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(71) Applicant(s):
Daniel Joseph Newman
75 Priory Road, London, N8 8LR, United Kingdom

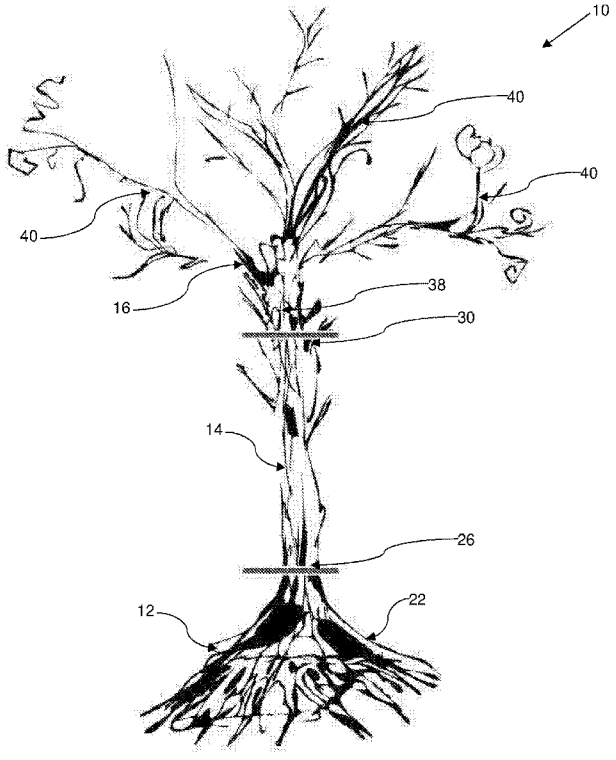
(72) Inventor(s):
Daniel Joseph Newman

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service:
Albright IP Limited
County House, Bayshill Road, CHELTENHAM,
Gloucestershire, GL50 3BA, United Kingdom

(54) Title of the Invention: **Halloween artificial tree**
Abstract Title: **Artificial tree in deciduous style for celebrating Halloween**

(57) A Halloween artificial tree 10 comprising base, trunk and crown sections 12, 14, 16 which can be assembled together or disassembled for storage and transport. The crown section 16 has a crown body 38 and a plurality of branches 40 projecting from the crown body 38, the branches 40 being at least in part malleable or posable. In a second aspect the base section 12 defines a container for receiving ballast (for example, water) and has elongate protrusions 22 of the appearance of roots. The trunk section 14 is devoid or substantially devoid of branches. Preferably the branches comprise a metal core and plastic coating to allow them to be moved into position. The bendable branches may allow the crown to be compressed in footprint for storage. Preferably the sections connect by metal rods (20, figure 2; 44, figure 4). Preferably sets of branches are connected to the crown via receivers (158, figure 9) angled at approximately 30 degrees to the vertical. The crown might be directly attachable to the base to form a bush if height is undesirable. The tree might be black and have the appearance of a deciduous tree in the autumn or fall to give it a spooky appearance appropriate for Halloween.

Figure 1



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At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

