting surface when transitioning between the locking recesses and the first and second tracks.

5. The collapsible crate of claim 1 wherein the end portions of the first side frame include guide pins and the first track and second track includes guide slots receiving the guide

pins, the guide slots directing movement of the end portions of the first side frame between the locking recesses and the first and second track surfaces.

6. The collapsible crate of claim 5 wherein the guide slots include a cam surface positioned above the guide pins when the end portions of the first and second legs are received in the locking recesses to limit vertical movement of the first side frame when the end portions of the first and second legs are withdrawn from the locking recesses and to direct the end portions of the first and second legs toward the first and second track surfaces.

7. The collapsible crate of claim 1 further comprising:

a base including the supporting surface and the receptacle; and

a support bar to support the first side frame in the upright position, the support bar having a first end attached to the first side frame and a second end removably attachable to the base.

8. The collapsible crate of claim 1 further comprising a locking mechanism operable to reversibly secure the first side frame in the upright position and/or when stowed on the first and second track surfaces of the receptacle.

9. The collapsible crate of claim 8 wherein the locking mechanism includes a retractable locking pin to be inserted into a lock opening of the first side frame to secure the end portion of the first side frame in the locking recesses.

10. The collapsible crate of claim 8 wherein the locking mechanism includes a retractable locking pin that is able to be extended into a path of the first side frame to inhibit movement of the first leg and second leg along the first track surface and second track surface.

11. A collapsible crate comprising:

a base having a supporting surface and defining a receptacle below the supporting surface, the supporting surface having an outer edge;

a first side frame having a first leg and a second leg removably insertable along tracks of the receptacle on a first end portion of the base; and

a second side frame having a third leg and a fourth leg removably insertable along tracks of the receptacle on a second end portion of the base, the outer edge of the support surface extending from the first end portion to the second end portion, each leg of the first side frame and second side frame being a different distance from the outer edge than the other legs of the first side frame and second side frame.

12. The collapsible crate of claim 11 wherein the third leg is further from the outer edge than the first leg and the fourth leg is further from the outer edge than the second leg, wherein the second leg is further from the outer edge than the first leg.

13. The collapsible crate of claim 11 wherein the receptacle of the base includes four tracks along which the legs of the first side frame and second frame are inserted into the base.

14. The collapsible crate of claim 13 wherein each of the four tracks extend parallel to one another along the same plane.

15. The collapsible crate of claim 11 wherein the first side frame includes a first protrusion and a second protrusion and the second side frame includes a third protrusion and a fourth protrusion, the first protrusion and third protrusion the same distance from the outer edge and the second protrusion and the fourth protrusion the same distance from the outer edge.

16. The collapsible crate of claim 15 wherein the first side frame includes an upper member extending between the first leg and second leg, the upper member extending beyond the second leg to support the second protrusion in alignment with the fourth protrusion.

17. The collapsible crate of claim 16 wherein the second side frame includes an upper member extending between the third leg and fourth leg, the upper member of the second

side frame extending beyond the third leg to support the third protrusion in alignment with the first protrusion.

18. The collapsible crate of claim 15 wherein the first and second protrusions extend upward from the first side frame beyond the supporting surface when the first side frame is inserted into the receptacle, and the third and fourth protrusions extend upward from the second side frame beyond the supporting surface when the second side frame is inserted into the receptacle.

19. The collapsible crate of claim 15 wherein the first side frame and second side frame are able to be withdrawn from the receptacle of the base and secured in an upright position relative to the supporting surface, the first and second protrusions extending upward from the first side frame when the first side frame is secured in the upright position, and the third and fourth protrusions extending upward from the second side frame when the second side frame is secured in the upright position.

20. A crate comprising:

a base having a first end portion, a second end portion, a left side, and a right side, the left and right sides extending from the first end portion to the second end portion;

a first side frame having an upper portion and a lower portion, the lower portion including a first side portion extending towards the upper portion, the upper portion including a first stacking protrusion; and

a second side frame having an upper portion and a lower portion, the second side frame lower portion including a second side portion extending towards the second side frame upper portion, the second side frame upper portion including a second stacking protrusion,

the first side portion adjacent to and positioned a first distance from a plane extending upwardly from the left side of the base, the second side portion adjacent to and positioned a second distance from the plane, the first distance being different from the second distance, and the first and second stacking protrusions each positioned at substantially a third distance from the plane.

21. The crate of claim 20 wherein the first stacking protrusion is a fourth distance from the first side portion and the second stacking protrusion is a fifth distance from the second side portion, the fourth distance being different from the fifth distance.

22. The crate of claim 20 wherein the third distance is different from the first and second distance.

23. The crate of claim 20 wherein first side portion of the first side frame includes a first leg, the first side frame lower portion further including a third leg, the first and third legs extending from the first side frame upper portion to the first end portion of the base,

wherein the second side portion of the second side frame includes a second leg, the second side frame lower portion further including a fourth leg, the second and fourth legs extending from the second side frame upper portion to the second end portion of the base,

wherein each leg of the first side frame and second side frame are a different distance from the left side plane than the other legs of the first side frame and second side frame.

24. The crate of claim 23 wherein the upper portion of the first side frame supports the first stacking protrusion laterally from the first leg toward the left side plane.

25. The crate of claim 24 wherein the second stacking protrusion of the first side frame is substantially aligned with the second leg.

26. The crate of claim 24 wherein the upper portion of the second side frame supports a third stacking protrusion laterally from the third leg away from the left side plane.

27. The crate of claim 20 wherein the first side frame lower portion includes a third side portion extending towards the first side frame upper portion, the first side frame upper portion including a third stacking protrusion; and

the second side frame lower portion includes a fourth side portion extending towards the second side frame upper portion, the second side frame upper portion including a fourth stacking protrusion,

the third side portion adjacent to and positioned a fourth distance from a right side plane extending upwardly from the right side of the base, the fourth side portion adjacent to and positioned a fifth distance from the right side plane, the fourth distance being different from the fifth distance, and the third and fourth stacking protrusions each positioned at substantially a sixth distance from the plane.

28. The crate of claim 20 wherein a width of the upper portion of the first side frame is greater than a width of the lower portion of the first side frame, the width of the upper portion of the first side frame being the distance from the first stacking protrusion to a third stacking protrusion of the first side frame.

29. The crate of claim 28 wherein the width of the upper portion of the first side frame is the same as a width of the upper portion of the second side frame, the width of the upper portion of the second side frame being the distance from the second stacking protrusion to a fourth stacking protrusion of the second side frame.