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- ☒ Description : paged 1, 2 to paged 7
- ☒ Claim(s) : paged 14 to paged 18
- ☐ Drawing(s) : paged to paged
- ☐ Abstract : paged to paged

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Stacking and Nesting Containers

The present invention relates to containers which are designed to allow like containers to stack or nest with each other.

One conventional style of container, an example of which is described in British Patent GB 1270340, can stack or nest, and is referred to herein as a stack/nest container. This style is designed to allow one container to nest into a container below, when in a first relative orientation, but to stack on the container below when the relative orientation has changed, usually by 180° about the vertical axis. In some designs, containers stack when all identically aligned and nest when alternately aligned. In other designs, containers nest when identically aligned and stack when alternately aligned.

According to the present invention there is provided a container formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation, wherein stacking means are provided having a stowed position in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position in which the stacking means interferes with nesting to cause the containers to stack when in the

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first relative orientation.

Preferably the stacking height given by the stacking means is different to the stacking height available when the stacking means is stowed, and is preferably intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height when the stacking means is stowed.

The stacking means may incorporate formations corresponding to formations which engage to cause stacking when containers are in the second relative orientation.

Preferably the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.

The stacking means are preferably at or within the base of the container when in their stowed position. The stacking means are preferably mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position, such as by hinge or pivot means. They may be mounted to the base or, where the container has a base and upstanding walls, they may be mounted to the bottom of a wall.

Preferably there are recesses in the base to receive stacking means when in the stowed position. The recesses may be sufficiently deep to receive the stacking



means without the stacking means projecting above the upper surface of the base when in the stowed position. There may be detent means to retain the stacking means in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.

The stacking means may support the base of a like container from below when in the stacking position.

The container may comprise further stacking formations which engage a second like container to allow the container to stack when in the second relative orientation.

Preferably handle means are provided to facilitate movement of the stacking means between their stowed and stacking positions.

The invention also provides a container formed to allow a like container to nest therein, and comprising stacking means having a stowed position in which nesting is allowed as aforesaid, and a stacking position in which the stacking means interfere with the entry of one container into another for nesting, thereby causing like containers to stack, wherein the stacking means is located at or within the base of the container when in the stowed position.

The stacking means are preferably within the base of the container when in their stowed position. The stacking means are preferably mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position, such as by hinge or pivot means. They may be mounted to the base or, where the container has a base and upstanding walls, they may be mounted to the bottom of a wall.

Preferably there are recesses in the base to receive stacking means when in the stowed position. The recesses may be sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means without the stacking means projecting above the upper surface of the base when in the stowed position. There may be detent means to retain the stacking means in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.

The stacking means may support the base of a like container from below when in the stacking position.

Preferably handle means are provided to facilitate movement of the stacking means between their stowed and stacking positions.

Preferably the container is formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to

cause a second like container to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation. Preferably the stacking means interfere with nesting when the containers are in the first relative orientation.

Preferably the stacking height given by the stacking means is different to the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation, and is preferably intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.

The stacking means may incorporate formations corresponding to formations which engage to cause stacking when containers are in the second relative orientation.

Preferably the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.

The container may comprise further stacking formations which engage a second like container to allow the container to stack when in the second relative orientation.

One embodiment of the present invention will now be described in more detail, by way of example only, and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a partly schematic perspective view of a container according to the invention;

Fig. 2 is an elevation of one end wall from within the container and divided at the central plane to indicate the arrangement when the stacking means are in their stacking position (to the right) and nesting position (to the left); and

Fig. 3 is a view corresponding to Fig. 2 and showing the other end wall.

Referring to the drawings, the container 10 is formed in a manner which will be described more fully below, to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation. A second like container may stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation. Stacking means shown generally at 12 are provided and have a stowed position (as shown in Fig. 1) in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position to be described with reference to Figs. 2 and 3, in which the stacking means interferes with nesting to cause the containers to stack when in the first relative orientation.

In more detail, the container 10 is a stack/nest container which nests when containers are similarly aligned, and stacks when containers are alternately reversed by 180° rotation about the vertical. The container 10 has a base 14, two side walls 16 and two end walls 18. In this example, the walls 16 are relatively long and the walls 18 are relatively short, but this relationship could be reversed or the walls could all be of equal length. The walls are perforated in a number of ways for various reasons. A rim 20 extends around the entire periphery at the top of the walls 16. The walls 16, 18 slope inwardly and the plan of the base 14 is smaller than the plan of the inner edge of the rim 20. Various notch formations 22 are provided around the mouth of the container, just inside the rim 20. At one end wall 18A, there are two notches 22 spaced from the extreme ends of the wall 18A. On the other end wall 18B, two notches 22 are in the container corners, at the ends of the wall 18B. Three notches 22 are provided along each side wall 16 but not symmetrically about the centre. One merges with a notch in the end wall 18B and the other two are spaced along the wall 16 but there is no notch 22 at the corner joining the end wall 18A.