Figure 1

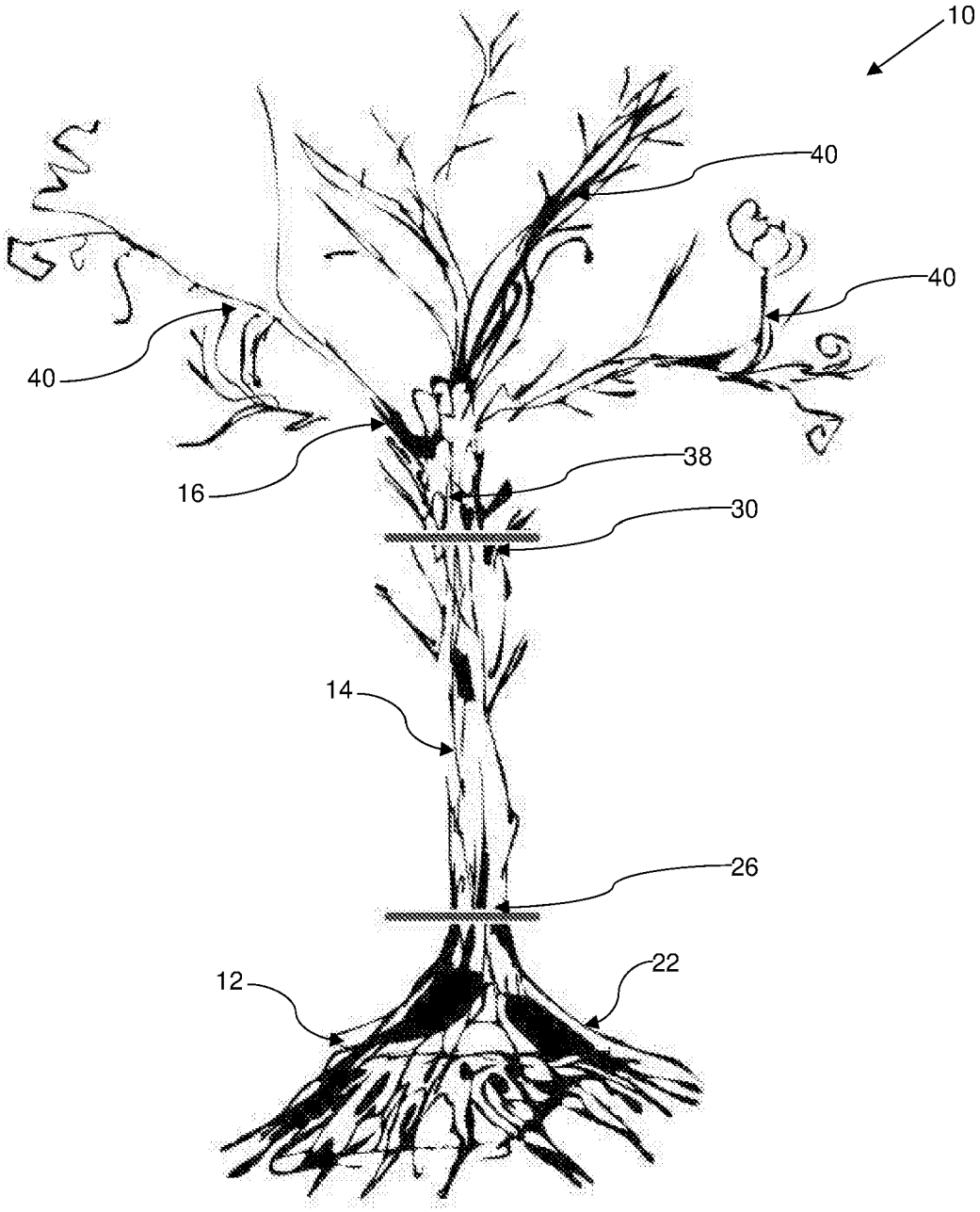


Figure 2

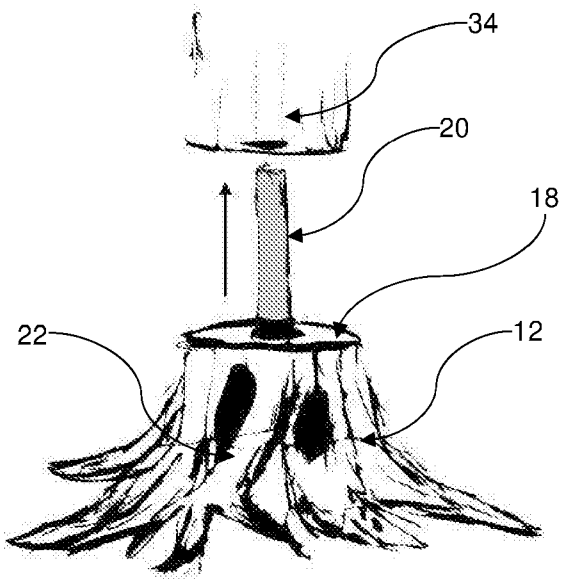


Figure 3

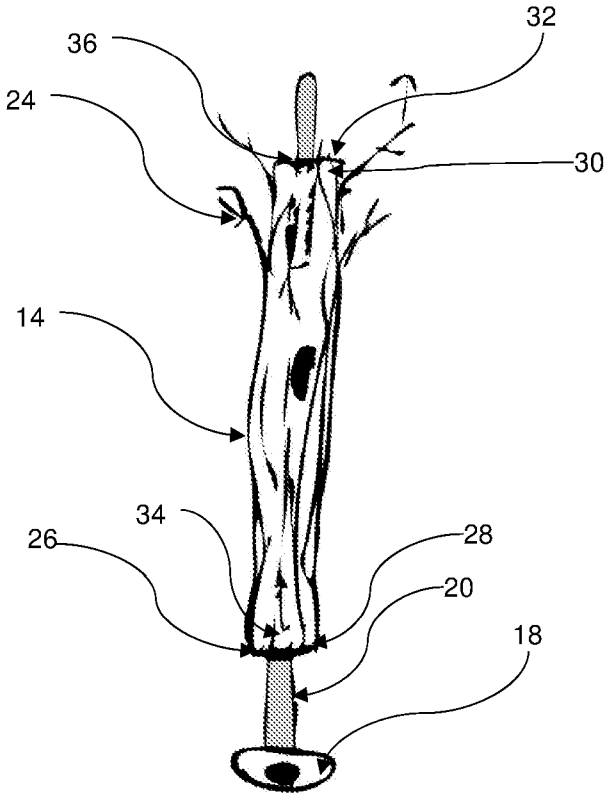


Figure 4

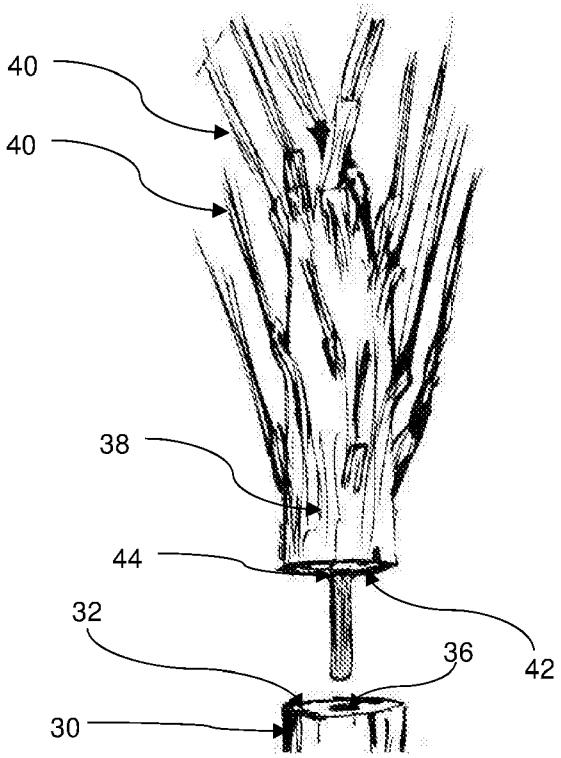


Figure 5a

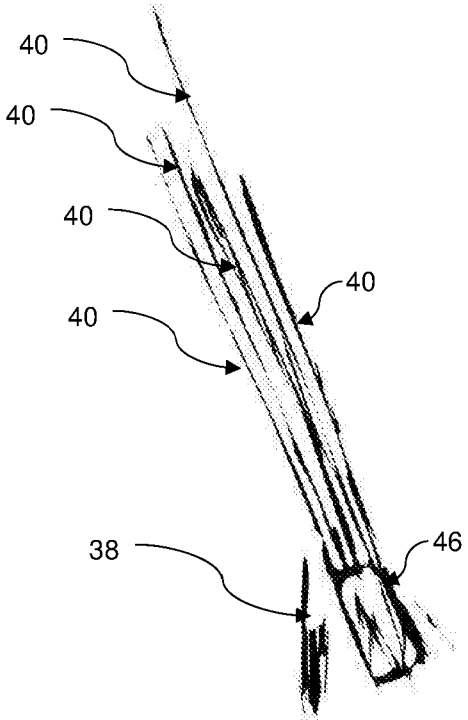


Figure 5b

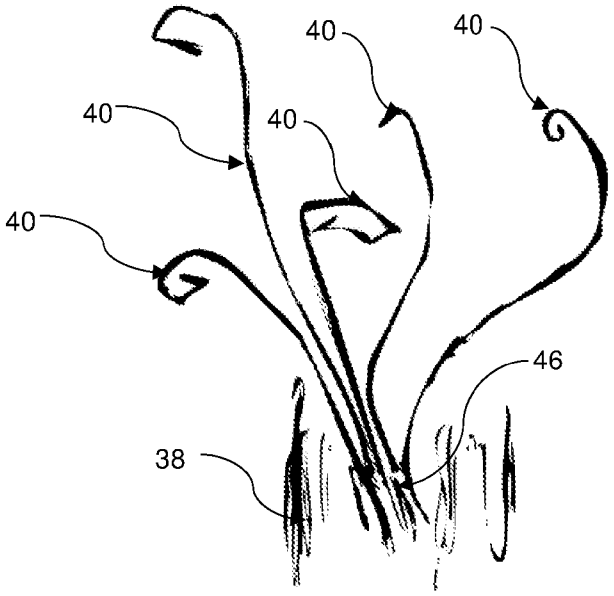


Figure 6

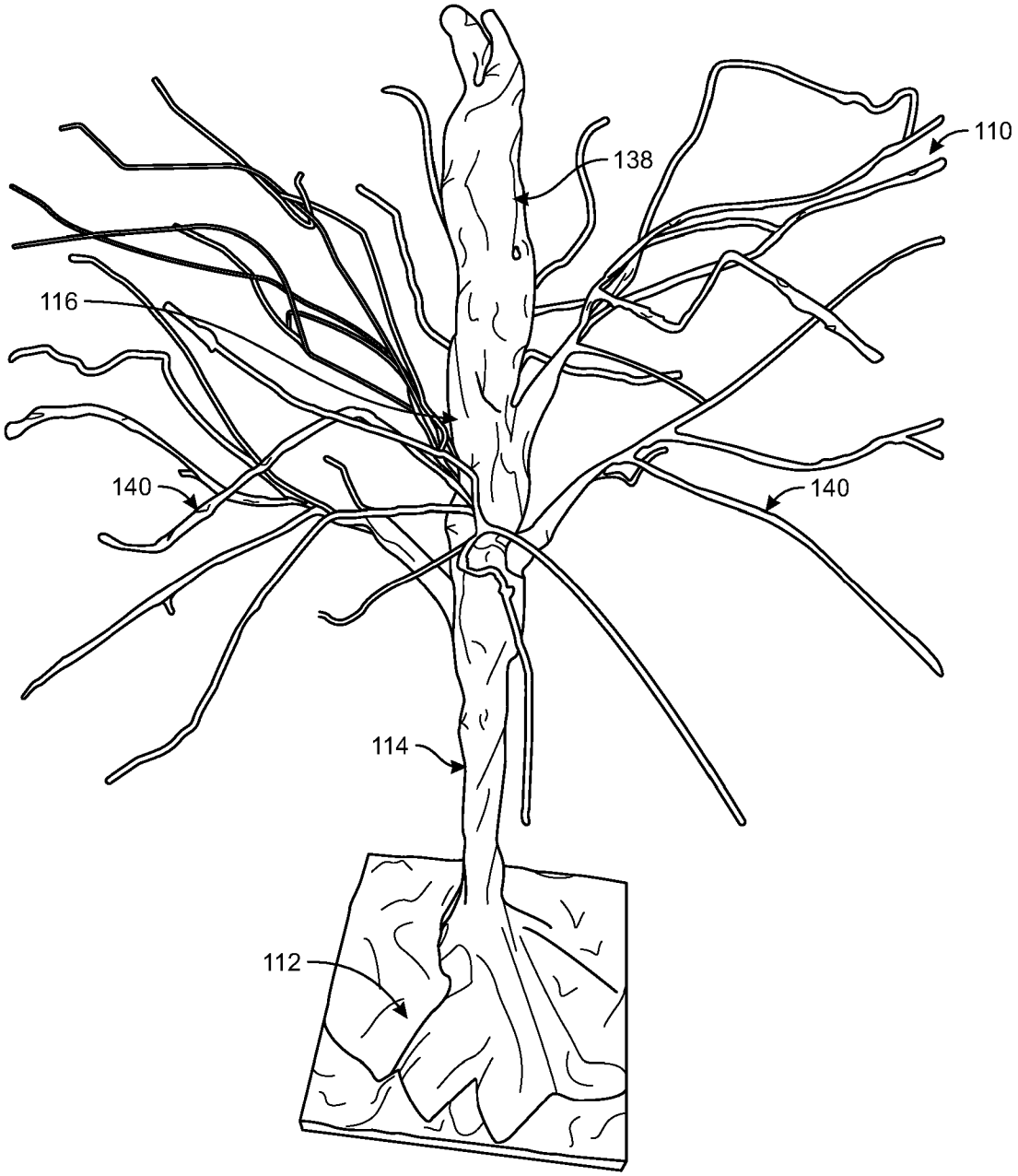


Figure 7

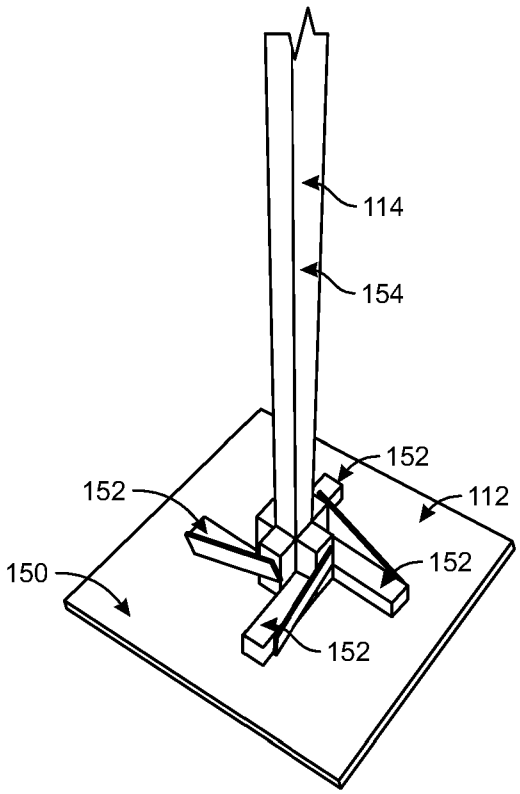


Figure 8

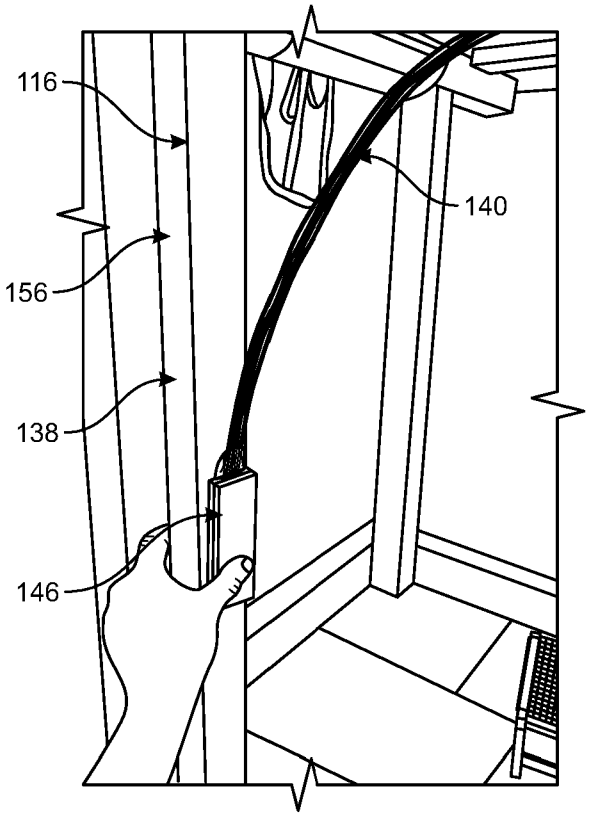


Figure 9

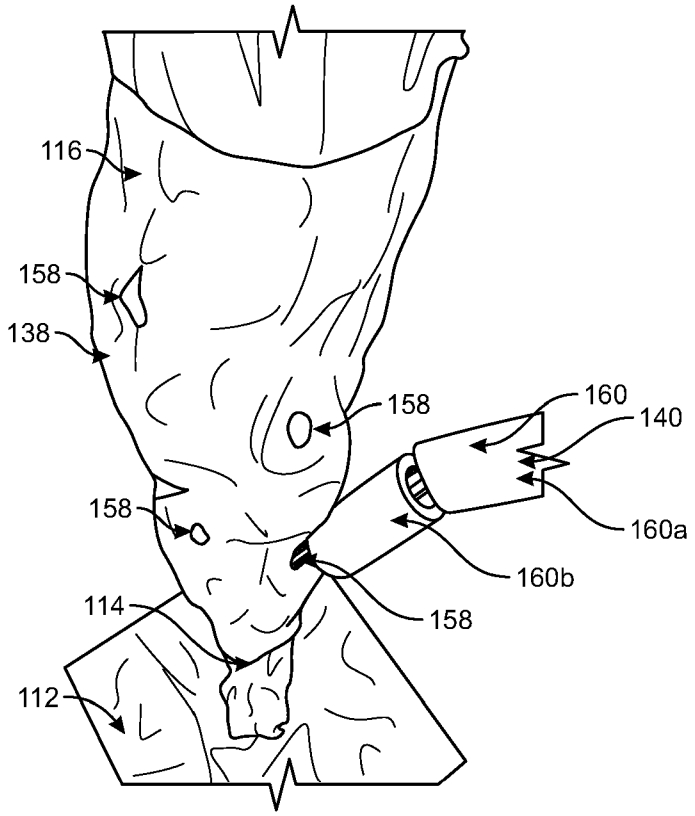
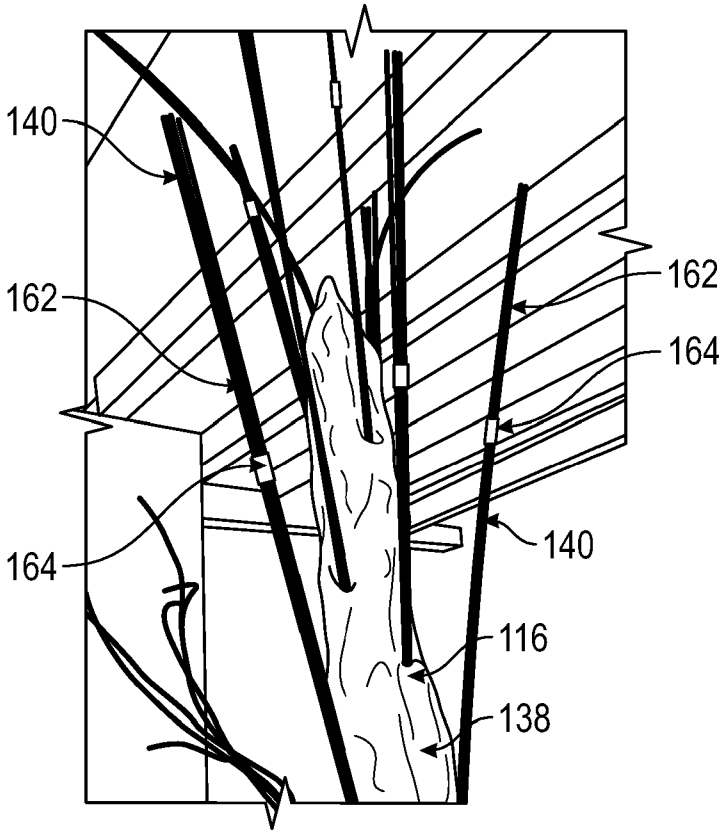
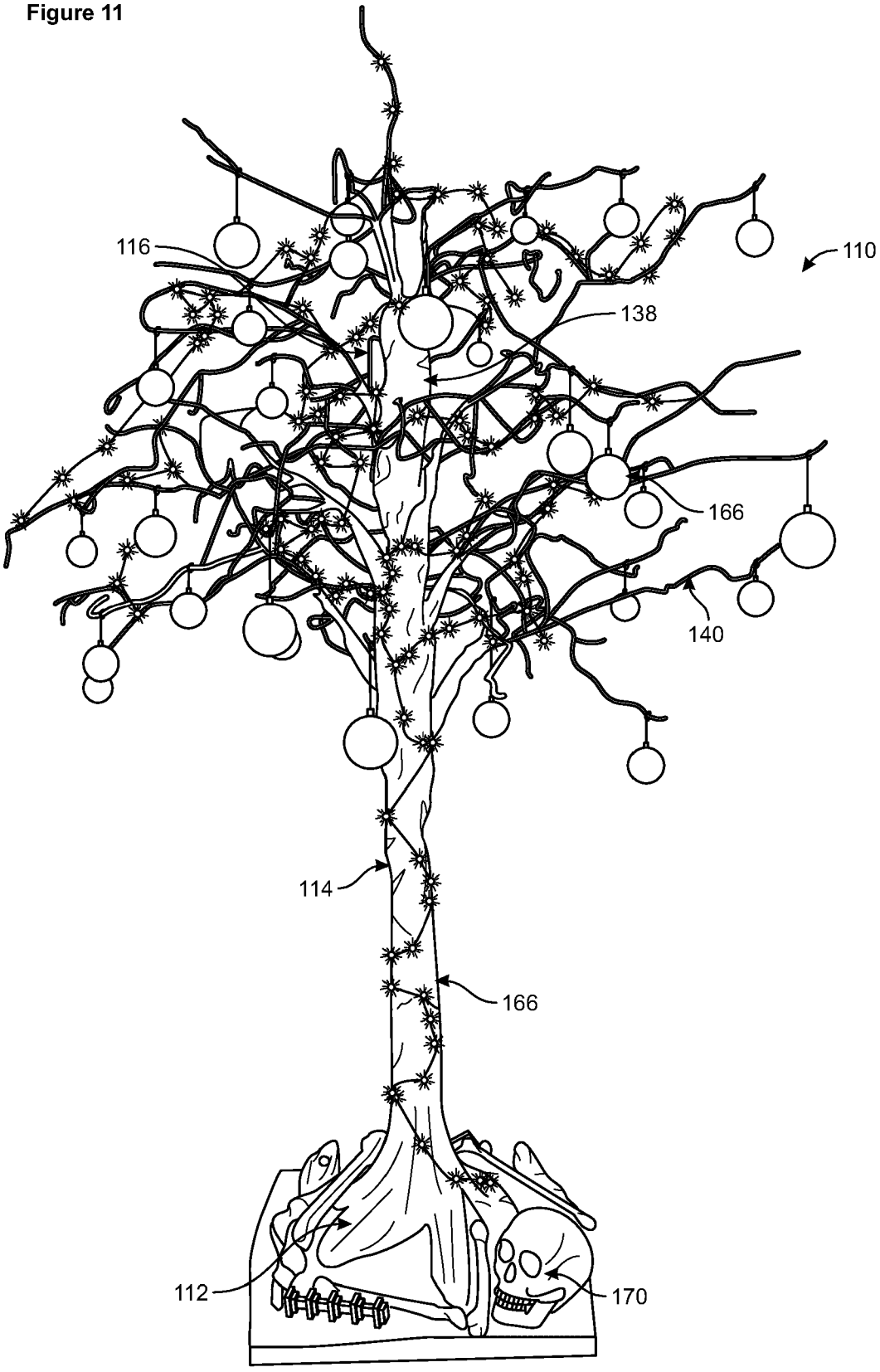


Figure 10



17 05 21

Figure 11



Halloween Artificial Tree

The present invention relates to an artificial tree, in particular to a Halloween artificial tree or a scary, frightening, fantastical or bare branched artificial tree.

Halloween is a celebration in many parts of the world on 31 October of each year. Halloween is associated with spirits, mystical or scary creatures, the dead, "trick-or-treating" and other customs and games, and autumn in the northern hemisphere when leaves fall or abscise from deciduous trees.

