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(54) **DURABLE FOOD COVER**

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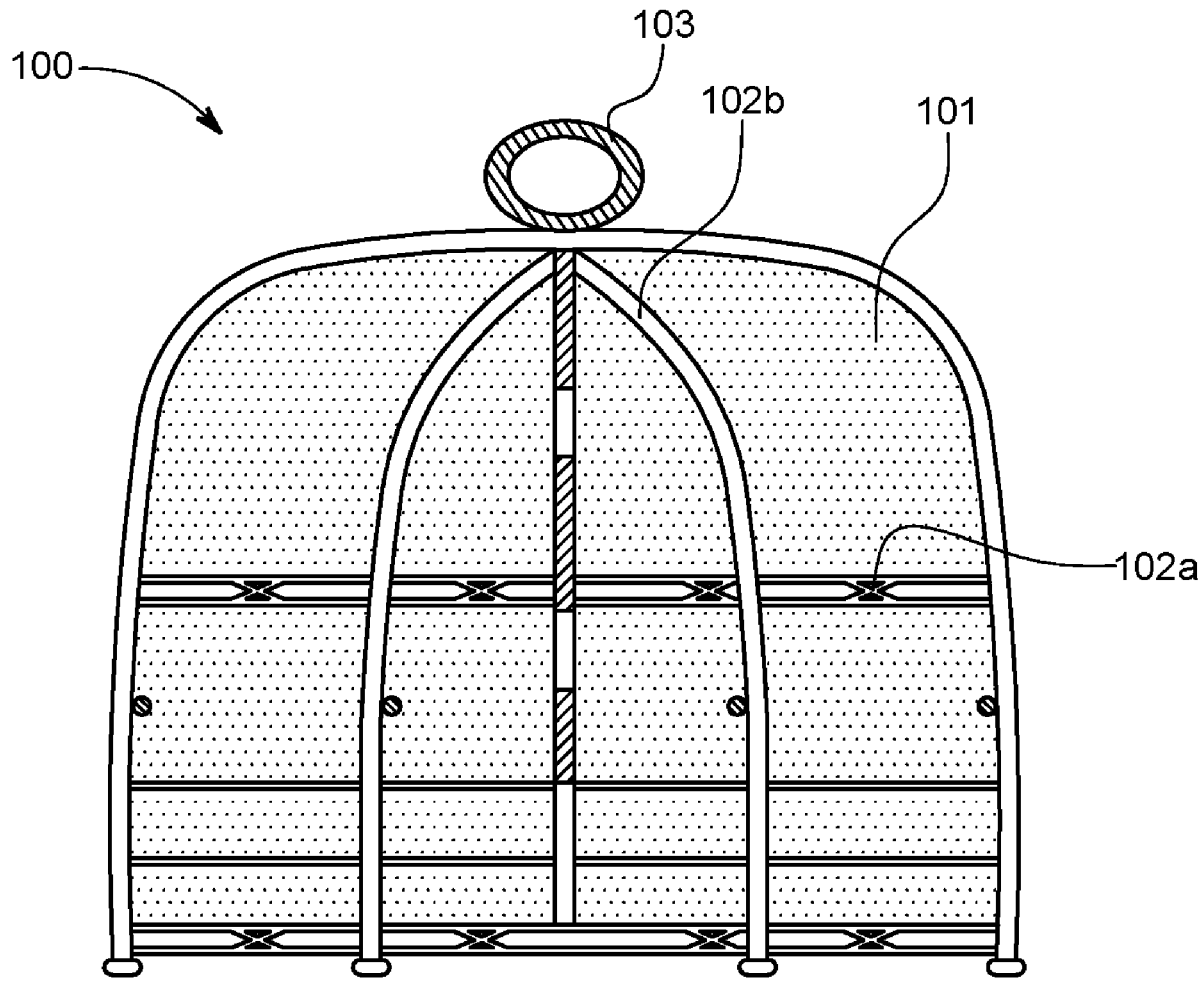
(57) **ABSTRACT**

An article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover is disclosed. The durable food cover includes multiple shaped enclosure for protecting items of food, a durable mesh-like airflow food cover, a dome-shaped top having a ring handle coupled to a top surface, an adjustable lattice framework supporting the durable mesh-like airflow food cover, and an opening to permit access within the enclosure. The adjustable lattice framework includes one or more levels of orientation coupled to the durable mesh-like airflow food cover for suspending the food cover above the food items, a plurality of support arm forming the dome-shaped top, and a plurality of side support arms configured to couple together forming the multiple shaped enclosure. Each of the one or more level having one or more side walls of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover from the dome-shaped top to a base.



