

PATENT SPECIFICATION (11)

1 489 844

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(54) IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO A STRUCTURE FOR SUPPORTING FLORA

(71) We, DART INDUSTRIES INC., a corporation organised and existing under the laws of Delaware, United States of America, of 8480 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90048, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

The present invention is related to a structure for holding flora or the like, and, more particularly, to a versatile multi-unit flora display assembly.

Most of the prior art multi-unit flower receptacles comprise container groupings for miniature gardens, flower pots, or the like. These units require a particular construction depending on the type and weight of soil and on the degree of moisture desired with facilities for good drainage. Additionally, arrangements for superposing or displaying flower pots are generally heavy-duty structures requiring special constructions which are not versatile due to the requirements of strength, economy, and stability.

U.S. Patent 3,183,624 discloses a floral arranger having a large bottom tray portion into which may be fitted a large vase portion either alone or in combination with a small vase portion. Although a significant advance in the art, the structure disclosed in this U.S. Patent lacks a certain amount of versatility in that the tray portion is not provided with a means for engagement with the top of the vases and therefore, must always be located in the lowermost position of the ensemble. Also additionally, the said prior disclosed floral arranger calls for the use of separate grid-like structures for the top of both the large and small vase portions. These grid structures are generally unsupported and prone to rupture and distortion.

The present invention seeks to provide a structure for holding flora or the like in which the above described disadvantages of prior proposed such structures are reduced or obviated.

According to this invention there is pro-

vided a structure for holding flora comprising a bowl and a vase, said bowl being positionable upon or under the vase and having an opening in the bottom wall thereof, said opening being bounded by respective upper and lower flange members integral with said bottom wall and extending in opposite directions substantially perpendicular thereto, and said vase having integral base and side wall portions, said side wall portion including a lower portion extending below the base wall portion which lower portion has a size and shape corresponding to the size and shape of said upper flange member and is adapted to releasably interengage therewith, said side wall portion including a top portion having means to releasably interengage said lower flange member.

According to another aspect of this invention there is provided a kit of parts for forming such a structure.

A preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a three unit ensemble, the units of which may be combined in various ways to form versatile assemblies adapted to display all types of fresh and dry flowers, other types of flora, flower buds or another other type of ornament. The ensemble comprises a bowl having on its bottom wall upper and lower ring flanges concentric with a central opening. The opening extends through the bottom of the bowl and is covered with an open mesh grid to facilitate the arrangement and positioning of flora contained therein.

The ensemble further includes a vase having a top portion which is adapted to engage the lower ring flange of the bowl so that the bowl may be positioned in an upper position on top of the vase. The top portion of the vase is flared outwardly in matching conformity to the inwardly tapering bottom side walls of the bowl such that a smooth transition results when the bowl and vase are engaged. The bottom of the vase is recessed so that it may engage the upper flange of the bowl and be positioned within the bowl for another variation.

The third part of the ensemble is a closure

member having a U-shaped annular sealing portion for engagement with the lower flange of the bowl. The closure has on its top surface a plurality of projections to facilitate the arrangement of flowers or the like.

It can be seen from the above that an advantage of said preferred embodiment of the present invention is that it allows the association of different groups of plants or flowers into one attractive display. The different flora may be presented either in an upper position when the bowl is placed on top of the vase or in a lower position when the vase is placed within the bowl. In either combination, flowers having long stems may be arranged with the stems extending downwardly into the vase whilst flowers having short stems, or buds may be arranged in the bowl between the upper ring flange and side wall. The ensemble is simple to use yet provides an adaptable means for presenting flowers in a variable manner to enhance the most attractive aspects of each different type of bud, flower or the like.