It would be desirable to have an artificial tree which is appropriate to at least some of the associations of Halloween, to act as a focal point of celebration. For example, it would be desirable to have a Halloween artificial tree to act as an appropriate decoration in a home at a Halloween party. Alternatively, it may be desirable to use a Halloween artificial tree outside of a home to act as an indicator for passing trick-or-treaters. In particular, it would be useful to have a large or full-size Halloween artificial tree, which therefore provides a more realistic appearance.

Artificial trees are known with reference to Christmas. However, Christmas artificial trees have a distinctive triangular shape and are strongly associated with the celebration of Christmas and of winter in the northern hemisphere. The conventional emotional associations of a Christmas tree would be wholly unsuitable for the celebration of Halloween. Furthermore, Christmas trees are not deciduous bare branched trees, which might not be in keeping with the autumnal association of Halloween in the northern hemisphere.

It would be desirable to have a tree which is similar in appearance to a bare branched deciduous tree, since this may have the appearance of a dead tree as well as being autumn appropriate. However, the outwardly extending branches at the top of a conventional deciduous tree may present a topple hazard. Additionally, the outwardly extending branches and elongate trunk of such an artificial tree may be difficult to store. Appropriate storage of the artificial tree would be important due to the relatively short duration of celebration of Halloween, although the present invention aims to encourage the celebration of Halloween and the use of the Halloween artificial tree over a longer period.

The present invention seeks to provide a solution to these problems.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a Halloween artificial tree comprising: a base section which defines a container for receiving ballast and which has elongate protrusions of the appearance of roots; a trunk section which is devoid or substantially devoid of branches and which has first and second opposing ends; a crown section which has a crown body and a plurality of branches projecting from the crown body, the branches being at least in part malleable; the first end of the trunk section being removably mountable to the base section, and the crown section being removably mountable to the second end of the trunk section so that the Halloween artificial tree is disassemblable for ease of storage and/or transportation.

