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(54) **Containers for growing plants**

(57) A container for growing plants such as fruit and/or flowering plants has a plurality of apertures 16 in its side wall for receiving the plants such that the roots of the plant extend into a growing medium, e.g. soil, in the container and the main body of the plant is outside the container. Integral support members 17 project outwardly from the side wall at positions defining the lowermost portion of the periphery of the apertures to support the plants. The container is assembled from alternate panels 12, 14 which have side edges adapted for sliding engagement.

FIG. 5

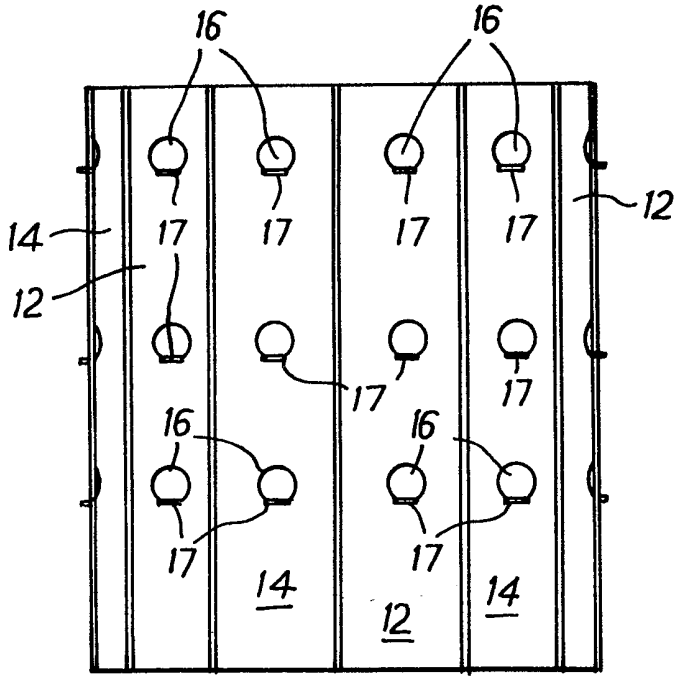

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FIG. 1

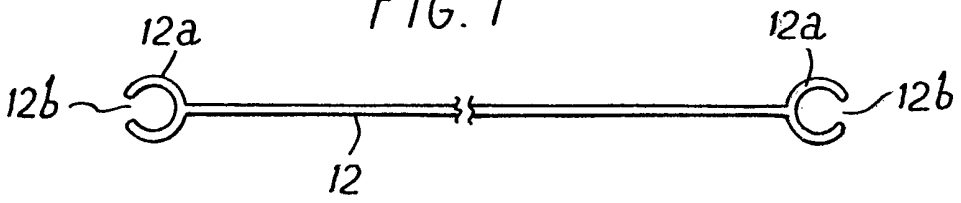


FIG. 2

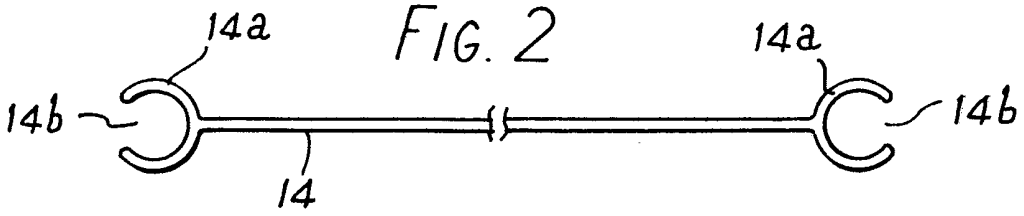


FIG. 3

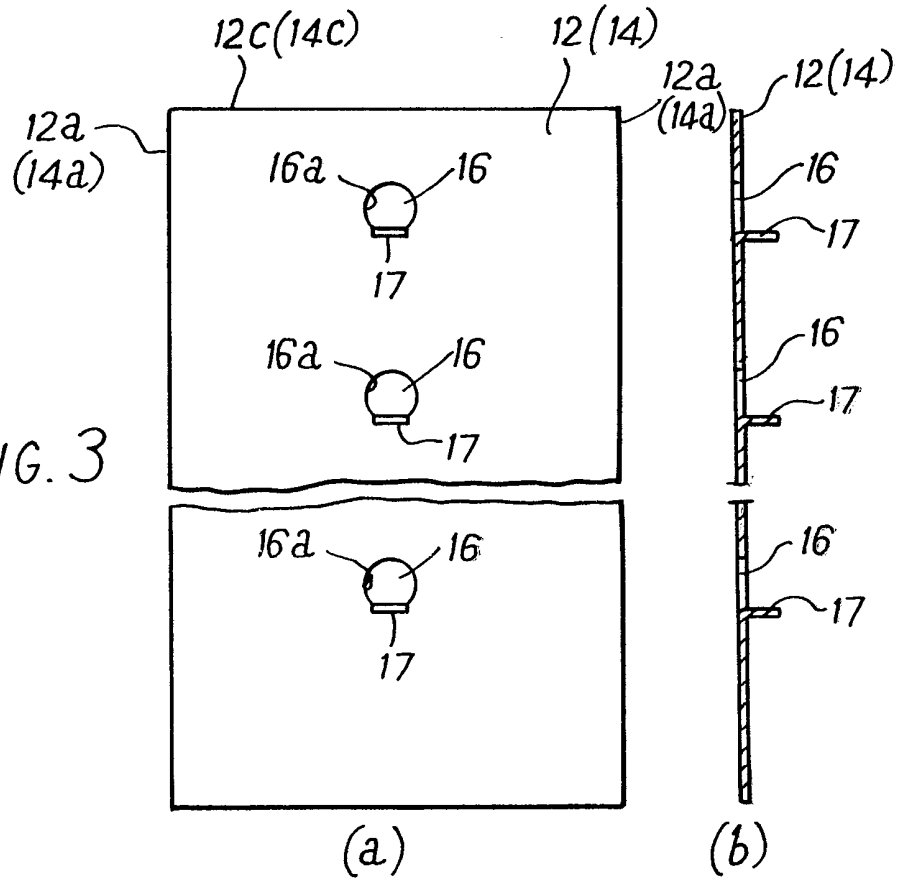
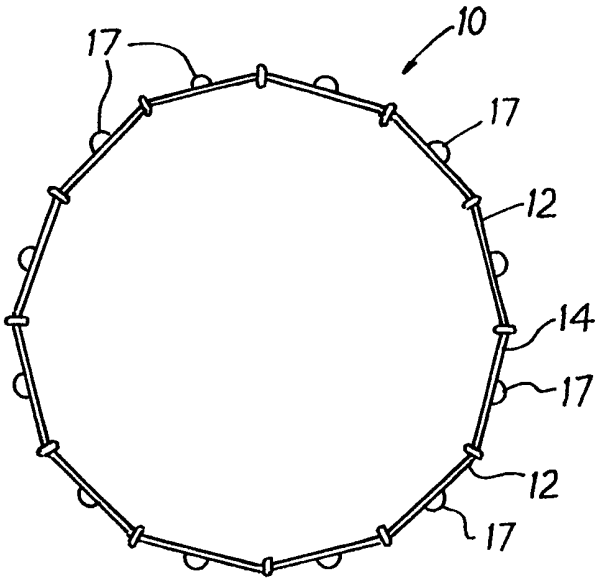