In order that the invention may be more readily understood and so that further features thereof may be appreciated the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

FIGURE 1 is an exploded elevational view of a multi-unit flora display assembly in accordance with the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a view of the units shown in Figure 1 when assembled;

FIGURE 3 is a vertical cross-section taken along the line 3-3 of Figure 2;

FIGURE 4 is a reduced scale bottom plan view of the assembly shown in Figure 2;

FIGURE 5 is an elevational view of the bowl and vase shown in Figure 1 with the bowl engaged to the top of the vase;

FIGURE 6 is a broken-away cross-section view of the connection between the bowl and vase taken along line 6-6 of Figure 5;

FIGURE 7 is a top plan view of the closure member shown in Figure 1;

FIGURE 8 is a bottom plan view of the bowl shown in Figure 1; and,

FIGURE 9 is a top plan view of the bowl shown in Figure 8.

Referring to the drawings, Figure 1 shows each of the separate individual components of a structure in accordance with the present invention. The engagement of each to form one version of a flora display ensemble is depicted in Figures 2 and 3. In this version bowl 14 is engaged at its bottom with closure member 18 and vase 10 is connected to the interior of the bowl. To facilitate the engagement of the vase and closure to the bowl, a planar bottom wall 13 of the bowl is provided with an integral upper ring flange 15 and an integral lower ring flange 17. The upper ring flange is positioned concentric

with the side walls 22 of the bowl and is provided with a central opening 25 having an open mesh grid 24 extending thereacross. The grid is provided with open spaces 26 for the insertion and relative positioning of flower stems and the grid is formed from a plurality of ribs that are integral with the upper flange approximately midway along the vertical extent thereof. The lower ring flange is concentric with the bowl opening and is outwardly offset from the upper flange. It extends downwardly in a generally perpendicular direction from bottom wall 13. The lower portion 19 of said flange is slightly flared outwardly to facilitate engagement with a U-shaped sealing portion 20 of the closure member.

The closure member 18 presents a top surface having a lowered generally horizontal planar central area 28 and a large number of upstanding projections or spikes 30 symmetrically spaced thereabout. The closure member is provided with a continuous cylindrical outer rim 32 about its entire circumference which extends vertically with respect to the central area 28. Extending inwardly from the rim is a generally flat horizontal annular ridge 34 which merges radially inwardly into an annular recess or channel 20. The recess is generally U-shaped in cross-section and is concentric with the outer ring 32 and ridge 34. The U-shape presents a top opening 36 for frictional engagement with the lower flange 17. To further facilitate such engagement, the outer wall portion 20a, adjacent ridge 34, is vertically longer than the inner wall 20b which merges into the central area 28. The difference in height, in part, may be caused by the ridge 34 being at a higher level relative to the central area 28. However, the advantageous effect is to make opening 36 more accessible for insertion of lower flange portion 19 during assembly of the units. It will be understood that each of the component parts of the present invention are preferably made of resilient plastics material providing for a firm snap-on frictional engagement with one another.

The side walls 22 of the bowl converge downwardly and inwardly at 38 and terminate in a downwardly projecting protuberance 40 having a flat mating surface 42. The protuberance and mating surface present a circular configuration about the outside lower portion of the bowl as shown best in Figure 8. The circular configuration is concentric with the ring flanges 17, 19 and is of the same diameter as the top edge 50 of vase 10 for a purpose to be hereinafter described.

In the assembly shown in Figures 2 to 4, the vase is positioned within the bowl by frictional engagement of upper flange 15 with the downwardly extending lower side wall portion 46 of the vase. To facilitate this

engagement, the inner surfaces of the lower side wall portion contain a series of ribs 48 at spaced intervals thereabout. These ribs contact the surfaces of flange 15 and allow ease of engagement and disengagement with the vase.

The side walls 52 of the vase are slightly flared outwardly from the base 44 and extend into a fluted top portion 53. The top portion terminates with the aforementioned flat top edge 50 and includes an annular inner ridge 54 having an undercut portion 56. When the bowl is placed on top of the vase as shown in Figures 5 and 6, the undercut portion 56 frictionally engages the flared portion 19 of the flange ring 17. In this combination the closure member would not be utilised.

