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Lash

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(54) **DEVICE FOR CLAMPING THICK, TEXTURED OR COILY HAIR**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC . *A45D 8/30* (2013.01); *A45D 8/28* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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USPC 132/106, 133, 273, 275; D28/21, 23, 28, D28/33

See application file for complete search history.

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Primary Examiner — Todd E Manahan

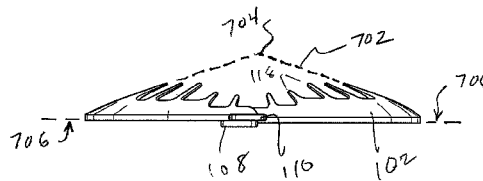
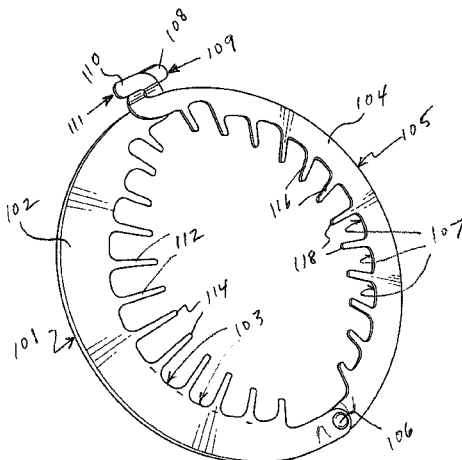
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A device for clamping thick, textured, coiled or kinky hair includes first and second curved components, each with an outer edge and an inner concave curved edge between first and