It is apparent from Fig. 1 that the distribution of notches 22 has asymmetry when viewed from above.

Ten feet 24 are arrayed around the lower edge of

the walls 16,18 at the outer faces. Each foot 24 corresponds with a notch 22 (so that two merged feet correspond with the merged notches at the junction of the side walls 16 and the end wall 188). Each foot 24 is structurally connected to the corresponding notch 22 by a sloping strut 26 which allows weight supported by a notch 22 to be passed through to the corresponding foot 24.

The distribution of feet 24 is the same as the distribution of notches 22 except that the distribution has been rotated through 180° about a vertical axis. That is to say, if the rim 20 was notionally rotated by 180° about a vertical axis relative to the base 14, there would be a foot 24 directly beneath each notch 22. In consequence, if a first container is rotated by 180° about the vertical axis, relative to a second container, the two containers can then be stacked by lowering feet 24 on the upper container to engage the notches 22 on the lower container. A complete and secure stack can be formed by alternating the orientation of containers so that each stacks in this manner. The weight of the stack is then transferred down the stack through a zigzag series of struts 26.

The details of how the feet 24 and notches 22 engage, and consequently of their design, are within the

skill of the skilled reader and do not themselves form part of the present invention. Their design may vary according to expected loads, manufacturing materials and techniques, etc.

The assymetry just described also allows like containers to nest. When containers have the same orientation as each other, the feet 24 and struts 26 of the upper container can be lowered into the lower container because they will be clear of the notches 22. As the container is further lowered, the fully nested condition is reached in which the rims 20 of the upper and lower containers are immediately above one another (and may rest on each other), the struts 26 of the two containers are next to each other (and on a slant) and the feet 24 lie immediately one above the other (and may rest on each other). Finally, the bases 14 of the two containers will be close together. This is the normal compact condition useful when transporting empty containers.

The nesting and stacking arrangements described above provide compact nesting for storage and return transport, or stacking when containers are full. The stacking means 12 allow containers to be stacked at an intermediate height when only partly full, as will now be

described.

Each stacking means 12 has two end formations 30 connected by a bar 32 serving as a handle for easier manipulation. The end formations 30 are in the region of the corners of the container 10. The stacking means 12 are hinged or pivoted to the container base or the bottom edge of the end walls 18 to allow them to turn from a stowed position shown at the left of Figs. 2 and 3, to a stacking position shown at the right of those figures. (It is to be appreciated that the left and right sides of each of Figs. 2 and 3 would be a mirror image when in the stowed position or in the stacking position, so that the stowed and stacking positions can conveniently both be shown on the same drawing by dividing the drawing at the vertical plane midway along the end wall 18).

The base 14 has a channel recess 34 complementary to the outline of the stacking means 12, to allow the stacking means 12 to lie in the channel 34 when in the stowed position. If desired, the channel 34 may be sufficiently deep for the upper surface of the stacking means 12, when stowed, to be flush with or below the level of the upper surface of the base 14. A simple snap catch may be provided to retain the stacking means 12 in

the stowed position, if required.

Each end formation 30 has a generally arched configuration which, in this example, consists of two upright legs 36 and a cross-bar 38. The bar 32 extends between the formations 30 to allow both formations 30 to be raised together, such as by raising the bar 32. The complete stacking means 12 may be a single component manufactured for instance by injection moulding. The stacking means 12 shown in Fig. 2 differs from that shown in Fig. 3 solely by the location of lugs 40. In Fig. 2, adjacent the end wall 18A, the lugs 40 extend up above the cross-bar 38 (when raised) at the top of the outermost uprights 36. In the stacking means 12 shown in Fig. 3, adjacent the end wall 18B, the lugs 40 extend up above the cross-bar 38 (when raised) at the top of the innermost uprights 36. Many other designs of formation 30 could be used, including rounded arches, or unperforated plate members etc.

It can also be seen from Figs. 2 and 3 that the spacing of the lugs 40 from the centre line corresponds to the spacing of the feet 24 on the end walls 18, also from the centre line. In consequence, if a second container is lowered into a container below, with both containers having the same orientation, but with the

stacking means 12 of the lower container in the raised, stacking position, the upper container will not be able to move down to the fully nested condition as described above. Instead, the stacking means 12 will interfere because the feet 24 will make contact with the lugs 40 and further downward movement will be arrested. The weight of the upper container will then be borne by the stacking means 12 and the upper container will be supported in an intermediate stacked position. This intermediate stacked position is part way between the fully nested condition described above, and the stacking position available when containers are rotated through 180° relative to each other.