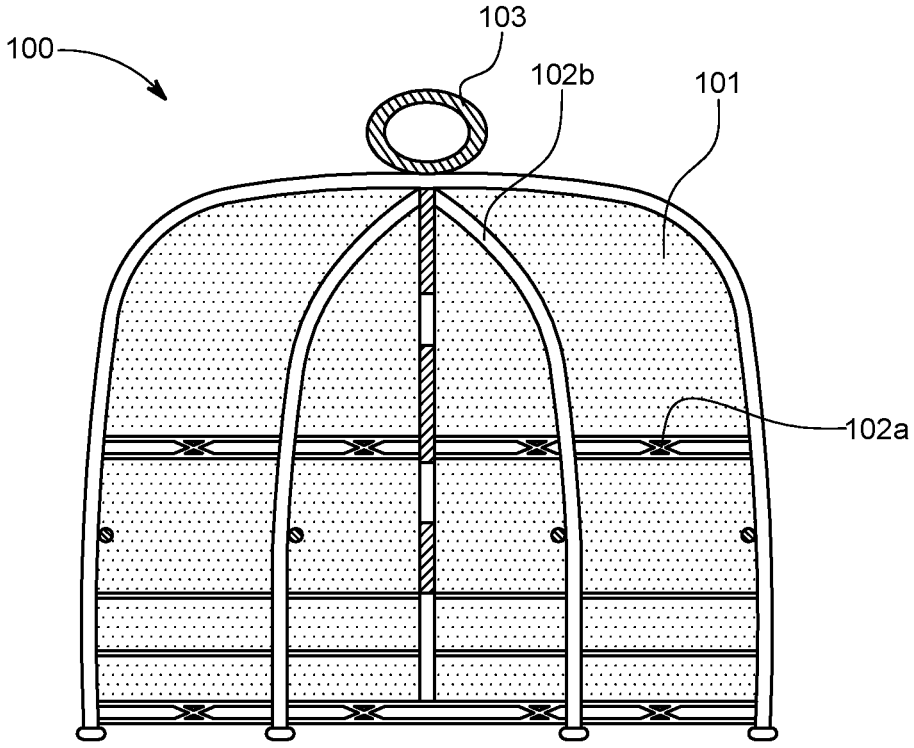


FIG. 1

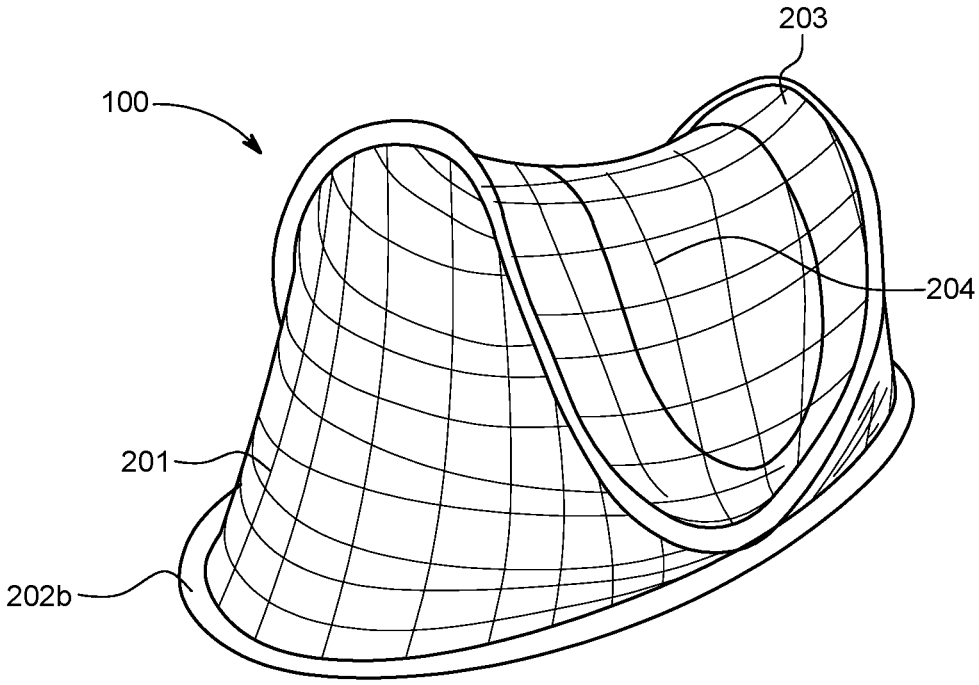


FIG. 2A

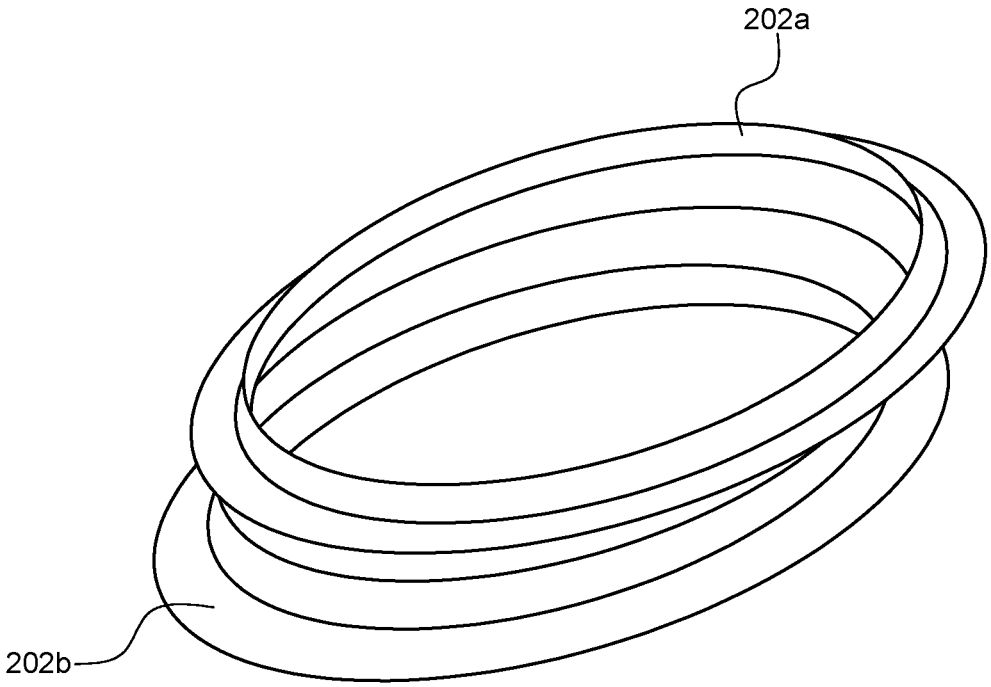


FIG. 2B

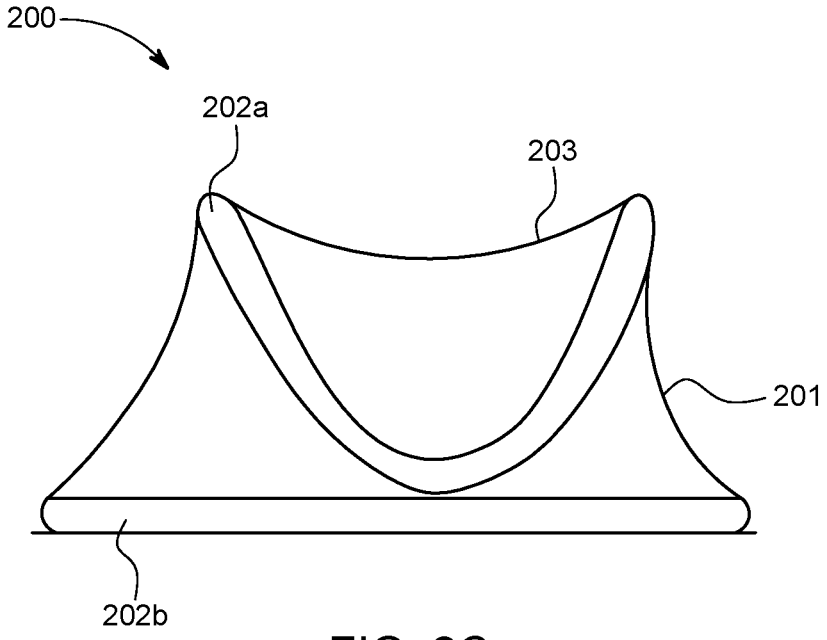


FIG. 2C

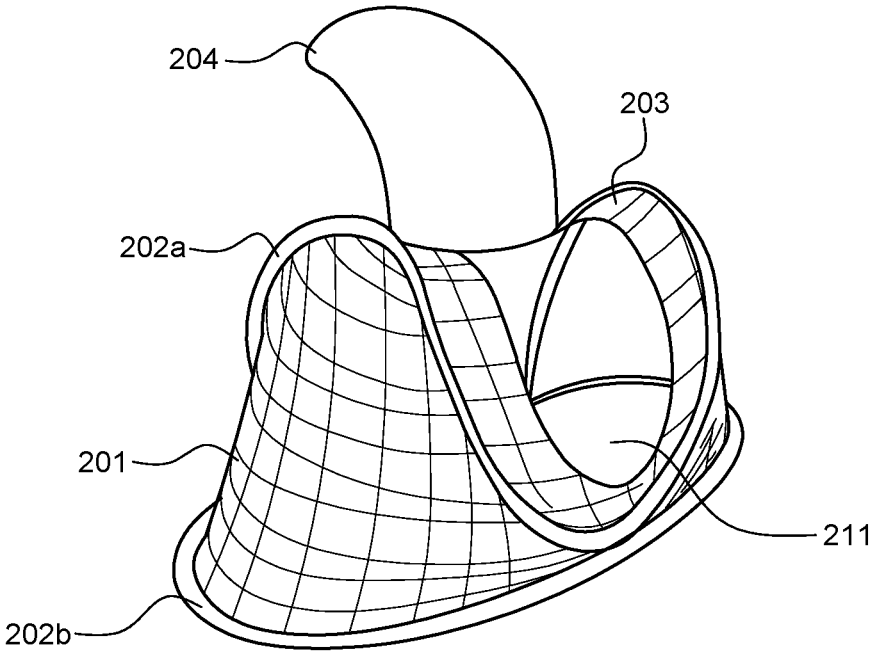


FIG. 2D