A tree with a bare trunk and bare branches at the crown provides the appearance of a dead, late autumn, scary, or fantastical tree. Although generally mimicking the appearance of a dead tree or tree having undergone leaf abscission, the artificial tree may have an unnatural or fantastical appearance, for example the branches not appearing suitable for supporting leaves. Due to the bare trunk with branches at the top, the weight distribution of such a tree would be higher up than a conventional Christmas artificial tree. Additionally, the branches being malleable to provide for user customisation and to permit easier storage may allow for the weight distribution to be moved away from the centre of the tree. These factors may result in the Halloween artificial tree presenting a topple hazard.

As such, the base section is included and can receive ballast to weigh the base down and prevent or limit the tree from toppling. The presence of the substantial base, which is required for functional purposes, is disguised with the appearance of roots, which may also add to the scary or death-like effect of the artificial tree.

The artificial tree being disassemblable allows for easy storage, which can be important due to the typically short celebration of Halloween.

It will be appreciated that such an artificial tree will find application in residential domestic settings, as well as in a commercial setting, for example forming part of a Halloween display in a shop, and potentially supporting items for sale.

It will be appreciated that the term malleable refers to the branches as being bendable, and does not require the cross-section of the branch to be deformable.

Whilst described as being a Halloween artificial tree, the tree may be used in non-Halloween scenarios, and may instead be referred to as a scary, frightening, autumnal or bare branched artificial tree.

Although the artificial tree is described as having elongate protrusions, connectable sections, and a container base, it will be appreciated that this may not be the case.

Preferably, the branches may be malleable at or adjacent to the crown-body so that the branches can be bent to extend outwardly or upwardly to adjust a footprint of the tree to assist with storage.

Advantageously, each branch comprises at least one metal wire core and a polymeric coating. The metal wire provides the malleability of the branch. Aluminium, copper or steel wires may be selected, for example. Whilst described as a wire, it will be appreciated that this may include other elongate elements such as rods or strips. The polymeric coating may provide a softer feel and more natural appearance to the tree and could be used to bulk the branch. The polymeric coating may also prevent or limit sharp ends of the wire from being exposed, and possibly may assist with electrically insulating the tree in the instance of the tree having an electrical connection. Each branch, and in particular a base portion of each branch, may have multiple metal wires, for example five metal wires. At the base portion, the metal wires may be coated together. Towards the end of the branch, the metal wires may be individually coated, to create a dendritic appearance.

Beneficially, the coating may be disjointed to permit easier shaping of the branch between separated portions. Where the coating is particularly thick and is non-malleable or substantially non-malleable or at least not readily malleable, it may be advantageous to provide separated coating sections to allow for easier shaping at joints in the coating.

In a preferable embodiment, at least one of the branches may include at least one sub-branch projecting from a main body of the branch. The tree branches may therefore be dendritic, which may provide a more natural appearance.

Optionally, the container may have a closeable opening. This may prevent or limit ballast from spilling from the opening.

Additionally, the closeable opening may be closed via a screw threaded cap. A screw-threaded cap would be convenient to open and close.

Beneficially, the container may be liquid-tight or watertight. This may permit for water to be used as ballast.

Preferably, the trunk section and base section may be connectable via a rod. Advantageously, the crown section and trunk section may be connectable via a rod. A

projection, such as a projecting rod may provide a secure connection. In the instance that the base section includes the rod, the rod may be hollow and fluidly communicated with the container to provide a conduit for filling the container.

Beneficially, the trunk section may comprise a body and a rod which extends therethrough and projects at each end of the trunk to connect with the crown and/or base. This may provide a convenient way of manufacturing a projection at each end and may provide structural integrity to the trunk section.

Additionally, the rod may comprise metal. Metal may provide suitable rigidity to the connection or trunk section. The metal is preferably steel, although aluminium, for example may also be considered.

In a preferable embodiment, each branch may be received in a receiver on the crown body, the receiver facing upwardly. An upward facing receiver allows for the branches to be more conveniently shaped to face upwards, and thereby reduce the footprint of the crown section for storage.

Preferably, the receiver may face an angle from a vertical direction of between 15 and 60 degrees. More preferably, the receiver may face an angle from the vertical direction of 30 or substantially 30 degrees.

Advantageously, a plurality of branches may be received in the same receiver. This may provide for more convenient production, as well as providing the opportunity for creating the appearance of sub-branches.

In a preferable embodiment, the trunk section may have a height of at least a third of the overall height of the artificial tree.

Optionally, the base, trunk and/or crown section may comprise plastics. Plastics are convenient for various manufacturing processes. For example, all the components may be cast, or some components, such as the trunk section, may be extruded. Different plastics may be considered, in particular synthetic resins. Wood or metals could be considered, although plastics is preferred. Composite materials could also be considered, such as fibreglass.

Additionally, the Halloween artificial tree may be black. A black artificial tree provides a more appropriate Halloween appearance.

Beneficially, the Halloween artificial tree may be at least 1 metre tall. More preferably, the Halloween artificial tree may be at least 2 metres tall. A large artificial tree provides a more natural and dramatic appearance, and is suitable for use outside.

Advantageously, an end portion of each branch or sub-branch may be sufficiently malleable to form a return for securing decorations to the branch or sub-branch.

Optionally, the crown section may be removably mountable to the base section to form a Halloween artificial bush. The crown section being compatible with the base section allows for the option of the trunk section being omitted, and therefore creating the appearance of an artificial bush or shrub. This may be advantageous in instances where there is a height restriction. In this case, the product may instead be referred to as a Halloween artificial tree and bush apparatus.

Preferably, the Halloween artificial tree comprises the appearance of a deciduous tree having undergone or in the process of autumnal leaf abscission. An artificial tree which has the appearance of a deciduous tree having undergone or in the process of autumnal leaf abscission, in other words a typical late autumn tree, is more appropriate for the celebration of Halloween than a typical Christmas tree.

The exterior surface of the trunk section and/or crown section preferably have a tree-like or bark-like texture. In other words, an undulating texture.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a Halloween artificial tree comprising: a base section; a trunk section which has first and second opposing ends; a crown section which has a crown body and a plurality of branches projecting from the crown body, the branches being at least in part malleable; the first end of the trunk section being removably mountable to the base section, and the crown section being removably mountable to the second end of the trunk section so that the Halloween artificial tree is disassemblable for ease of storage and/or transportation.

The invention will now be more particularly described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a representation of a first embodiment of a Halloween artificial tree in accordance with the first and second aspects of the invention, with two horizontal lines indicating a demarcation between a base section, a trunk section, and a crown section;

Figure 2 shows a representation of the base section and a lower portion of the trunk section of the Halloween artificial tree of Figure 1, with an arrow indicating a direction for connection between the two sections;

Figure 3 shows a full view of the trunk section of Figure 2, with an upper portion of the base section of Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows a crown body of the crown section of the Halloween artificial tree of Figure 1;

Figure 5a shows a branch of the crown section of the Halloween artificial tree of Figure 1, with branch members in a first arrangement;

Figure 5b shows a branch of the crown section of the Halloween artificial tree of Figure 1, with branch members in a second arrangement;

Figure 6 shows a second embodiment of a prototypical Halloween artificial tree in accordance with the first and second aspects of the invention;

Figure 7 shows an interior of the base section and trunk section of the prototypical Halloween artificial tree of Figure 6;

Figure 8 shows a branch of the crown section of the prototypical Halloween artificial tree of Figure 6;

Figure 9 shows a top perspective view of the of the prototypical Halloween artificial tree of Figure 6 with some branches removed;

Figure 10 shows a view of an upper portion of the crown section of the prototypical Halloween artificial tree of Figure 6, with coatings of the branches removed; and

Figure 11 shows a view of the prototypical Halloween artificial tree of Figure 6, having been painted and decorated.

Referring firstly to Figure 1 there is shown a first embodiment of a Halloween artificial tree 10 having a base section 12, a trunk section 14 and a crown section 16.