second ends. The inner concave edges include a plurality of inwardly directed, spaced-apart teeth. A hinge joins the first ends of the curved components, enabling the second ends of the components to open and close around a bundle of hair with the teeth penetrating into the bundle. A cooperating closure maintains the device in position around the bundle of hair. The ends of the teeth define an opening even when the device is closed around the bundle of hair. The first and second curved components are preferably integrally formed from molded plastic. The cooperating closure may include first and second hook shapes. The device may come in different sizes to accommodate different hair textures and styles of children and adults.

6 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1

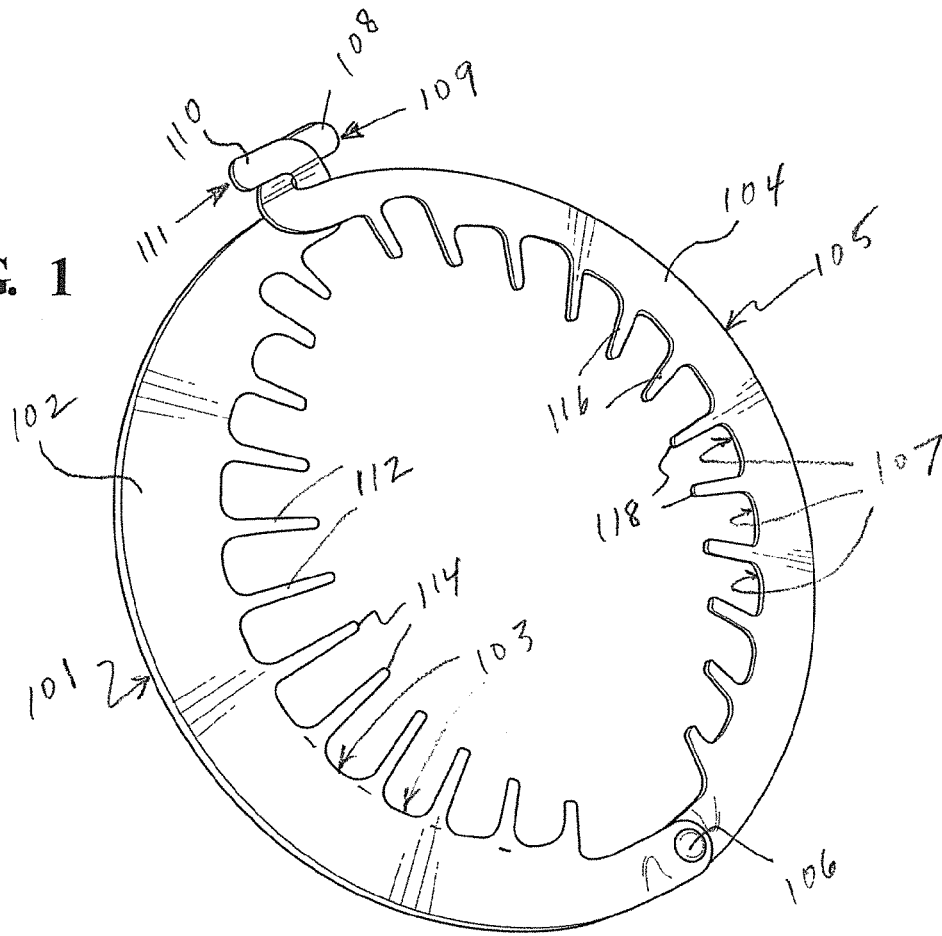
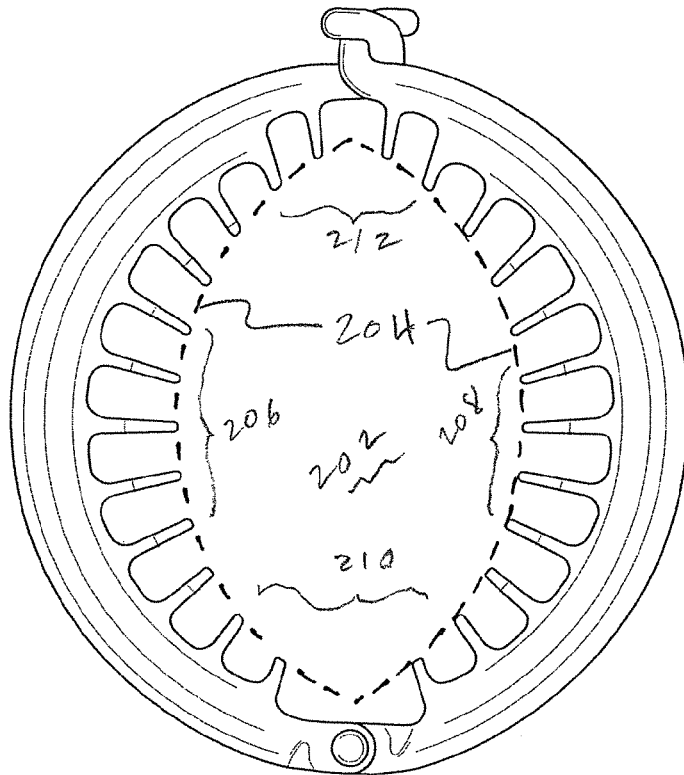