Conversely, if the stacking means are down, lying in the recess 34, nesting is unobstructed.

The details of how the lugs 40 engage the feet 24, and whether notches are provided in the lugs or there is simple abutment of the base 14 from below, or some other arrangement is used, can be widely varied, particularly according to the nature of the notches 22 and feet 24 being used.

It can be seen that the lugs 40 mimic notches 22 when the stacking means 12 are raised, in that lugs 40

then occupy positions directly below the position which notches 22 would occupy if the lower container was rotated through 180°.

It is envisaged that the container described above can be readily manufactured by injection moulding from a plastics material, but other arrangements and materials could be used.

Many modifications and variations to the container described could be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. For instance, stacking means generally of the form described could be incorporated in a container which has notches and feet distributed to allow stacking when containers have like orientation, and nesting when rotated through 180°, or some other amount. The notches and feet could be replaced by many other alternatives, such as pillars and voids.

Whilst endeavouring in the foregoing specification to draw attention to those features of the invention believed to be of particular importance it should be understood that the Applicant claims protection in respect of any patentable feature or combination of features hereinbefore referred to and/or shown in the drawings whether or not particular emphasis has been placed thereon.



CLAIMS

1. A container formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation, wherein stacking means are provided having a stowed position in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position in which the stacking means interferes with nesting to cause the containers to stack when in the first relative orientation.
2. A container according to claim 1, wherein the stacking height given by the stacking means is different to the stacking height available when the stacking means is stowed.
3. A container according to claim 2, wherein the stacking height given by the stacking means is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height when the stacking means is stowed.
4. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the stacking means incorporate formations corresponding to formations which engage to cause stacking when containers are in the second relative orientation.
5. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.
6. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the stacking means are at or within the base of the container when in their stowed position.
7. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the stacking means are mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position.
8. A container according to claim 7, wherein the stacking means turn by





hinge or pivot means.

9. A container according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the stacking means are mounted to the base.
10. A container according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the stacking means are mounted to the bottom of a wall upstanding from the container base.
11. A container according to any preceding claim, comprising recesses in the base to receive stacking means when in the stowed position.
12. A container according to claim 11, wherein the recesses are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means without the stacking means projecting above the upper surface of the base when in the stowed position.
13. A container according to claim 11 or 12, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.
14. A container according to any preceding claim, wherein the stacking means support, in use, the base of a like container from below when in the stacking position.
15. A container according to any preceding claim, further comprising further stacking formations which engage a second like container to allow the container to stack when in the second relative orientation.
16. A container according to any preceding claim, comprising handle means to facilitate movement of the stacking means between their stowed and stacking positions.
17. A container formed to allow a like container to nest therein, and comprising stacking means having a stowed position in which nesting is





allowed as aforesaid, and a stacking position in which the stacking means interfere with the entry of one container into another for nesting, thereby causing like containers to stack, wherein the stacking means is located at or within the base of the container when in the stowed position.

18. A container according to claim 17, wherein the stacking means are within the base of the container when in their stowed position.

19. A container according to claim 17 or 18, wherein the stacking means are mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position.

20. A container according to claim 19, wherein the stacking means are mounted to turn by hinge or pivot means.

21. A container according to any of claims 17 to 20, wherein the stacking means are mounted to the base of the container, the container has a base and upstanding walls.

22. A container according to any of claims 17 to 20, wherein the stacking means are mounted to the bottom of a wall upstanding from the container base.

23. A container according to any of claims 17 to 22, comprising recesses in the base to receive stacking means when in the stowed position.

24. A container according to claim 23, wherein the recesses are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means without the stacking means projecting above the upper surface of the base when in the stowed position.

25. A container according to any of claims 17 to 24, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.

26. A container according to any of claims 17 to 25, wherein the stacking





means may support the base of a like container from below when in the stacking position.

27. A container according to any of claims 17 to 26, comprising handle means to facilitate movement of the stacking means between their stowed and stacking positions.

28. A container according to any of claims 17 to 27, formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation.

29. A container according to claim 28, wherein the stacking means interfere with nesting when the containers are in the first relative orientation.

30. A container according to claim 28 or 29, wherein the stacking height given by the stacking means is different to the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.

31. A container according to claim 30, wherein the stacking height given by the stacking means is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.

32. A container according to any of claims 28 to 31, wherein the stacking means may incorporate formations corresponding to formations which engage to cause stacking when containers are in the second relative orientation.