Although described as a Halloween artificial tree, it will be appreciated that the product may otherwise be referred to as a scary, frightening, spooky or bare branched artificial tree.

The base section 12 is preferably frustoconical or pyramidal in shape. This shaping may assist with stability, providing a wider bottom whilst permitting for narrowing or tapering towards the trunk section 14. Additionally, such a shape may assist with creating a more natural appearance of a tree 10, for example assisting with creating the appearance of roots.

The base section 12 defines a container for receiving ballast. For example, the container may be a covered container having a closeable opening at or adjacent to an upper portion of the base section 12. The opening may, for example, be closeable by a cap, such as a screw-threaded cap in which case the base section 12 may have a corresponding screw-threaded receiver. Water, sand, or another pourable substance may be poured through the opening to fill or at least partly fill the container. Such ballast may weigh the base section 12 to prevent of limit the artificial tree 10 from toppling when in use.

Whilst a covered container is described, it will be appreciated that open containers may also be considered. An open container may be more convenient for positioning non-pourable ballast therein, for example positioning large stones therein.

The container is preferably watertight or liquid-tight to permit the use of water as ballast.

Referring in addition to Figure 2, the base section 12 includes a first trunk connection surface 18 for abutting, engaging or connecting with the trunk section 14. Here the first trunk connection surface 18 is planar or substantially planar, although it will be appreciated that it may have a step, for example, to provide greater connection between the base section 12 and the trunk section 14.

The base section 12 has a first trunk connector 20 for connecting to the trunk section 14. A connection between the base section 12 and the trunk section 14 will be better understood hereinbelow.

The base section 12 is preferably between 0.3 metres m and 0.6 m tall, and is more preferably 0.45 m tall. However, other sizes may be considered.

The base section 12 preferably has a plurality of elongate protrusions 22 extending along a surface thereof. Such elongate protrusions 22 provide the appearance of tree 10 roots and therefore may be useful to disguise the base, which otherwise provides the function of supporting the rest of the Halloween artificial tree 10. It will be appreciated that the protrusions 22 may contain at least part of the ballast.

Referring in addition to Figure 3, the trunk section 14 is devoid or substantially devoid of branches. Whilst being described as being devoid of branches, it will be appreciated that truncated branches or branch stumps 24 may be included.

The trunk section 14 is preferably elongate and is here also cylindrical or substantially cylindrically, although it will be appreciated that other shapes may also be considered such as cuboidal or other prismatic shapes.

At a first end 26 of the trunk section 14 there is a base connection surface 28 and at an opposing second end 30 of the trunk section 14 there is crown connection surface 32. The base connection surface 28 and the crown connection surface 32 are planar or substantially planar, although it will be appreciated that non-planar connection surfaces may be considered as discussed previously. At the first end 26 of the trunk section 14 there is a base connector 34, and at the second end 30 of the trunk section 14 there is a crown connector 36.

The trunk section 14 is preferably between 0.5 m and 1.5 m tall. More preferably the trunk section 14 is 0.9 m tall. However, it will be appreciated that other heights may be considered.

Referring now to Figures 1 and 4, the crown section 16 has a crown body 38 and a plurality of branches 40 projecting therefrom. The crown body 38 may be considered to be a support for the branches 40. Here the crown body 38 is short and the branches 40 project radially from the crown body 38 so that each branch 40 projects from a similar height. However, it will be appreciated that the crown body may be longer, and the branches project from along its length. There may, for example, be more than ten branches 40, and may be between forty and sixty branches.

The crown body 38 has a second trunk connection surface 42, which is planar or substantially planar. The second trunk connection surface 42 may preferably be similar

or identical to the base connection surface 28 of the trunk section 14. The crown body 38 has a second trunk connector 44.

Referring now to Figures 5a and 5b, the branches 40 are at least in part malleable or shapeable. Therefore, at least a portion of the branches 40 are flexible without being resilient. This has the result that the branches 40 can be shaped, with the shape being maintained for at least a significant duration. Preferably, the majority, or the entirety of the branches are malleable. To achieve such an effect, the branches 40 may comprise readily bendable metal. For example, the branches 40 may comprise a metal wire, a metal rope, a metal strip or a metal rod. The metal and thickness of wire may be selected to permit convenient and repeatable bending to allow for shaping and reshaping of the branch 40. For example, the metal may comprise aluminium, copper or steel or alloys thereof.

The metal may be covered or coated by another material. This may be done for a variety of reasons, for example to bulk the branch 40 without requiring a large thickness of metal, to improve an appearance of the branch 40, to prevent corrosion of the metal, or to avoid the presence of sharp metal ends of the branch 40. Such a covering material may be a polymeric material, such as plastics or rubber. However, it will be appreciated that other materials may be considered. Since the metal core is malleable and non-resilient, the coating material may be a resilient material, given that the metal core would hold the shape of the coating.

As can be seen in Figure 5a and 5b, each branch 40 may be received in a receiver 46 on the crown body 38, the receiver 46 facing upwardly. The receiver 46 may, for example, define a hole or recess in which the branches 40 are securable. There may be multiple branches 40 received in each receiver 46, for example there may be five branches 40 in each receiver 46. The branches 40 in a receiver 46 may be arranged so that they each face the same direction.

The receivers 46 generally face upwardly. For example, here the receivers 46 face an upward direction at an angle to the vertical direction. Here the angle to the vertical direction is between 15 degrees and 60 degrees, and is preferably 30 degrees or substantially 30 degrees. However, other angles may be considered. The advantage of the receivers 46, and therefore branches 40, facing upwards is that this reduces the width of the crown section 16, so that it can be fit into smaller packaging. Additionally, the branch ends facing upwardly may help to prevent them from being caught on the

side of the packaging, as the crown section 16 is being inserted. The crown section 16 is therefore easier to store.

When comparing Figures 5a and 5b, it can be seen that a user may adjust the shape of the branches 40 from a first arrangement, where the branches 40 received in one receiver 46 are parallel to each other, to a second arrangement, where the branches 40 received in one receiver 46 are misaligned from each other and extend in different directions. This allows for a user to adjust the shape of the branches 40 of their Halloween artificial tree 10 according to their individual preference which may prevent or limit the chance of any two trees 10 appearing the same. The malleability of the branches 40 is such that they may be preferably bendable and shapeable in more than one plane. In other words, the branches 40 may be bendable and shapeable in three-dimensions.

Other branch arrangements to the above may be considered. For example, a rigid or pliantly flexible branch base, which is not malleable, may extend from the crown body. From the branch base, malleable branches may extend in a similar arrangement to the above. Alternatively, the branch base may also be malleable.

Additionally or alternatively, whilst branch receivers with multiple branches therein are described, it will be appreciated that this may not be the case and in fact at least some of the branches may be individually arranged or connected to the crown body.

The crown section 16 is preferably between 0.5 m and 1. 5 m tall, and is more preferably 1 m tall. However, it will be appreciated that other heights may be considered. The height of the crown section 16 may be defined between the bottom of the crown body 38 and the tip of the branch 40 which can be extended most upwards.

The base section 12 is separably or disconnectably connectable with the trunk section 14 via inter-engagement of the first trunk connector 20 and the base connector 34. The trunk section 14 and the base section 12 are preferably interconnected via a projection, protrusion or male connector, which is here a rod. The rod is preferably a metal rod, and may, for example comprise steel, although other metals such as aluminium may be considered, and other materials such as wood or plastics may be considered.