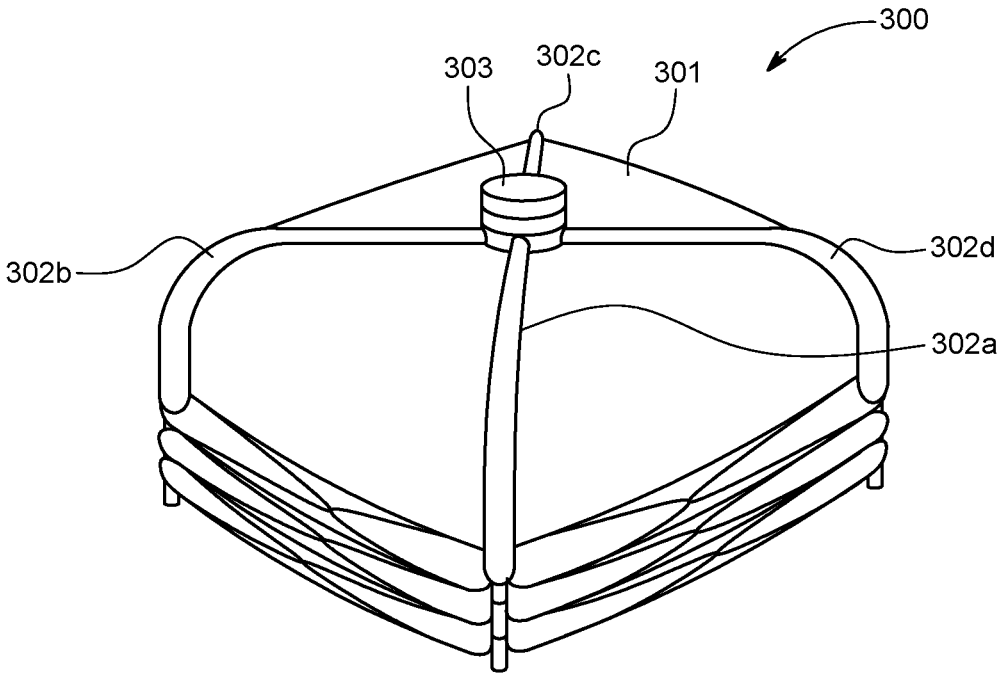

300
303
302c
301
302b
302d
302a

FIG. 3A

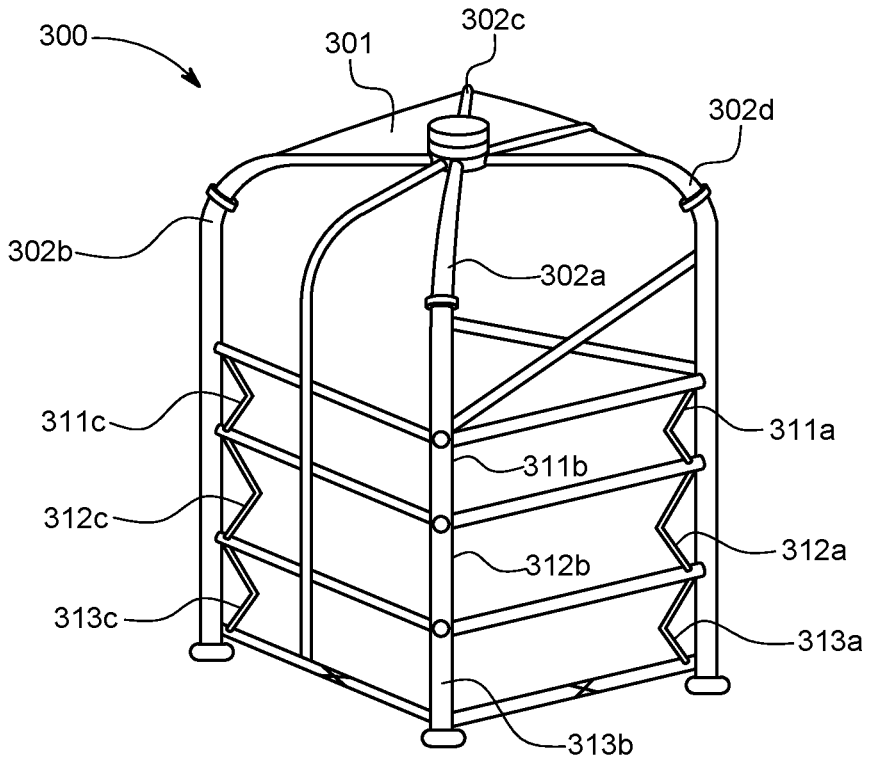

300
301
302c
302d
302b
302a
311c
311a
311b
312c
312a
312b
313c
313a
313b

FIG. 3B

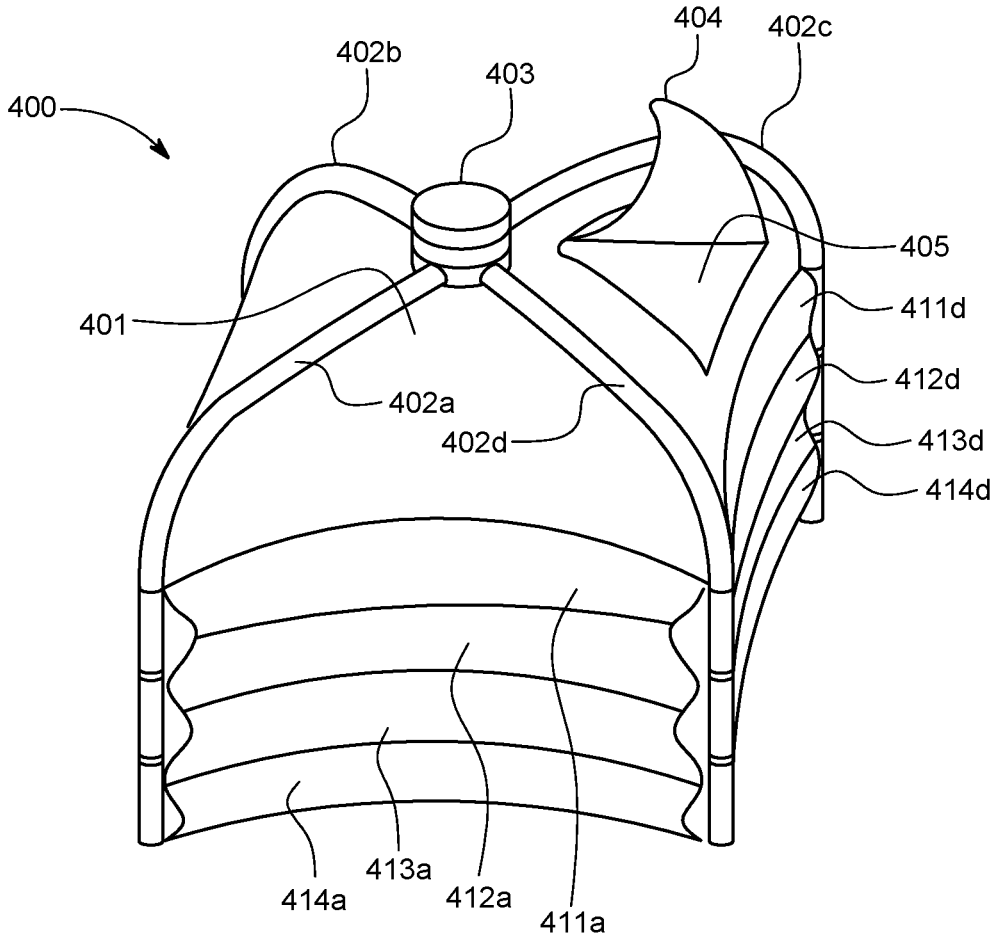

400
402b
403
404
402c
405
401