33. A container according to any of claims 28 to 32, wherein the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.

34. A container according to any of claims 28 to 33, comprising further stacking formations which engage a second like container to allow the container to stack when in the second relative orientation.



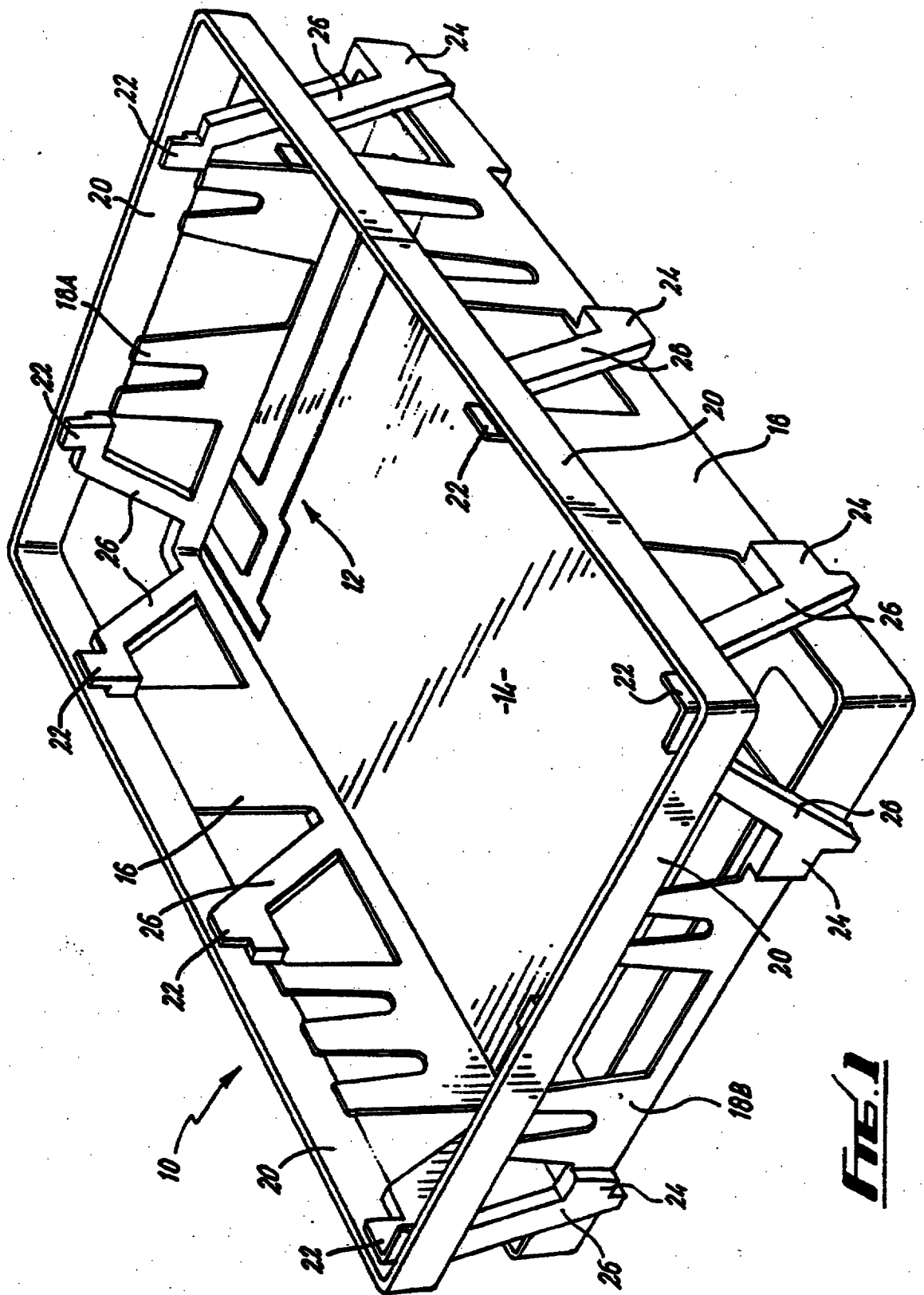


35. A container substantially as described above, with reference to the accompanying drawings.

36. Any novel subject matter or combination including novel subject matter disclosed, whether or not within the scope of or relating to the same invention as any of the preceding claims.