The first trunk connector 20 may comprise the projecting rod and the base connector 34 may comprise a hole, recess or female connector. The first trunk connector 20 may therefore be received in the base connector 34 to connect the base section 12 and trunk

section 14. Alternatively, the base connector 34 may comprise the rod, and the first trunk connector 20 may comprise the hole. As a further option, both the trunk section 14 and the base section 12 may comprise holes and the rod may be separable from the two sections and insertable into the holes to form a connection therebetween, in the manner of a dowel joint. It will be appreciated that the base section 12 and the trunk section 14 may each comprise a projection and a hole, the projection of the trunk section 14 being receivable in the hole of the base section 12 and *vice versa*.

The trunk section 14 and the crown section 16 may be connectable in a similar manner to the above with the crown connector 36 of the trunk section 14 and the second trunk connector 44 of the crown section 16 comprising a projection and/or a hole. Figure 3 shows the trunk section 14 including a projection at the second end 30 and Figure 4 shows the crown section 16 including a projection. In this case, it will be appreciated that both sections may include holes and a separate rod may be insertable therebetween.

In a possible arrangement, the second trunk connector 44 may be compatible with the first trunk connector 20 so that the base section 12 and crown section 16 can be directly joined. For example, the first trunk connector 20 may comprise a projection and the second trunk connector 44 may comprise a hole. In this way, the trunk section 14 may be omitted, which may be preferable in the instance of height limitations, and the formation of a Halloween artificial bush or smaller Halloween artificial tree may be possible. To enable this versatile arrangement, the first and second ends 26, 30 of the trunk section 14 should be similar or identical, although the first end 26 should include a hole and the second end 30 should include a projection, or *vice versa* if required.

The crown section 16 being compatible with the base section 12 may also allow for easier shaping of the branches 40. For example, in the instance that the tree 10 is tall, the branches 40 of the crown section 16 may be outside convenient reach of a user when the tree 10 is fully assembled with the trunk section 14. Therefore, the crown section 16 may be firstly connected with the base section 12 so that the branches 40 are within easy reach. The branches 40 can then be shaped before the crown section 16 is removed from the base section 12, the trunk section 14 attached to the base section 12, and the crown section 16 with the shaped branches 40 attached to the trunk section 14.

It will be appreciated that, for ease of manufacturing and to aid structural integrity of the trunk section 14, a rod may extend through the length of the trunk section 14 and project at each end. In this case the first and second trunk connectors 20, 44 should be holes.

The Halloween artificial tree 10 may be formed from various materials. For example, preferably, the base section 12, trunk section 14 and crown body 38 comprise plastics, such as resin, which may be cast or moulded. As a possible option the base section 12 may comprise wood, with a container which is formed from plastics, or otherwise waterproofed, defined therein. Alternatively, the whole base section 12 may comprise plastics or metal. The trunk section 14 may comprise wood, plastics, or metal optionally with a metal core as previously described if required. The crown body 38 may comprise wood, plastics or metal.

The Halloween artificial tree 10 is preferably a dark colour, most preferably black, dark brown or dark grey, to provide an appropriate Halloween appearance.

The Halloween artificial tree 10 is large, and is therefore comparable in size to a small tree 10 to provide a realistic and dramatic appearance. For example, the Halloween artificial tree 10 is preferably in total at least 1 m tall, and is more preferably at least 2 m tall.

In use, the Halloween artificial tree 10 may be assembled via positioning the base section 12 with the first trunk connector 20 facing upwards. The container may then be filled with ballast, although it will be appreciated that this may be done after the artificial tree 10 has been assembled. Next the trunk section 14 is attached or connected to the base section 12 via interengagement of the first trunk connector 20 and the base connector 34. The crown section 16 may then be attached to the trunk section 14 via interengagement of the second trunk connector 44 and the crown connector 36.

The branches 40 can then be bent and shaped according to the user's specific desire. For example, initially the branches 40 may be pointing in steep upwards direction to reduce a footprint or cross-sectional area of the crown section 16. At least some of the branches 40 may then be bent to face a different direction, for example a downwards direction, a sidewards direction, or a less steep upwards direction. As well as being bendable in an upwardly and downwardly direction, the branches 40 are preferably also bendable in a side-to-side direction. This may allow for the formation of many different appearances of the artificial tree 10.

Decorations may be positioned on the branches 40, for example being hung from the branches 40 on a loop of string. The malleability of the branches 40 may assist with the securing of decorations. For example, the branches 40 may be levelled or directed

slightly upwardly, to prevent or limit the risk of decorations sliding off the branches 40. Additionally or alternatively, it will be appreciated that an end portion of branch 40 may be sufficiently malleable to allow for a return to be formed. In other words, the end of the branch 40 may be bent back towards the crown body 38. This may assist with securing decorations. The end of the branch 40 may even be folded back across the loop of string of the decoration, or wrapped around the loop of string of the decoration to provide added securement. The use of decorations will be better understood hereinbelow.

The Halloween artificial tree 10 may then be disassembled and the decorations removed if relevant. To assist with storage, the sections are separated and the branches 40 may be bent so as to be directed upwards. The branches 40 being bent upwards may reduce the footprint of the crown section 16. It will be appreciated that the branches 40 may even be sufficiently malleable to be bent back upon themselves, and therefore folded so as to reduce the footprint of the crown section 16. The ballast may be removed from the base if so desired.

Referring now to Figure 6, a second embodiment of the Halloween artificial tree 110 can be seen. The second embodiment 110 is a prototype, and has been constructed from wood for convenience. As such, it will be appreciated that whilst wood is described and shown, this is not the preferable arrangement, and more preferably plastics, such as resin, will be used.

Similar or identical reference numerals are used as for the first embodiment, with 100 added. The second embodiment has a base section 112, trunk section 114 and crown section 116. Whilst it is preferable for the sections to be separably or disconnectably connectable, it will be appreciated that in this embodiment the sections may not necessarily be separable or disconnectable.

Referring to Figure 7, an underlying support structure of the base section 112 and trunk section 114 can be seen. The base section 112 of the second embodiment comprises a planar ground engagement element 150 and a plurality of support elements 152 arranged thereon to support the trunk section 114. The base section 112 is preferably formed of timber, lumber or wood.

If the base section 112 includes a container, it will be appreciated that the container may be positioned around, on top of, or to the side of the support elements 152. The support elements 152 and ground engagement element 150 of the base section 112 are covered

and have elongate protrusions 122 to provide the appearance of tree roots, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Whilst this arrangement is shown, it will be appreciated that this is a prototype, and more preferably the base may be cast from plastics and the support elements or base section may not be necessary.

The trunk section 114, as shown in Figure 7, may comprise a central core 154 of timber, lumber or wood and is supported by the support elements 152 of the base section 112. The trunk section 114 may be covered to provide the appearance of a natural tree 110 trunk, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Referring again to Figure 6, it can be seen that the crown body 138 of the crown section 116 is elongate and branches 140 are secured, attached or connected along a length thereof.

As shown in Figure 8, the elongate crown body 138 may comprise a wooden core 156. It will be appreciated that the core 156 of the crown body 138 may be unitarily formed with the core 154 of the trunk section 114.

The branches 140 may be attached to the crown body 138 via receivers 146. The receivers are secured to the crown body 138, and here the core 156 of the crown body 138. Such securement may be via fasteners or adhesive, for example.

Here there are a plurality of metal wires attached via the receiver 146. All or a plurality of the wires may be coated together, or alternatively the wires may be individually coated.

Referring now to Figure 9, it can be seen that a covering of the crown body 138, which may cover the core 156, has a plurality of holes 158 therein, each hole 158 for receiving a branch 140 therethrough.

