CLAIMS:

1. A fan blade comprising a mount supporting a plurality of superimposed fan blade segments arranged to slide relative to one another from a retracted storage configuration to an extended operative configuration.

2. The fan blade according to claim 1 wherein the fan blade segments slide telescopically one within the other.

3. The fan blade according to either claim 1 or 2 wherein, the mount is adapted to be secured to a rotating plate whereby the fan blade, in the operative configuration extends radially of the rotating plate.

4. The fan blade according to any one of the proceeding claims wherein the mount supports three fan blade segments, the outer blade segment defining a tip of the blade.

5. The fan blade according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the fan blade segments are substantially flat.

6. A ceiling fan comprising an electric motor adapted to drive a rotating plate that supports a plurality of equally spaced fan blades that extend radially of the plate, each fan blade comprising a root and a tip joined by leading and trailing edges, the root being adapted to be secured to the plate, wherein each blade comprises a plurality of fan blade segments arranged to slide telescopically one within the other whereby the fan blade segments can be located substantially within the periphery of the plate in a

retracted configuration and can extend radially outwardly in an operative configuration.

7. The ceiling fan according to claim 6 wherein as the fan rotates the fan blade segments slide outwardly due to centrifugal forces.

8. The ceiling fan according to claim 7 wherein biasing means pulls the fan blade segments back into the retracted configuration against the centrifugal force as the fan slows down to a stop.

9. The ceiling fan according to claim 8 wherein opposed blades are interconnected by a chain driven by a sprocket including biasing means which rotates the chain to pull back the blade segments as the fan slows to a stop.

10. The ceiling fan according to any one of claims 6 to 9 wherein each blade has an angle of incidence to the horizontal, preferably between 10 and 15 degrees.

11. The ceiling fan according to any one of claims 6 to 10 wherein the rotating plate supports four equally spaced radially extending blades.

12. The ceiling fan according to any one of claims 6 to 11 wherein each blade is secured to the plate by a mount.

13. The ceiling fan according to claim 12 wherein the mount includes a slot through which the blade slides.

CLAIMS:

1. A ceiling fan comprising an electric motor adapted to drive a rotating plate that supports a plurality of equally spaced fan blades that extend radially of the plate, the fan having a lower periphery above which the fan blades are located, each fan blade comprising a root and a tip joined by leading and trailing edges, the root being adapted to be secured to the plate, wherein each blade comprises a plurality of fan blade segments arranged to slide telescopically one within the other whereby the fan blade segments are located wholly within the lower periphery in a retracted configuration and extend radially outwardly of the lower periphery in an operative configuration.

2. The ceiling fan according to claim 1, wherein the lower periphery is defined by the rotating plate.

3. The ceiling fan according to claims 1 or 2, wherein as the fan rotates the fan blade segments slide outwardly due to centrifugal forces.

4. The ceiling fan according to claim 3 wherein biasing means pulls the fan blade segments back into the retracted configuration against the centrifugal force as the fan slows down to a stop.

5. The ceiling fan according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein opposed blades are interconnected by a chain driven by a sprocket including biasing means which rotates the chain to pull back the blade segments as the fan slows to a stop.

6. The ceiling fan according to any one of the

preceding claims, wherein each blade has an angle of incidence to the horizontal, preferably between 10 and 15 degrees.

7. The ceiling fan according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the rotating plate supports four equally spaced radially extending blades.

8. The ceiling fan according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein each blade is secured to the plate by a mount.

9. The ceiling fan according to claim 8 wherein the mount includes a slot through which the blade slides.

10. The ceiling fan according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the mount supports three fan blade segments: an outer segment, an inner segment and an intermediate segment.

11. The ceiling fan according to claim 10 wherein the outer blade segment defines a tip of the blade.

12. The ceiling fan according to claim 11 wherein in the wholly retracted storage configuration, the tip of the blade is wholly within the intermediate segment, and an intermediate segment is wholly within the outer segment.

13. The ceiling fan according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the fan blade segments are substantially flat.

14. A ceiling fan substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.