FIG. 4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12
14
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12
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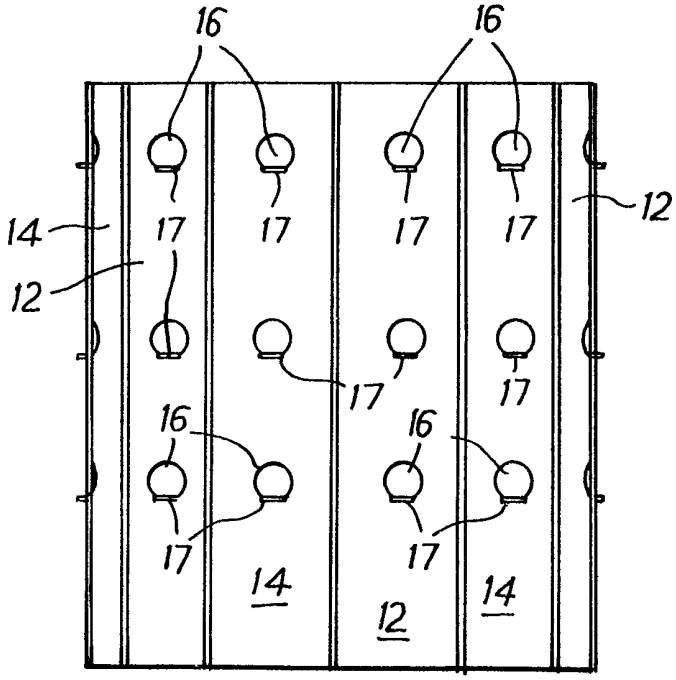
FIG. 5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SPECIFICATION

Containers for growing plants

This invention relates to containers for growing plants such as fruit and/or flowering plants and concerns containers of the kind having a plurality of apertures in a side wall for receiving plants, such that in use the roots of a plant extend into a growing medium, such as soil, in the container and the main body of the plant including the leaves, fruit and/or flowers is outside the container.

Such containers are well known and have been used, for example, for growing hanging flowers and strawberry plants. In the case of some plants it is desirable to support at least part of the plant and it has been proposed to provide a plant support in the form of a length of stiff wire which is formed into a closed loop having a shape approximating to the outline shape of a spoon. In use, the part of the support resembling the handle of a spoon is inserted through the lowermost part of an aperture in the side wall of the container and pushed into the growing medium so that the part resembling the bowl of a spoon extends externally of the container and is used to support a plant growing out of the same aperture. It is believed that such supports are satisfactory but they are an extra item which has to be manufactured and supplied to a user of such a container and they can be lost or damaged necessitating the supply or manufacture of replacements.

According to the invention there is provided a container of the kind described comprising integral plant support members which project outwardly from side wall at positions defining a lowermost portion of the periphery of the apertures.

The support members may be formed by piercing the side wall to define a substantial portion of the upper periphery of the aperture and deforming outwardly the pierced portion to form the support. The material used for the side wall must be sufficiently flexible to allow the support member to be formed and one suitable, plastics material is polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

The side wall of the container may be assembled from a plurality of elongate panels having their elongate edges so formed that they can engage corresponding edges of adjacent panels to form the container, at least some of the panels being provided with an aperture and plant support member according to the invention.

The container may comprise a first set of panels having two parallel longitudinal edges, of similar cross-section, a second set of panels having two parallel longitudinal edges of similar cross-section, the longitudinal edges of a panel from one set being slideably engageable with the longitudinal edge of a panel of the other set, whereby panels from the first and second sets can be joined alternately to form a cylindrical container, which is, in use, arranged with its axis substantially vertical.

The container may comprise a plurality of elongate panels in which the cross-section of one elongate edge is complementary to that of the other edge so that the said one edge of one panel can slideably engage the said other edge of another panel whereby the container is formed from a plurality of said interengaged panels.

Further according to the invention there is provided a kit of parts for a container comprising panels according to any one of the three immediately preceding paragraphs.

A cover member may be provided and this may be apertured to receive further plants.

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a cross-sectional view of a first panel for use in a container according to the invention,

Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view of a second panel for use in a container according to the invention,

Figures 3(a) and 3(b) are respectively front and side views of a panel according to Figure 1 or Figure 2, to a different scale.

Figure 4 is a plan view of a container comprising a plurality of panels according to Figures 1 and 2, and

Figure 5 is a side view of the container of Figure 4.

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a generally cylindrical container 10 for growing plants such as strawberry plants.