Additionally, the wire or rod of the branch 140 of Figure 9 has at least a portion 160 of a coating of a greater thickness at or adjacent to the crown body 138. Here the coating includes a foam sheath, which may be a polymeric foam such as polyurethane foam, polyethylene foam, or polystyrene foam. However, it will be appreciated that this is a prototypical arrangement, and so foam may not be used in reality. Instead, plastic mouldings may be used, such as resin mouldings. A thicker coating at or adjacent to the base may provide a more natural appearance to the branch 140. Here the thicker portion

of coating is split into separate elements 160a, 160b, which may allow for bending of the metal core between the elements and so still permit at least some shaping of the branch 140 at or adjacent to the crown body 138.

Referring to Figure 10, a plurality of branch groups 162 can be seen, projecting from the crown body 138, each branch group 162 comprising a plurality of branches 140.

The metal wires or rods of the branches 140 of the branch group 162 may be secured together along a portion of a length thereof, the portion being proximal to the crown body 138. The securement is here achieved by tape 164, although other securing means may be considered. Therefore, the portions of the metal wires proximal to the crown body 138 may not be independently bendable or movable and may be coated together so as to have the appearance of a single branch or branch base. The end or distal portions of the metal wires of the branch group 162 may not be secured together and may be individually coated so as to be independently moveable and shapeable and therefore have the appearance of sub-branches. Such an arrangement therefore allows for the creation of the appearance of a branch base with a plurality of sub-branches extending therefrom. Additionally, it will be appreciated that, for example, an intermediate portion of two of the metal wires may be secured and coated together, with the end portions of the two wires independently moveable and coated. This may therefore create the appearance of two further sub-branches, projecting from a sub-branch, which in turn projects from the branch base. Such an arrangement may provide a dendritic or branched effect for the crown section, which may therefore appear more natural.

Referring now to Figure 11, the prototypical artificial Halloween tree 110 has been painted or otherwise coloured black. Decorations 166, such as baubles, have been hung from the branches 140. A lighting element 168, which here comprises fairy lights or Christmas lights, have been arranged on the trunk section 114 and branches 140. Other decorative elements 170, which here includes imitation skeleton bones, have been positioned around the base 112.

Whilst the base is described as having a container for filling with ballast, it will be appreciated that in fact this may be omitted and, for example, the base may already be appropriately weighted. For example, the base may include a high-density material such as steel or iron.

Whilst the branches are described as malleable, it will be appreciated that the branches may in fact not be malleable, and may be hinged or resiliently flexible.

Although a single trunk section is described, it will be appreciated that multiple trunk sections may be provided to provide options for different heights of artificial tree, and/or to provide for more convenient storage. For example, different Halloween artificial trees may be offered with a trunk section or middle section of different lengths, or a Halloween artificial tree may be offered with multiple trunk sections or middle sections of different lengths to provide the option of different heights. Connectable segments of trunk section or middle section may be considered to provide more options for tree height.

Various other features may be envisaged. For example, the artificial tree may include lighting or audio. The lighting or audio may be powered by an electrical power supply which has conductors which extends through the base section. Electrical conductors in the trunk section may be connected to those of the base section when the trunk section and base section are connected. Connection of the trunk section with the base section may therefore act as a switch for activating the lighting or audio. The artificial tree may also include motion or proximity sensors which may trigger activation of the audio or lighting. The artificial tree may include motors or actuators, for example to permit movement of the branches, or rotation of the crown or trunk section. The trunk section or crown section may include a recess in the appearance of a tree knot for receiving treats, such as sweets or candies, for trick-or-treaters. The recess may include a proximity or motion sensor for activating audio or lighting in response to the insertion of a hand into the recess. Alternatively, the recess may include an open container for receiving a fluid, such as a gel, to act as a trick for those inserting their hand into the recess.

It is therefore possible to provide an artificial tree which is suitable for Halloween. A bare trunk and bare branches provide an appropriate appearance for the associations of Halloween. In view of the branches being only at or adjacent to the top of the tree, and the branches being moveable, a weighted base provides the necessary stability for the artificial tree, which may otherwise be top-heavy and pose a topple-hazard. Due to the typically brief duration of the celebration of Halloween, the artificial tree being collapsible and having bendable branches permits for convenient storage.

The words ‘comprises/comprising’ and the words ‘having/including’ when used herein with reference to the present invention are used to specify the presence of stated

features, integers, steps or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof.

It is appreciated that certain features of the invention, which are, for clarity, described in the context of separate embodiments, may also be provided in combination in a single embodiment. Conversely, various features of the invention which are, for brevity, described in the context of a single embodiment, may also be provided separately or in any suitable sub-combination.

The embodiments described above are provided by way of examples only, and various other modifications will be apparent to persons skilled in the field without departing from the scope of the invention as defined herein.

Claims

1. A Halloween artificial tree comprising:
   a base section which defines a container for receiving ballast and which has elongate protrusions of the appearance of roots;
   a trunk section which is devoid or substantially devoid of branches and which has first and second opposing ends;
   a crown section which has a crown body and a plurality of branches projecting from the crown body, the branches being at least in part malleable;
   the first end of the trunk section being removably mountable to the base section, and the crown section being removably mountable to the second end of the trunk section so that the Halloween artificial tree is disassemblable for ease of storage and/or transportation.

2. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 1, wherein the branches are malleable at or adjacent to the crown-body so that the branches can be bent to extend outwardly or upwardly to adjust a footprint of the tree to assist with storage.

3. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein each branch comprises at least one metal wire core and a polymeric coating.

4. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 3, wherein coating is disjointed to permit easier shaping of the branch between separated portions.

5. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein at least one of the branches includes at least one sub-branch projecting from a main body of the branch.

6. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the container has a closeable opening.

7. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 6, wherein the closeable opening is closed via a screw threaded cap.

8. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the container is liquid-tight.

9. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the trunk section and base section are connectable via a rod.

10. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the crown section and trunk section are connectable via a rod.

11. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the trunk section comprises a body and a rod which extends therethrough and projects at each end of the trunk to connect with the crown and/or base.

12. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein the rod comprises metal.

13. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein each branch is received in a receiver on the crown body, the receiver facing upwardly.

14. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 13, wherein the receiver faces an angle from a vertical direction of between 15 and 60 degrees.

15. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 14, wherein the receiver faces an angle from the vertical direction of 30 or substantially 30 degrees.

16. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein a plurality of branches is received in the same receiver.

17. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the trunk section has a height of at least a third of the overall height of the artificial tree.

18. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the base, trunk and/or crown section comprises plastics.

19. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the Halloween artificial tree is black.

20. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the Halloween artificial tree is at least 1 metre tall.

21. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in claim 20, wherein the Halloween artificial tree is at least 2 metres tall.

22. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein an end portion of each branch or sub-branch is sufficiently malleable to form a return for securing decorations to the branch or sub-branch.

23. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the crown section may be removably mountable to the base section to form a Halloween artificial bush.

24. A Halloween artificial tree as claimed in any one of the preceding claims comprising the appearance of a deciduous tree having undergone or in the process of autumnal leaf abscission.

25. A Halloween artificial tree comprising:
a base section;
a trunk section which has first and second opposing ends;
a crown section which has a crown body and a plurality of branches projecting from the crown body, the branches being at least in part malleable;
the first end of the trunk section being removably mountable to the base section, and the crown section being removably mountable to the second end of the trunk section so that the Halloween artificial tree is disassemblable for ease of storage and/or transportation.

Intellectual Property Office

Application No:	GB2016432.3	**Examiner:**	Mr Chris Morris
Claims searched:	1-25	**Date of search:**	29 March 2021

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1, 5-8, 17-21, 24-25	GB2333645 A (VODAFONE) Whole document
A	-	US5962088 A (TANAKA) Whole document

Categories:

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^{X} :

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC

A41G

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI, EPODOC, Patent Fulltext, INTERNET

International Classification:

Subclass	Subgroup	Valid From
A41G	0001/00	01/01/2006