411d
412d
402a
402d
413d
414d
414a
413a
412a
411a

FIG. 4A

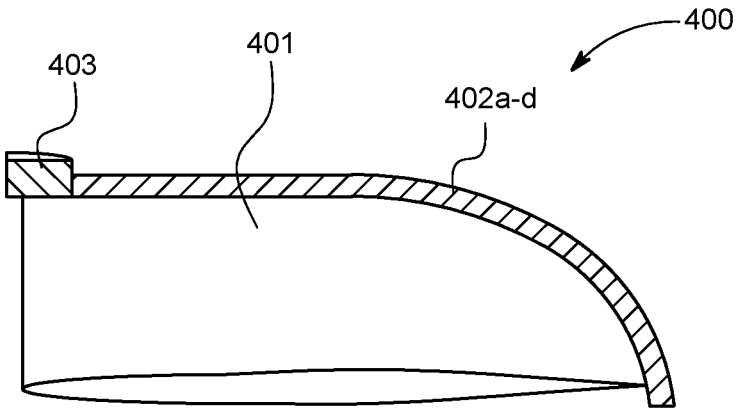

400
403
401
402a-d

FIG. 4B

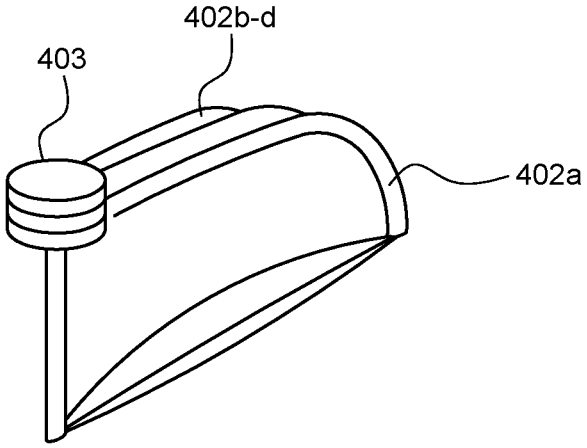


FIG. 4C

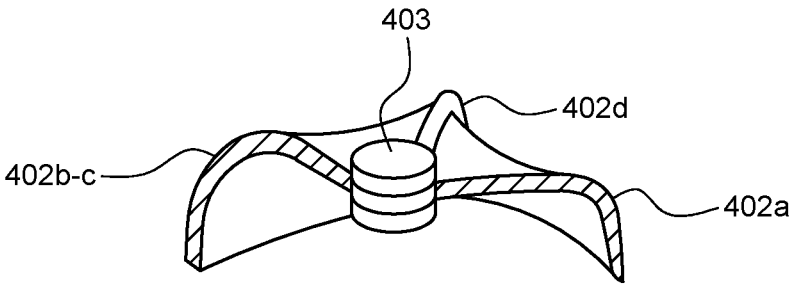


FIG. 4D

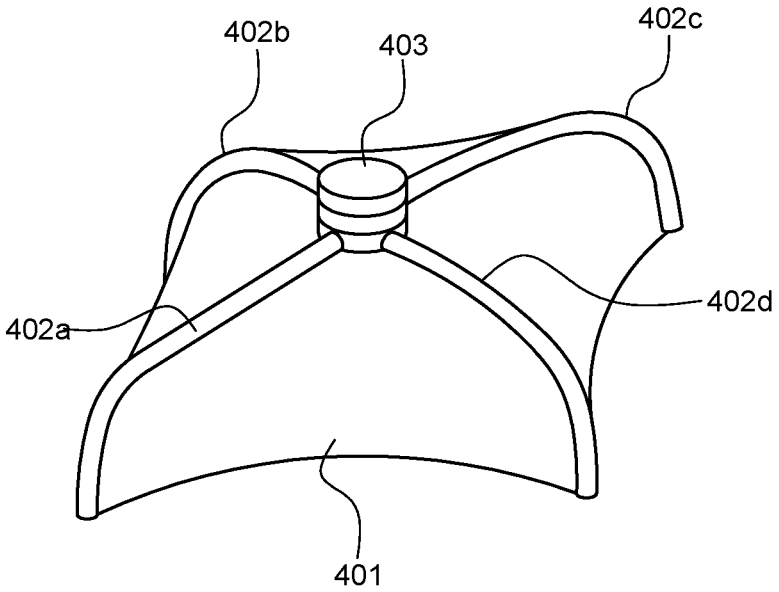


FIG. 4E

DURABLE FOOD COVER

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This application relates in general to an article of manufacture for providing food cover, and more specifically, to an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover.