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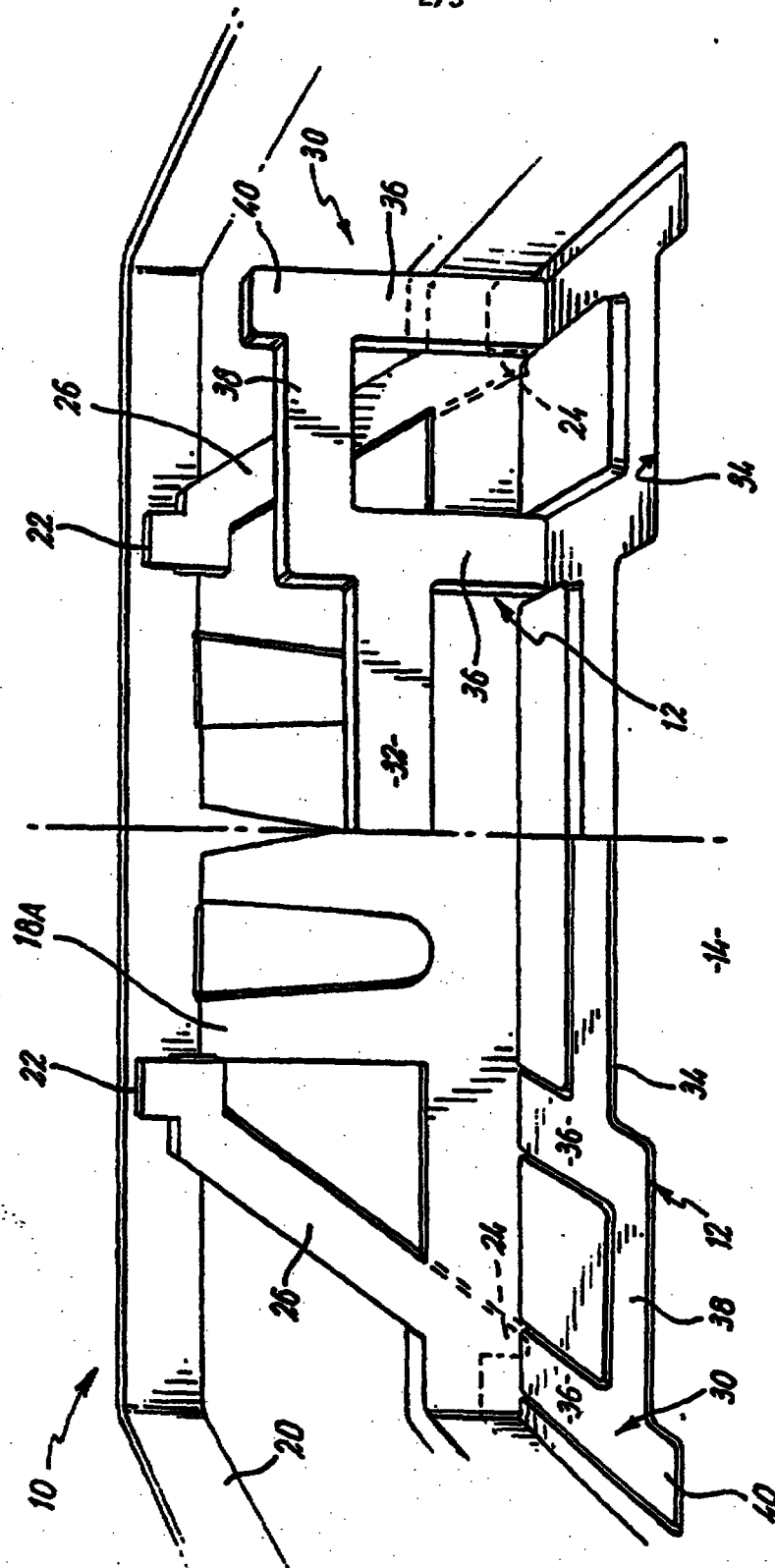