FIG. 2



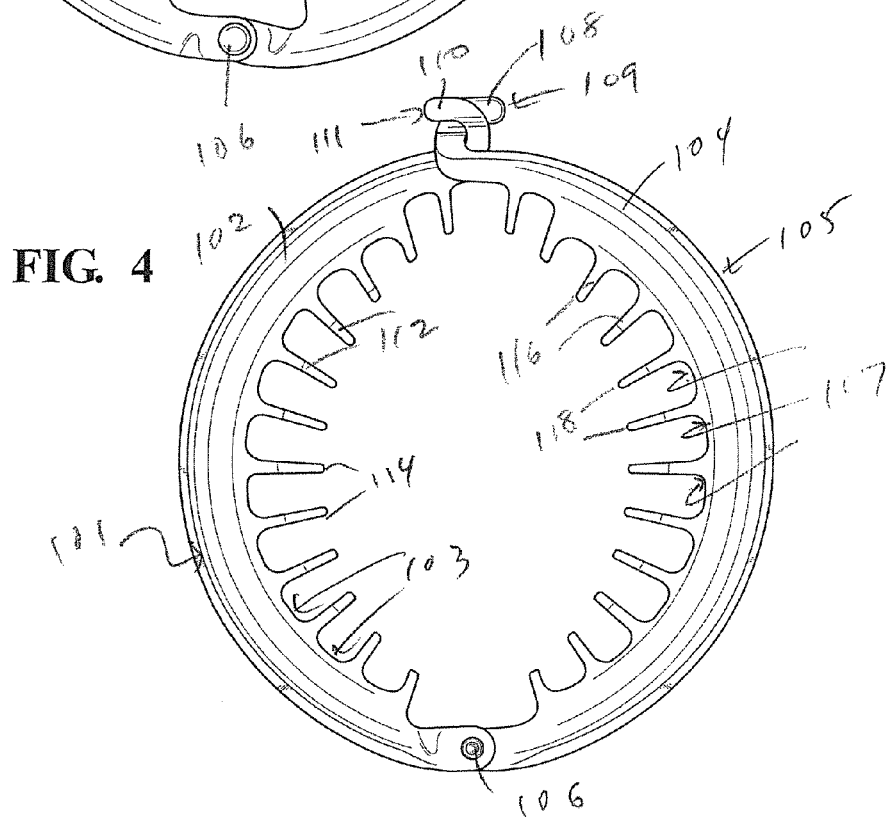
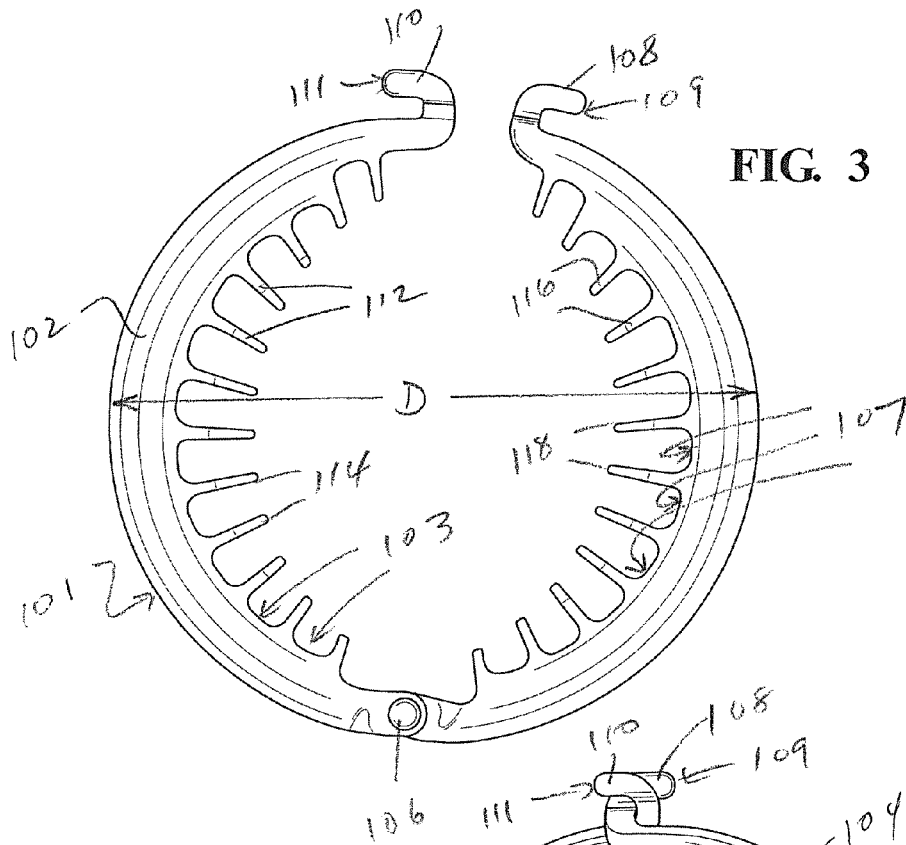