BACKGROUND

[0002] During food preparation and while it is being served, some parts of a meal are waiting to be used or served, typically in a bowl or container that is open to the air. While these food items are waiting to be used, they need to be protected from flying insects, dust, particulates, and the like, especially when sitting at a barbecue, parties, tabletops, and on kitchen counters and islands. In order for the fruits and foods to be accessible and yet protected in all of these locations, a cover is needed that is lightweight, adjustable up to plurality of heights, washable and easily dried, easy to fold down into a small size for storage, and easy enough to unfold and safely place on flat surfaces such as kitchen counters, islands, tabletops, and any catered engagements. Providing a combination of adequate protection, light weight, and ease of use is typically not found in existing devices and methods.

[0003] Therefore, a need exists for an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover. The present invention attempts to address the limitations and deficiencies in prior solutions according to the principles and example embodiments disclosed herein.

SUMMARY

[0004] In accordance with the present invention, the above and other problems are solved by providing an article of manufacture for a soft-sided durable food cover according to the principles and example embodiments disclosed herein.

[0005] In one embodiment, the present invention is an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover. The durable food cover includes multiple shaped enclosure for protecting items of food, a durable mesh-like airflow food cover, a dome-shaped top having a ring handle coupled to a top surface, an adjustable lattice framework supporting the durable mesh-like airflow food cover, and an opening to permit access within the enclosure.

[0006] In another aspect of the present invention, the adjustable lattice framework includes one or more levels of orientation coupled to the durable mesh-like airflow food cover for suspending the food cover above the food items.

[0007] In another aspect of the present invention, the adjustable lattice framework further includes a plurality of support arm forming the dome-shaped top, and a plurality of side support arms configured to couple together forming the multiple shaped enclosure.

[0008] In another aspect of the present invention, each of the one or more level having one or more side walls of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover from the dome-shaped top to a base.

[0009] In another aspect of the present invention, the opening to the multiple shaped enclosure is on a bottom surface of the durable food cover.

[0010] In another aspect of the present invention, the plurality of support arm forming pivot about a center point attached to the ring handle for folding the durable food cover into a closed orientation.

[0011] In another aspect of the present invention, the multiple shaped enclosure comprises one of the following shapes: square, rectangular, round, oval, and pyramid.

[0012] In another aspect of the present invention, the adjustable lattice framework comprises a pair of arching and stretchable support members coupled to an inside surface of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover. The pair of arching and stretchable support members support the durable mesh-like airflow food cover to form the multiple shaped enclosure when in a popped up configuration.

[0013] In another aspect of the present invention, the opening to the multiple shaped enclosure is located along a top surface of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover. The opening being configured to be opened and closed with a flap of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover on opposite sides of the opening engage each other.

[0014] In another aspect of the present invention, the opposite sides of the flap in the durable mesh-like airflow food cover couple together using a closing device comprising a zipper, one or more snaps, a pair of magnets, and mating Velcro™ fabric.

[0015] In another aspect of the present invention, the durable food cover further comprises a bottom surface of material forming an inner surface within the multiple shaped enclosure.

[0016] In another aspect of the present invention, the pair of stretchable supports **202***a-b* are made of semi-rigid support members connected together with elastic or bungie cord material.

[0017] In another aspect of the present invention, the durable mesh-like airflow food cover comprises fabric made of natural and synthetic material.

[0018] In another aspect of the present invention, the fabric comprises cotton, silk, polyester, nylon, and silicone materials.

[0019] The foregoing has outlined rather broadly the features and technical advantages of the present invention in order that the detailed description of the invention that follows may be better understood. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims of the invention.

[0020] It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the conception and specific embodiment disclosed may be readily utilized as a basis for modifying or designing other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the present invention. It also should be realized by those skilled in the art that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims. The novel features that are believed to be characteristic of the invention, both as to its organization and method of operation, together with further objects and advantages will be better understood from the following description when considered in connection with the accompanying figures. It is to be expressly understood, however, that each of the figures is provided for the purpose of illustration and description only and is not intended as a definition of the limits of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] Referring now to the drawings in which like reference numbers represent corresponding parts throughout:

[0022] FIG. **1** illustrates an example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention.

[0023] FIGS. **2***a-d* illustrate a second example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention.

[0024] FIGS. **3***a-b* illustrate a third example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention.

[0025] FIGS. **4***a-e* illustrate a fifth example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0026] This application relates in general to an article of manufacture for providing food cover, and more specifically, to an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention.