The container 10 comprises twelve elongate, flat panels of a suitable plastics material such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC); a first set of six panels 12 being arranged alternately with a second set of six panels 14. Each of the parallel longitudinal edges 14*a* of panels 14 is formed with a circular cylindrical cross-section having a slot 14*b* formed along its length as shown. The internal diameter of the edge 14*a* is about 7mm and the width of the slot 14*b* is about 4mm. Each of the parallel longitudinal edges 12*a* of panels 12 is formed with a circular cylindrical cross-section having a slot 12*b* formed along its length as shown in Figure 1. The external diameter of the edge 12*a* is about 6mm such that the edge 12*a* can be introduced into and be slideably engaged by the edge 14*a* of a panel 14. The slot 12*b*, which is about 3mm wide, is not necessary but does give some resilience to the edge 12*a* as two panels 12 and 14 are assembled. Thus two sets of panels 12 and 14 can be assembled together to form a container as shown in Figures 4 and 5, the number of panels used determining the diameter of the container. Typically, each set may comprise six panels and the panels may conveniently be about 864mm long and about 125mm between the centres of the edges 12*a* or 14*a* as the case may be.

The panels 12, 14 are flat but they could have a slight curve in the transverse direction. The panels may be moulded but preferably extruded.

Some of the panels, and in this embodiment, all of the panels 12, 14 are provided with three apertures 16 spaced about 19cm apart; the uppermost aperture being spaced about 15cm from the top edges 12*c*, 14*c* of the panels 12, 14 respectively. The aper-

tures 16 are generally circular about 5cm in diameter and are formed by piercing the panels 12, 14 around a substantial, upper portion 16*a* of their peripheries to leave generally circular discs 17 attached to the panels 12, 14 at the lower portions of the peripheries of the apertures 16. In use, the discs 17 are deformed outwardly as shown in Figures 3(b) and 4 to form plant supports for a plant growing out of the corresponding aperture 16. Although three apertures 16 are shown in each panels 12, 14, more or less apertures can be provided and their shape is not critical.

The longitudinal edges of the panels 12, 14 can take various forms provided that an edge of a panel from one set can be slideably engaged by an edge of a panel from the other set.

In use, the container 10 is assembled and arranged with its longitudinal axis vertical as shown in Figures 4 and 5. The container is filled with a growing medium, such as soil and the roots of plants to be grown are pushed through the apertures 16 into the soil and the remainder of the plant supported by the supports 17.

An apertured cover member may also be provided to receive further plants but in this case the plants will be supported by the cover itself and the supports 17 can be dispensed with.

CLAIMS

1. A container having a plurality of apertures in a side wall for receiving plants, such that in use the roots of a plant extend into a growing medium in the container and the main body of the plant including the leaves, fruit and/or flowers is outside the container, in which the container comprises integral plant support members which project outwardly from the side wall at positions defining a lowermost portion of the periphery of the apertures.

2. A container according to Claim 1, in which the support members are formed by piercing the side wall to define a substantial portion of the upper periphery of the aperture and deforming outwardly the pierced portion to form the support.

3. A container according to Claim 1 or 2, in which the side wall is formed of a plastics material.

4. A container according to Claim 3, in which the side wall is polyvinyl chloride.

5. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the side wall of the container is assembled from a plurality of elongate panels having their elongate edges so formed that they can engage corresponding edges of adjacent panels to form the container, at least some of the panels being provided with an aperture and plant support member.

6. A container according to Claim 5 comprising a first set of panels having two parallel longitudinal edges, of similar cross-section, a second set of panels having two parallel longitudinal edges of similar cross-section and different from that of said first set of panels, the longitudinal edges of a panel from one set being slideably engageable with the longitudinal edge of a panel of the other set, whereby panels from the first and second sets can be joined alternately to form a cylindrical container, which is, in use, arranged with its axis substantially vertical.

7. A container according to Claim 5 comprising a plurality of elongate panels in which the cross-section of one elongate edge is complementary to that of the other edge so that the said one edge of one panel can slideably engage the said other edge of another panel whereby the container is formed from a plurality of said interengaged panels.

8. A container according to any one of the preceding claims further comprising a cover member.

9. A container according to Claim 8, in which the cover member is apertured to receive further plants.

10. A container for growing plants substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

11. The features as herein disclosed, or their equivalents, in any novel selection.

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