FIG. 5

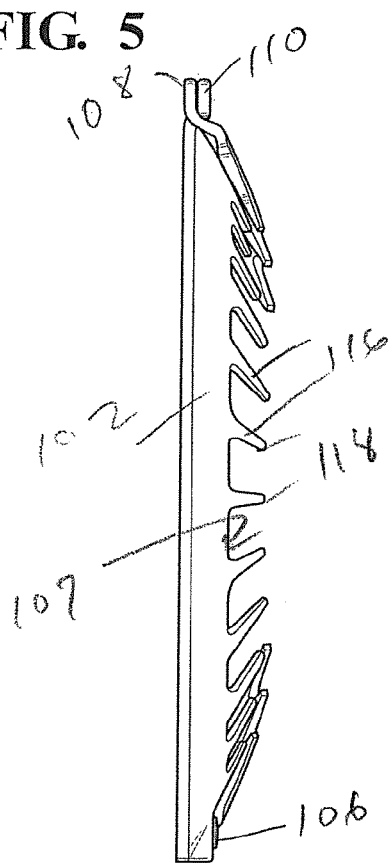


FIG. 6

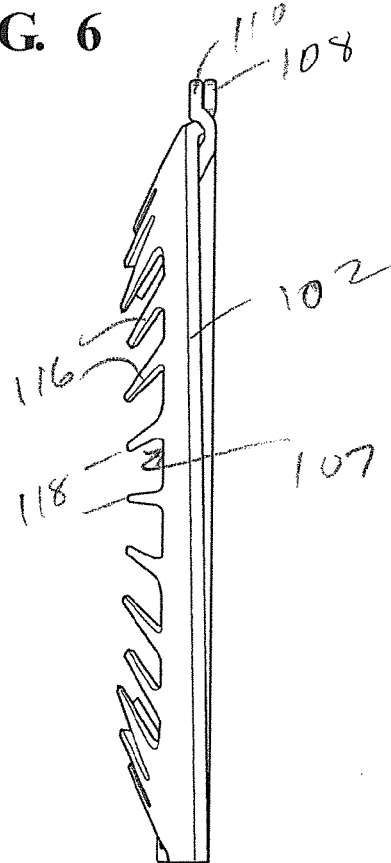


FIG. 7

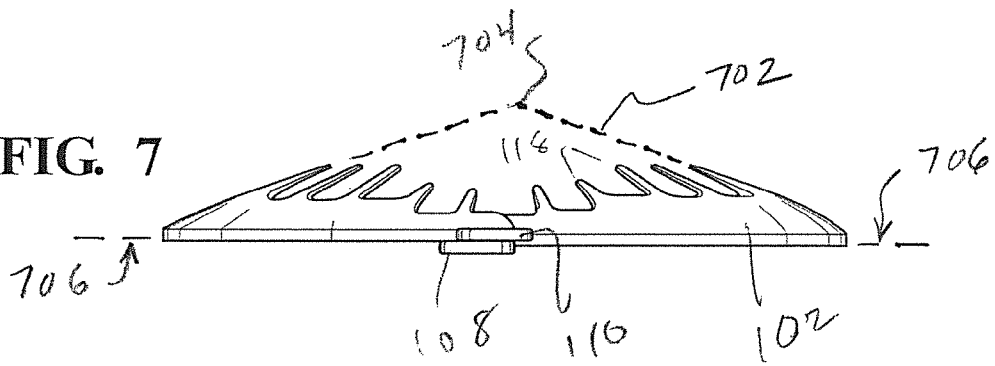
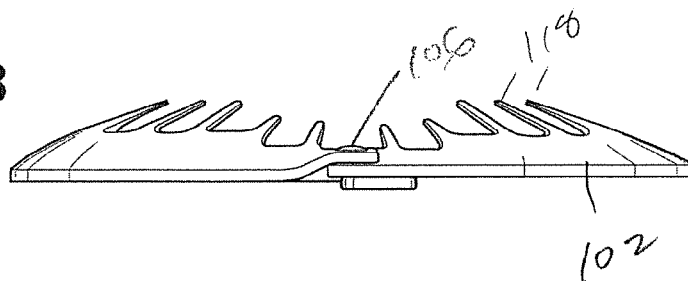


FIG. 8



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DEVICE FOR CLAMPING THICK, TEXTURED OR COILY HAIR

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to hair accessories and, in particular, to a hair clip for thick, textured or coily hair.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Most hair styling accessories are designed for straight hair, and they cannot accommodate thick textured or coily hair. Hair ties, including "scrunchies," are difficult to get around and remove from thick gatherings of textured hair, and since the teeth of "banana clips" overlap, the jaws are too small. Again, banana clips are really intended for straight hair.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention resides in a sanitary, durable and affordable device that clamps thick, textured, coiled or kinky hair without over-squeezing. The device includes first and second curved components, each component having an outer edge and an inner concave curved edge between first and second ends. The inner concave edge of each component includes a plurality of inwardly directed, spaced-apart teeth. A hinge joins the first ends of the curved components, enabling the second ends of the components to open and close around a bundle of hair with the teeth penetrating into the bundle.

A cooperating closure associated with the second ends of the components is used to maintain the device in position around the bundle of hair. In contrast to existing devices, the teeth of one component never touch or bypass the teeth of the other component. Rather, the ends of the teeth define an opening even when the device is closed around the bundle of hair. In the preferred embodiment, the ends of the teeth define a biconvex opening when the device is closed around the bundle of hair.

The first and second curved components are preferably integrally formed from molded plastic, for example. The cooperating closure may include first and second hook shapes on the second ends of the first and second curved components. The device may come in different sizes to accommodate different hair textures and styles of children and adults. For instance, the outer edges of the first and second may define a diameter or dimension in the range of 1 to 5 inches. The length of the teeth may vary from shorter near the ends of the components to longer in the middle, and the outer edges of the first and second curved components may define substantially smooth convex curves.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an oblique of the preferred embodiment of the invention in a closed position;

FIG. 2 is a top view in the closed position;

FIG. 3 is a top view in a slightly open position;

FIG. 4 is a bottom view;

FIG. 5 is a view from one side;

FIG. 6 is a view from another side;

FIG. 7 is a view from the side showing the closure; and

FIG. 8 is a view from the side showing the hinge.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The drawings present different views of the preferred embodiment of the invention. FIG. 1 is an oblique view of