[0027] Various embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals represent like parts and assemblies throughout the several views. Reference to various embodiments does not limit the scope of the invention, which is limited only by the scope of the claims attached hereto. Additionally, any examples set forth in this specification are not intended to be limiting and merely set forth some of the many possible embodiments for the claimed invention.

[0028] In describing embodiments of the present invention, the following terminology will be used. The singular forms "a," "an," and "the" include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to "a needle" includes reference to one or more of such needles and "etching" includes one or more of such steps. As used herein, a plurality of items, structural elements, compositional elements, and/or materials may be presented in a common list for convenience. However, these lists should be construed as though each member of the list is individually identified as a separate and unique member. Thus, no individual member of such list should be construed as a de facto equivalent of any other member of the same list solely based on their presentation in a common group without indications to the contrary. As used herein, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

[0029] It further will be understood that the terms "comprises," "comprising," "includes," and "including" specify the presence of stated features, steps or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, steps or components. It also should be noted that in some alternative implementations, the functions and acts noted may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, two figures shown in succession may in fact be executed substantially concurrently or may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality and acts involved.

[0030] The terms "diner" and "user" refer to an entity, e.g., a human, using a soft-sided durable food cover associated with the invention. The term user herein refers to one or more users.

[0031] The term "invention" or "present invention" refers to the invention being applied for via the patent application with the title "Durable Food Cover." Invention may be used interchangeably with cover.

[0032] In general, the present disclosure relates to an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover. To better understand the present invention, FIG. **1** illustrates an example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention. The Durable Food Cover I 00_is suitable for use to protect fruits and foods from flying insects, dust, and particulates. The design is lightweight, adjustable up to plurality of heights, washable and dries in minutes, easy to fold down into a small size for storage, and easy enough to unfold and safely place on flat surfaces such as kitchen counters, islands, tabletops, and any catered engagements. This is a portable device designed to be used at barbecues, parties, and other events to protect food while leaving the dishes easy to access.

[0033] This durable airflow food cover **100** is designed to have multiple shapes such as square, rectangular, and round. All shapes have a dome design with a ring handle **103** used to place the unit in desired position. A durable airflow food cover **100** is adjustable into a plurality of increments with each increment measuring 2.5 inches. A range of openings on opposing sides, with magnetic strips or similar closing devices, provide easy access and immediate closure after each usage. The Durable Food Cover **100** is made from a hollow lattice framework **102***a-b* and mesh-like silicone material **101** to provide even airflow and is height-adjustable and lightweight for easy portability. The mesh-like silicone material **101** may be made using many different natural and synthetic materials including cotton, silk, polyester, nylon and the like. The mesh-like silicone material **101** typically does not provide an insulating layer as its use to cover fruits that are kept at a room temperature do not need insulation.

[0034] FIGS. **2***a-d* illustrate a second example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention. FIG. **2***a* shows a second embodiment of a durable cover **200** that pops up from a flat configuration in FIG. **2***b* into a free-standing cover. The Durable Food Cover **200** utilizes a pair of stretchable supports **202***a-b* that are configured in an arching arrangement that provide a framework to hold the cover material **201** in place and create an internal volume in which the fruits and food may be placed.

[0035] The pair of stretchable supports **202***a-b* are made of semi-rigid support members connected together with elastic or bungie cord material. The semi-rigid members may be separated to allow the cover **200** to collapse down onto itself for compact storage. When the pair of stretchable supports **202***a-b* are pulled upward, the connecting elastic or bungie cord material stretches and then pulls the semi-rigid members together to create a support frame for the covering material **201**. A flap **204** is provided in the covering material **201** that opens, as shown in FIG. **2***d*, to allow a user to reach into the Durable Food Cover **100** to place fruits and food items within the cover and to remove the items when needed. The flap **204** and opening **211** joins together to form a closing seam. The edges of the flap **204** and the opening

211 may include attachment mechanisms such as magnets, Velcro™, snaps, and similar devices to easily open and close the flap **204** when needed. These same attachment items also permit the flap **204** to be closed again when it is not needed.

[0036] As shown in FIG. **2***c*, the Durable Food Cover **100** utilizes a base ring member **202***b* to define a base upon which the durable airflow food cover **100** may rest. The stretchable support member **202***a* rises upward and downward about the flap **204** and corresponding opening **211** to provide the rising support members to hold the cover material **201** above the fruit and food inside.

[0037] FIGS. **3***a-c* illustrate a third example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention. FIG. **3***a* shows a third embodiment of a Durable Food Cover **300** according to the present invention. The cover **300** is constructed roughly in the shape of a square or rectangle defined by a set of four support arms **302***a-d* that are joined in a center point with a connecting ring **303**. Outward ends of the set of four support arms **302***a-d* may include a corner or arching member to direct the cover material downward at the edges of the cover **300**.

[0038] The cover material **301** attaches to the underside of the four support arms to provide a top cover surface between the set of four support arms **302***a-d*. The cover material **301** also may provide side panels **331***a-d* and **332***a-d* when unfolded.