Because the curvature of the lower bowl portion 38 corresponds to the degree of flare of the vase top portion 53, a smooth transition is effected giving the appearance of a unitary display structure. This appearance is also enhanced with the use of the flat horizontal edges 42 and 50 which form a flat abutting joint. This serves substantially to minimise interruption of the curvilinear outline of the display structure.

In the arrangement shown in Figure 5, long-stemmed flowers may be inserted through the open areas 26 of grid 24 in a manner to achieve an attractive floral arrangement. Additionally, because of the relatively large flat bottom wall portion 13 of the bowl, there is ample space for the placement of short-stemmed flowers, buds, wreath materials, or the like. With the up-standing annular flange 15 constructed integrally with the bottom portion 13, it is possible that fluids may be contained within the lower region of the bowl for floating flower buds. Of course, it is apparent that the bottom 44 of the vase is also integral with the side walls 52 such that fluids may be held therein to prolong the freshness of flowers. In this regard it is to be understood that the vase portion may be utilised by itself and the bowl may be utilised either alone or in combination with the closure member such that the entire bowl area can be sealed in a fluid tight manner. When the bowl is used with the closure member, one would have the advantage of utilising both the grid 24 and projections 30 for arranging flora or the like.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A structure for holding flora comprising a bowl and a vase, said bowl being positionable upon or under the vase and having an opening in the bottom wall thereof, said opening being bounded by respective upper and lower flange members integral with said bottom wall and extending in opposite directions substantially perpendicular thereto, and

said vase having integral base and side wall portions, said side wall portion including a lower portion extending below the base wall portion which lower portion has a size and shape corresponding to the size and shape of said upper flange member and is adapted to releasably interengage therewith, said side wall portion including a top portion having means to releasably interengage said lower flange member.

2. A structure according to claim 1 wherein the upper flange member of said bowl is interengaged with the lower side wall portion of said vase and the said lower flange member of the bowl has a closure member sealingly positioned thereon.

3. A structure according to claim 2 wherein said closure member includes a substantially planar central wall having therein a U-shaped groove that sealingly engages said lower flange member.

4. A structure according to claim 2 or claim 3 wherein said closure member includes a plurality of elongate projections adjacently positioned one with respect to the other and extending upwardly toward said bowl but terminating below said bowl opening.

5. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the opening of said bowl is provided with an open mesh grid comprising a plurality of ribs radiating outwardly from said upper flange member.

6. A structure according to claim 5 wherein said ribs are integral with said upper flange member approximately midway along the vertical extent thereof.

7. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the side wall top portion of said vase terminates in a flat horizontal top edge and includes an inner annular undercut portion located below said edge.

8. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said bowl includes a side wall extending vertically upwardly to a terminal upper edge positioned above said upper flange member and extending downwardly and inwardly to a horizontal flat annular base.

9. A structure according to claim 8, wherein the outer surface of the downwardly and inwardly extending portion of the side wall of said bowl includes an annular projection having a downwardly facing flat surface adapted to mate with the horizontal edge of the side wall top portion of said vase.

10. A structure according to claim 9 as dependent upon claim 7 wherein the annular undercut portion of said vase is engaged with the lower flange member of said bowl with the top edge of the vase in abutting contact with the downwardly facing annular surface of the bowl.

11. A structure for holding flora or the

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engagement, the inner surfaces of the lower side wall portion contain a series of ribs 48 at spaced intervals thereabout. These ribs contact the surfaces of flange 15 and allow ease of engagement and disengagement with the vase.

The side walls 52 of the vase are slightly flared outwardly from the base 44 and extend into a fluted top portion 53. The top portion terminates with the aforementioned flat top edge 50 and includes an annular inner ridge 54 having an undercut portion 56. When the bowl is placed on top of the vase as shown in Figures 5 and 6, the undercut portion 56 frictionally engages the flared portion 19 of the flange ring 17. In this combination the closure member would not be utilised.

Because the curvature of the lower bowl portion 38 corresponds to the degree of flare of the vase top portion 53, a smooth transition is effected giving the appearance of a unitary display structure. This appearance is also enhanced with the use of the flat horizontal edges 42 and 50 which form a flat abutting joint. This serves substantially to minimise interruption of the curvilinear outline of the display structure.