FIG. 2

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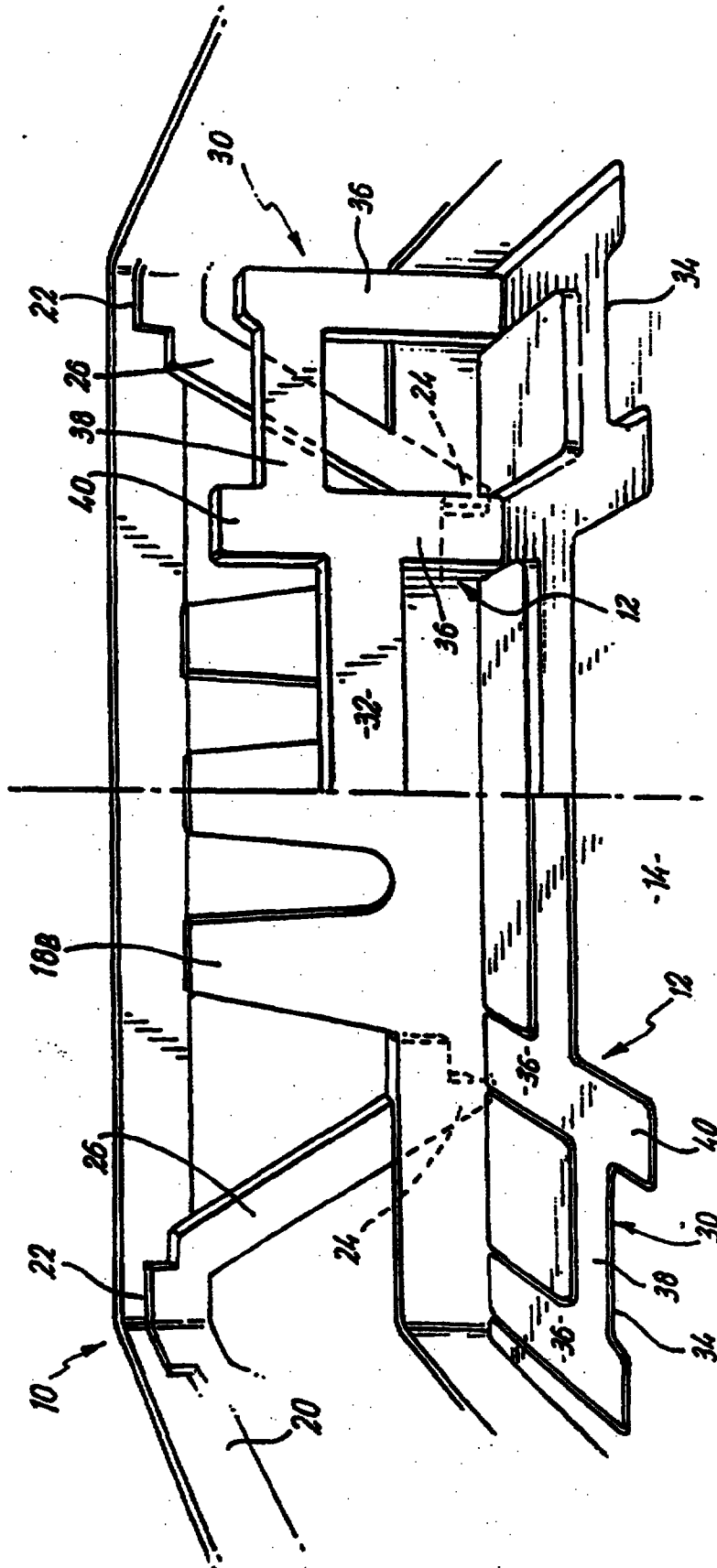


FIG. 3

- ☐ Description : paged to paged
☒ Claim(s) : paged ..15.. to paged ..18..
☐ Drawing(s) : paged to paged
☐ Abstract : paged to paged

Stacking and Nesting Containers

The present invention relates to containers which are designed to allow like containers to stack or nest with each other.

One conventional style of container, an example of which is described in British Patent GB 1270340, can stack or nest, and is referred to herein as a stack/nest container. This style is designed to allow one container to nest into a container below, when in a first relative orientation, but to stack on the container below when the relative orientation has changed, usually by 180° about the vertical axis. In some designs, containers stack when all identically aligned and nest when alternately aligned. In other designs, containers nest when identically aligned and stack when alternatively aligned. U.S. Patent RE 32223 discloses a multi-level stacking container. French Patent FR 2077219 discloses a container for fruit.

According to the present invention there is provided a container formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation, wherein stacking means are provided having a stowed position in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position in which the stacking means interferes with nesting to cause the containers to stack when in the first relative orientation, and wherein the stacking height given by the stacking means is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height when the stacking means is stowed.

The stacking means may incorporate formations corresponding to formations which engage to cause stacking when containers are in the second relative orientation.

Preferably the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.

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The stacking means are preferably at or within the base of the container when in their stowed position. The stacking means are preferably mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position, such as by hinge or pivot means. They may be mounted to the base or, where the container has a base and upstanding walls, they may be mounted to the bottom of a wall.

Preferably there are recesses in the base to receive stacking means when in the stowed position. The recesses may be sufficiently deep to receive the stacking

CLAIMS

1. A container (10) formed to allow a second like container (10) to nest therein when the two containers (10) are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container (10) to stack thereon when the two containers (10) are in a second relative orientation, characterised in that stacking means (12) are provided having a stowed position in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position in which the stacking means (12) interferes with nesting to cause the containers (10) to stack when in the first relative orientation, and in that the stacking height given by the stacking means (12) is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height when the stacking means (12) is stowed.
2. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the stacking means (12) incorporate formations (40) corresponding to formations (22) which engage to cause stacking when containers (10) are in the second relative orientation.
3. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.
4. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are at or within the base (14) of the container (10) when in their stowed position.
5. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position.
6. A container (10) according to claim 5, characterised in that the stacking means (12) turn by hinge or pivot means.