[0039] FIG. **3***b* shows a top portion of the Durable Food Cover **300** being lifted upward exposing a pair of side wall panels **331***a-d* and **332***a-d* falling downward from the set of four support arms **302***a-d*. A sets of side support members **311***a-d* and **312***a-d* are attached to the sides of the side wall panels **331***a-d* and **332***a-d* to provide support to hold the cover **300** in a deployed orientation. A pair of side support members **311***a-d*, **312***a-d* are attached between each of the side wall panels **331***a-d*, **332***a-d* at the corners of the Durable Food Cover **300**. Each pair of side support members **311***a-d*, **312***a-d* engage each other to create a single upward support corner when deployed. Each pair of side support members **311***a-d*, **312***a-d* may be connected together using an elastic or bungie cord material to pull and hold them together. Alternatively, each pair of side support members **311***a-d*, **312***a-d* may mechanically engage each other to be deployed and separated to fold the Durable Food Cover **300** into a compact form when not in use.

[0040] FIGS. **4***a-e* illustrate a fourth example embodiment of an article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover according to the present invention. FIG. **4***a* shows a fully deployed cover **400** with four sets of side wall panels **411***a-d*, **412***a-d*, **413***a-d*, **414***a-d*. These four sets of side wall panels **411***a-d*, **412***a-d*, **413***a-d*, **414***a-d* are coupled to sets of corner side support members similar to the ones disclosed above in reference to FIG. **3**. As with FIG. **3**, the Durable Food Cover **400** is constructed using a set of four support arms **402***a-d* connected together at a center ring **403**.

[0041] FIG. **4***b* shows the Durable Food Cover **400** in its compact storage configuration. The set of four support arms **402***a-d* are pushed together as each rotates about the center ring **403** until they are adjacent to each other. The cover material **401** is hanging downward in between each of the four support arms **402***a-d*. FIG. **4***c* shows the beginning of the deployment of the cover **400** as the set of four support arms **402***a-d* are beginning to rotate outward from each other around the center ring **403**. FIG. **4***c* shows one of the set of four support arms **402***a* deployed. FIG. **4***d* shows three of the set of four support arms **402***a, d* and *b-d* in a deployed position. FIG. **4***e* shows all four of the set of four support arms **402***a-d* deployed. As each of four support arms **402***a-d* is deployed, the cover material between each of the support arms is stretched outward to form the cover material of the top of the Durable Food Cover **400**. The side walls may be deployed downward once the set of four support arms **402***a-d* has been deployed. The legs or poles are telescoped for adjustability, so the length of the legs can be shortened for storage. The center ring is used to pull up the cord that is attached to the poles at the top of the cover to hold and support framework of the cover. The center ring when depressed, folds down cover by releasing the tension on the cord and break in the 45 degrees angle of the legs.

[0042] Even though particular combinations of features are recited in the present application, these combinations are not intended to limit the disclosure of the invention. In fact, many of these features may be combined in ways not specifically recited in this application. In other words, any of the features mentioned in this application may be included in this new invention in any combination or combinations to allow the functionality required for the desired operations.

[0043] No element, act, or instruction used in the present application should be construed as critical or essential to the invention unless explicitly described as such. Further, the phrase "based on" is intended to mean "based, at least in part, on" unless explicitly stated otherwise.

What is claimed is:

1. An article of manufacture for providing a soft-sided durable food cover, the durable food cover comprises:
- multiple shaped enclosure for protecting items of food;
- a durable mesh-like airflow food cover;
- a dome-shaped top having a ring handle coupled to a top surface;
- an adjustable lattice framework supporting the durable mesh-like airflow food cover; and
- an opening to permit access within the enclosure.

2. The durable food cover according to claim **1**, wherein the adjustable lattice framework comprises one or more levels of orientation coupled to the durable mesh-like airflow food cover for suspending the food cover above the food items.

3. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein the adjustable lattice framework further comprises:
- a plurality of support arm forming the dome-shaped top; and
- a plurality of side support arms configured to couple together forming the multiple shaped enclosure.

4. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein each of the one or more level having one or more side walls of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover from the dome-shaped top to a base.

5. The durable food cover according to claim **4**, wherein the opening to the multiple shaped enclosure is on a bottom surface of the durable food cover.

6. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein the plurality of support arm forming pivot about a center point attached to the ring handle for folding the durable food cover into a closed orientation.

7. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein the multiple shaped enclosure comprises one of the following shapes: square, rectangular, round, oval, and pyramid.

8. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein the adjustable lattice framework comprises a pair of arching and stretchable support members coupled to an inside surface of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover, the pair of arching and stretchable support members support the durable mesh-like airflow food cover to form the multiple shaped enclosure when in a popped up configuration.

9. The durable food cover according to claim **8**, wherein the opening to the multiple shaped enclosure is located along a top surface of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover, the opening being configured to be opened and closed with a flap of the durable mesh-like airflow food cover on opposite sides of the opening engage each other.

10. The durable food cover according to claim **9**, wherein the opposite sides of the flap in the durable mesh-like airflow food cover couple together using a closing device comprising a zipper, one or more snaps, a pair of magnets, and mating Velcro™ fabric.

11. The durable food cover according to claim **9**, wherein the durable food cover further comprises a bottom surface of material forming an inner surface within the multiple shaped enclosure.

12. The durable food cover according to claim **11**, wherein the pair of stretchable supports **202***a-b* are made of semi-rigid support members connected together with elastic or bungie cord material.

13. The durable food cover according to claim **2**, wherein the durable mesh-like airflow food cover comprises fabric made of natural and synthetic materials.

14. The durable food cover according to claim **13**, wherein the fabric comprises cotton, silk, polyester, nylon, and silicone materials.

* * * * *