In the arrangement shown in Figure 5, long-stemmed flowers may be inserted through the open areas 26 of grid 24 in a manner to achieve an attractive floral arrangement. Additionally, because of the relatively large flat bottom wall portion 13 of the bowl, there is ample space for the placement of short-stemmed flowers, buds, wreath materials, or the like. With the upstanding annular flange 15 constructed integrally with the bottom portion 13, it is possible that fluids may be contained within the lower region of the bowl for floating flower buds. Of course, it is apparent that the bottom 44 of the vase is also integral with the side walls 52 such that fluids may be held therein to prolong the freshness of flowers. In this regard it is to be understood that the vase portion may be utilised by itself and the bowl may be utilised either alone or in combination with the closure member such that the entire bowl area can be sealed in a fluid tight manner. When the bowl is used with the closure member, one would have the advantage of utilising both the grid 24 and projections 30 for arranging flora or the like.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A structure for holding flora comprising a bowl and a vase, said bowl being positionable upon or under the vase and having an opening in the bottom wall thereof, said opening being bounded by respective upper and lower flange members integral with said bottom wall and extending in opposite directions substantially perpendicular thereto, and

said vase having integral base and side wall portions, said side wall portion including a lower portion extending below the base wall portion which lower portion has a size and shape corresponding to the size and shape of said upper flange member and is adapted to releasably interengage therewith, said side wall portion including a top portion having means to releasably interengage said lower flange member.

2. A structure according to claim 1 wherein the upper flange member of said bowl is interengaged with the lower side wall portion of said vase and the said lower flange member of the bowl has a closure member sealingly positioned thereon.

3. A structure according to claim 2 wherein said closure member includes a substantially planar central wall having therein a U-shaped groove that sealingly engages said lower flange member.

4. A structure according to claim 2 or claim 3 wherein said closure member includes a plurality of elongate projections adjacently positioned one with respect to the other and extending upwardly toward said bowl but terminating below said bowl opening.

5. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the opening of said bowl is provided with an open mesh grid comprising a plurality of ribs radiating outwardly from said upper flange member.

6. A structure according to claim 5 wherein said ribs are integral with said upper flange member approximately midway along the vertical extent thereof.

7. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the side wall top portion of said vase terminates in a flat horizontal top edge and includes an inner annular undercut portion located below said edge.

8. A structure according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said bowl includes a side wall extending vertically upwardly to a terminal upper edge positioned above said upper flange member and extending downwardly and inwardly to a horizontal flat annular base.

9. A structure according to claim 8, wherein the outer surface of the downwardly and inwardly extending portion of the side wall of said bowl includes an annular projection having a downwardly facing flat surface adapted to mate with the horizontal edge of the side wall top portion of said vase.

10. A structure according to claim 9 as dependent upon claim 7 wherein the annular undercut portion of said vase is engaged with the lower flange member of said bowl with the top edge of the vase in abutting contact with the downwardly facing annular surface of the bowl.

11. A structure for holding flora or the



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like substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in Figures 1 to 4 and 7 to 9 of the accompanying drawings.

- 5 12. A structure for holding flora or the like substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in Figures 5 and 6 of the accompanying drawings.

- 10 13. A kit of parts for forming a structure for holding flora, said kit comprising a vase and a bowl, said bowl being positionable upon or under the vase and having an opening in the bottom wall thereof, said opening being bounded by respective upper and lower flange members integral with said bottom wall and extending in opposite directions substantially perpendicular thereto, and said vase having integral base and side wall portions, said side wall portion including a lower portion extending below the base wall portion which lower portion has a size and shape corresponding to the size and shape of said upper flange member and is adapted

to releasably interengage therewith, said side wall portion including a top portion having means to releasably interengage said lower flange member.

14. A kit of parts according to claim 13, said kit further comprising a closure member.

15. A kit of parts comprising a bowl, a vase and a closure member substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

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