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the device in a closed position. The device comprises a first curved component **102** and a second curved component **104** connected with a hinge **106**, allowing the opposing ends to open and close like jaws. The components are preferably made from a rigid or semi-rigid durable material such as ABS, nylon or other plastics, through materials such as wood or metals may be used. In the preferred embodiment, each component is a unitary structure made from integrally molded plastic, for example, with a plastic or metal rivet being used for hinge **106**. The device may come in different sizes, with the dimension "D" in FIG. 3 being in the range of 1.5 to 5 inches to accommodate children and adults with different hair styles and textures. For example, devices with outer sizes of 1.5", 2.25", 3.5" and 5" may be provided. The device may be made in any color(s), including colors to blend in with hair colors or contrast with typical hair colors.

Component **102** includes an outer edge **101** and an inner edge **103** from which there projects a plurality of spaced-apart inwardly directed teeth **112** with tips **114**. Likewise, component **104** includes an outer edge **105** and an inner edge **107** from which there projects a plurality of spaced-apart inwardly directed teeth **116** with tips **118**. In contrast to existing hair clamps, including the "banana clip," the teeth **112** or tips **114** of component **102** never touch or bypass the teeth **116** or tips **118** of component **104**. Rather, even when the device is closed, the tips of both sets of teeth leave a central opening **202** shown in FIG. 2 to better accommodate a gathering of thick, textured or coily hair. In the preferred embodiment, this opening approximates a bi-convex shape shown with broken lines **204**. The teeth are preferably angled so as to project generally radially inwardly toward the center of opening **202**, with the length of the teeth being graduated from longer teeth **206**, **208** near the middle of the device to shorter teeth **210**, **212** toward the ends. The teeth may have lengths in the range of ¼ inch or less, to 1 inch or more, depending upon the outer dimension "D."

At the end of the device opposite the hinge **106**, a closure mechanism is provided to keep the device in place around a gathering of hair. In the preferred embodiment, component **102** includes a C-shaped hook of material **110** that engages with a corresponding C-shaped hook of material **108** on component **104** as shown in FIGS. 1, 2 and 4-8. As best seen in FIGS. 5-8, the components and teeth are preferably angled to approximate a frustoconical form **702** terminating in point **704**. As evident from the figures, the two components **102**, **104** are nearly mirror images of one another, with slight differences around the hinge and closure to better maintain a flat front plane **706**.

To use the device, hair is gathered with the hand(s) of the user to create a bundle to be clamped. The device is opened more than that shown in FIG. 3. With the bundle of hair maintained with one hand, the opened device is placed around the bundle with the other, at which point both hands may be used to close the device around the bundled. The device is initially is "over-closed" so that the ends **109**, **111** of the hooks **108**, **110** in FIG. 1 engage, enabling the device to be left in place. In the preferred embodiment, flat plane **706** is oriented toward the head of the wearer with the point **704** of the conical shape pointing backward so that the device essentially "cups" the back of the head to be less conspicuous.

The invention claimed is:

1. A device for clamping thick, textured or coily hair, consisting of:
 - first and second components integrally formed from molded plastic, each of the first and second components

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having an inner and an outer convex curved edge between first and second ends;
 the inner edge of each component including a plurality of inwardly directed, spaced-apart teeth, each tooth terminating in a free end with a length of the teeth varying from shorter near the first and second ends of the first and second components and longer in a middle of the first and second components;
 a single hinge joining the first ends of the curved components enabling the second ends of the components to open and close around a bundle of hair with the teeth penetrating into the bundle of hair;
 a cooperating closure associated with the second ends of the first and second components for maintaining the device in position around the bundle of hair, the cooperating closure enabling the device to have an open position and a closed position; and wherein the cooperating closure includes first and second hook shapes on the second ends of each of the first and second components;
 wherein the teeth of the first component never touch or bypass the teeth of the second component, and when

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the device is in the closed position, the free ends of the teeth define a biconvex device devoid of any structures comprising the device wherein the first and second components approximate a frusto-conical shape in a side view of the device; and wherein the outer convex curved edges of the first and second components define a maximum dimension in the range of 1 to 5 inches.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein the first and second curved components and teeth associated therewith are mirror images of one another.

3. The device of claim 1, wherein the outer edges of the first and second curved components are smooth convex curves.

4. The device of claim 1, wherein the molded plastic material is one of ABS or nylon.

5. The device of claim 1, wherein the single hinge is a plastic or a metal rivet.

6. The device of claim 1, wherein the length of the teeth lies in a range of about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 1 inch.

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