7. A container (10) according to claim 5 or 6, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the base (14).
8. A container (10) according to claim 5 or 6, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the bottom of a wall (18A,18B) upstanding from the container base (14).
9. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, comprising recesses (34) in the base (14) to receive stacking means (12) when in the stowed position.
10. A container (10) according to claim 9, characterised in that the recesses (34) are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means (12) without the stacking means (12) projecting above the upper surface of the base (14) when in the stowed position.
11. A container (10) according to claim 9 or 10, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means (12) in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.
12. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the stacking means (12) support, in use, the base (14) of a like container (10) from below when in the stacking position.
13. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, further comprising further stacking formations (24) which engage a second like container (10) to allow the container (10) to stack when in the second relative orientation.
14. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, comprising handle means (32) to facilitate movement of the stacking means (12) between their stowed and stacking positions.
15. A container (10) formed to allow a like container (10) to nest therein, and comprising stacking means (12) having a stowed position in which nesting is





allowed as aforesaid, and a stacking position in which the stacking means (12) interfere with the entry of one container (10) into another for nesting, thereby causing like containers (10) to stack, characterised in that the stacking means (12) is located at or within the base (14) of the container (10) when in the stowed position.

16. A container (10) according to claim 15, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are within the base (14) of the container (10) when in their stowed position.

17. A container (10) according to claim 15 or 16, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position.

18. A container (10) according to claim 17, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to turn by hinge or pivot means.

19. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 18, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the base (14) of the container (10), the container (10) has a base (14) and upstanding walls (16,18).

20. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 18, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the bottom of a wall (18A,18B) upstanding from the container base (14).

21. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 20, comprising recesses (34) in the base (14) to receive stacking means (12) when in the stowed position.

22. A container (10) according to claim 21, characterised in that the recesses (34) are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means (12) without the stacking means (12) projecting above the upper surface of the base (14) when in the stowed position.





23. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 22, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means (12) in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.
24. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 23, characterised in that the stacking means (12) may support the base (14) of a like container (10) from below when in the stacking position.
25. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 24, comprising handle means (32) to facilitate movement of the stacking means (12) between their stowed and stacking positions.
26. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 25, formed to allow a second like container (10) to nest therein when the two containers (10) are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container (10) to stack thereon when the two containers (10) are in a second relative orientation.
27. A container (10) according to claim 26, characterised in that the stacking means (12) interfere with nesting when the containers (10) are in the first relative orientation.
28. A container (10) according to claim 26 or 27, characterised in that the stacking height given by the stacking means (12) is different to the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.
29. A container (10) according to claim 28, characterised in that the stacking height given by the stacking means (12) is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.
30. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 29, characterised in that the stacking means (12) may incorporate formations (40) corresponding to formations (22) which engage to cause stacking when containers (10) are in the second relative orientation.



31. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 30, characterised in that the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.
32. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 31, comprising further stacking formations (24) which engage a second like container (10) to allow the container (10) to stack when in the second relative orientation.
33. Any novel subject matter or combination including novel subject matter disclosed, whether or not within the scope of or relating to the same invention as any of the preceding claims.

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7. A container (10) according to claim 5 or 6, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the base (14).
8. A container (10) according to claim 5 or 6, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the bottom of a wall (18A,18B) upstanding from the container base (14).
9. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, comprising recesses (34) in the base (14) to receive stacking means (12) when in the stowed position.
10. A container (10) according to claim 9, characterised in that the recesses (34) are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means (12) without the stacking means (12) projecting above the upper surface of the base (14) when in the stowed position.
11. A container (10) according to claim 9 or 10, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means (12) in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.
12. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, characterised in that the stacking means (12) support, in use, the base (14) of a like container (10) from below when in the stacking position.
13. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, further comprising further stacking formations (24) which engage a second like container (10) to allow the container (10) to stack when in the second relative orientation.
14. A container (10) according to any preceding claim, comprising handle means (32) to facilitate movement of the stacking means (12) between their stowed and stacking positions.
- ~~15. A container (10) formed to allow a like container (10) to nest therein, and comprising stacking means (12) having a stowed position in which nesting is~~

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allowed as aforesaid, and a stacking position in which the stacking means (12) interfere with the entry of one container (10) into another for nesting, thereby causing like containers (10) to stack, characterised in that the stacking means (12) is located at or within the base (14) of the container (10) when in the stowed position.

