WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A susceptor assembly for supporting a crucible during a crystal growth process, the susceptor assembly comprising:

a susceptor base formed of a carbon-containing material, the susceptor base having a concave surface extending radially inward from an upper edge, and an annular wall extending from the upper edge to a shoulder, the shoulder extending radially outward from an outer surface of the annular wall opposite the concave surface;

a tubular sidewall formed of a carbon-containing material, the tubular sidewall being connected at a first end to the susceptor base, the first end of the sidewall receiving the annular wall to connect the sidewall to the susceptor base, an interior surface of the sidewall and the concave surface of the susceptor base defining an interior of the susceptor assembly sized and shaped to receive the crucible therein; and

a removable sacrifice ring interposed between the sidewall and the outer surface of the annular wall and interposed between the sidewall and the shoulder, the sacrifice ring having a first surface that faces the outer surface of the annular wall, a second surface that faces the interior surface of the sidewall, and a ledge extending outward from the second surface that engages the first end of the sidewall.

2. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the sacrifice ring is segmented into two or more segments.

3. The susceptor assembly of claim 2, wherein the sacrifice ring is segmented into six equally-sized segments.

4. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the sacrifice ring is formed of a carbon-containing material.

5. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the second surface and the ledge of the sacrifice ring define a shape of the sacrifice ring that complements a shape defined by the outer surface of the annular wall and the shoulder.

6. The susceptor assembly of claim 5, wherein the second surface and the ledge of the sacrifice ring define a L-shape.

7. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the first surface of the sacrifice ring is in partial contact with the outer surface of the annular wall, wherein a recess is formed in the first surface to define a recessed surface that is spaced a distance from the outer surface of the annular wall.

8. The susceptor assembly of claim 7, wherein the first surface of the sacrifice ring is in contact with the outer surface of the annular wall proximate opposing ends of the first surface and the recess is formed in a middle portion of the first surface.

9. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the sacrifice ring has at least one projection extending outward from the second surface, the at least one projection being in contact with the interior surface of the sidewall and the second surface being spaced a distance from the interior surface.

10. The susceptor assembly of claim 9, wherein the at least one projection comprises a series of spaced

apart projections that are disposed circumferentially along the second surface of the sacrifice ring.

11. The susceptor assembly of claim 1, wherein the sacrifice ring has a third surface that faces the shoulder of the susceptor base, the third surface being in partial contact with the shoulder, wherein a recess is formed in the third surface to define a recessed surface that is spaced a distance from the shoulder.

12. The susceptor assembly of claim 11, wherein the third surface of the sacrifice ring is in contact with the shoulder proximate opposing ends of the third surface and the recess is formed in a middle portion of the third surface.

13. A method of assembling a susceptor for supporting a crucible during a crystal growth process, the method comprising:

providing a susceptor base formed of a carbon-containing material, the susceptor base having a concave surface extending radially inward from an upper edge, and an annular wall extending from the upper edge to a shoulder, the shoulder extending radially outward from an outer surface of the annular wall opposite the concave surface;

installing a sacrifice ring onto the susceptor base, the sacrifice ring having a first surface that surrounds the outer surface of the annular wall, a second surface opposite the first surface, a ledge extending outward from the second surface, and a third surface opposite the ledge that overlays the shoulder of the susceptor base; and

connecting a tubular sidewall formed of a carbon-containing material to the susceptor base by inserting the annular wall into a first end of the sidewall such that the first end engages the ledge of the sacrifice ring and the sacrifice ring is interposed between the sidewall and the outer surface of the annular wall and interposed between the sidewall and the shoulder.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising positioning a crucible in an interior of the susceptor defined by an interior surface of the sidewall and the concave surface of the susceptor base.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising removing the sidewall from the susceptor base and, subsequently, removing the sacrifice ring from the susceptor base.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the sacrifice ring is segmented into two or more segments, and removing the sacrifice ring from the susceptor base includes independently removing one or more of the segments.

17. An ingot puller for producing single crystal semiconductor ingots, the ingot puller comprising:

a housing defining a growth chamber;

a crucible positioned in the growth chamber; and

a susceptor assembly supporting the crucible in the growth chamber, the susceptor assembly comprising:

a susceptor base formed of a carbon-containing material, the susceptor base having a concave surface extending radially inward from an upper edge, and an annular

wall extending from the upper edge to a shoulder, the shoulder extending radially outward from an outer surface of the annular wall opposite the concave surface;

a tubular sidewall formed of a carbon-containing material, the tubular sidewall being connected at a first end to the susceptor base, the first end of the sidewall receiving the annular wall to connect the sidewall to the susceptor base, an interior surface of the sidewall and the concave surface of the susceptor base defining an interior of the susceptor assembly that receives the crucible therein; and

a removable sacrifice ring interposed between the sidewall and the outer surface of the annular wall and interposed between the sidewall and the shoulder, the sacrifice ring having a first surface that faces the outer surface of the annular wall, a second surface that faces the interior surface of the sidewall, and a ledge extending outward from the second surface that engages the first end of the sidewall.

18. The ingot puller of claim 17, wherein the sacrifice ring is segmented into two or more segments.

19. The ingot puller of claim 17, wherein the second surface and the ledge of the sacrifice ring define an L-shape of the sacrifice ring that complements an L-shape defined by the outer surface of the annular wall and the shoulder.

20. The ingot puller of claim 17, wherein:

the first surface of the sacrifice ring is in partial contact with the outer surface of the annular wall, wherein a recess is formed in the first surface to define a

recessed surface that is spaced a distance from the outer surface of the annular wall,

the sacrifice ring has a series of spaced apart projections disposed circumferentially along the second surface of the sacrifice ring, each projection extending outward from the second surface and being in contact with the interior surface of the sidewall, the second surface being spaced a distance from the interior surface, and

the sacrifice ring has a third surface that faces the shoulder of the susceptor base, the third surface being in partial contact with the shoulder, wherein a recess is formed in the third surface to define a recessed surface that is spaced a distance from the shoulder.