16. A container (10) according to claim 15, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are within the base (14) of the container (10) when in their stowed position.

17. A container (10) according to claim 15 or 16, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to turn from their stowed position to their stacking position.

18. A container (10) according to claim 17, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to turn by hinge or pivot means.

19. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 18, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the base (14) of the container (10), the container (10) has a base (14) and upstanding walls (16,18).

20. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 18, characterised in that the stacking means (12) are mounted to the bottom of a wall (18A,18B) upstanding from the container base (14).

21. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 20, comprising recesses (34) in the base (14) to receive stacking means (12) when in the stowed position.

22. A container (10) according to claim 21, characterised in that the recesses (34) are sufficiently deep to receive the stacking means (12) without the stacking means (12) projecting above the upper surface of the base (14) when in the stowed position.

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23. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 22, comprising detent means to retain the stacking means (12) in either or both of the stacking and stowed positions.
24. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 23, characterised in that the stacking means (12) may support the base (14) of a like container (10) from below when in the stacking position.
25. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 24, comprising handle means (32) to facilitate movement of the stacking means (12) between their stowed and stacking positions.
26. A container (10) according to any of claims 15 to 25, formed to allow a second like container (10) to nest therein when the two containers (10) are in a first relative orientation, and to cause a second like container (10) to stack thereon when the two containers (10) are in a second relative orientation.
27. A container (10) according to claim 26, characterised in that the stacking means (12) interfere with nesting when the containers (10) are in the first relative orientation.
28. A container (10) according to claim 26 or 27, characterised in that the stacking height given by the stacking means (12) is different to the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.
29. A container (10) according to claim 28, characterised in that the stacking height given by the stacking means (12) is intermediate the nesting height and the stacking height available when in the second relative orientation.
30. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 29, characterised in that the stacking means (12) may incorporate formations (40) corresponding to formations (22) which engage to cause stacking when containers (10) are in the second relative orientation.

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31. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 30, characterised in that the first and second relative orientations are separated by 180° about a vertical axis.

32. A container (10) according to any of claims 26 to 31, comprising further stacking formations (24) which engage a second like container (10) to allow the container (10) to stack when in the second relative orientation.

33. Any novel subject matter or combination including novel subject matter disclosed, whether or not within the scope of or relating to the same invention as any of the preceding claims.

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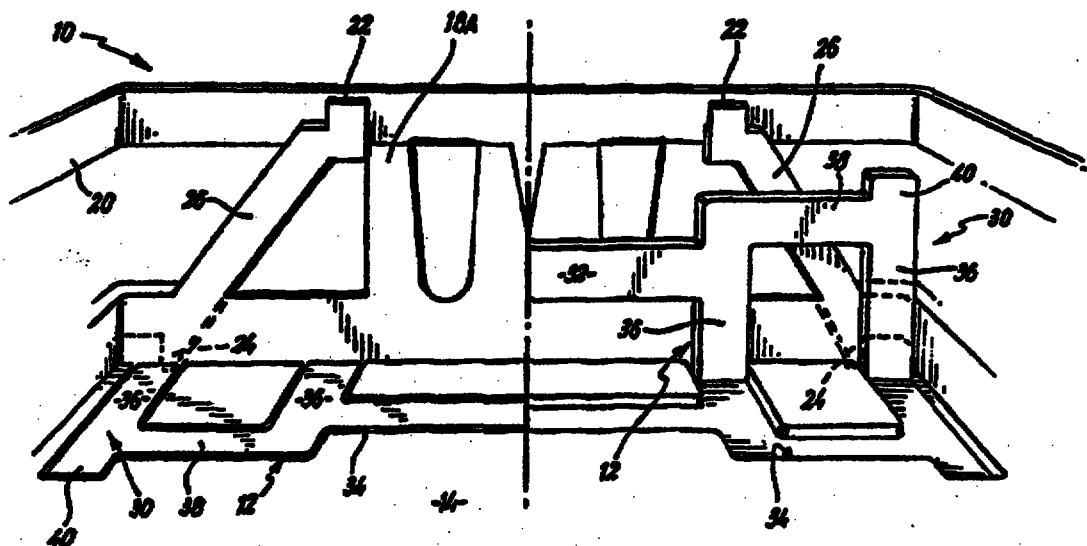
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(57) Abstract

A container (10) is formed to allow a second like container to nest therein when the two containers are in a first relative orientation, and to stack thereon when the two containers are in a second relative orientation. Stacking means shown generally at (12) have a stowed position (to the left in the drawing) in which stacking or nesting as aforesaid are possible, and a stacking position (to the right of the drawing) in which the stacking means (12) interfere with nesting to cause the containers to stack when in the second relative orientation.