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OH et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2025/0261602 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 21, 2025**(54) **APPARATUS FOR CULTIVATING PLANTS**(71) Applicant: **LG ELECTRONICS INC.**, Seoul
(KR)(72) Inventors: **Jongmin OH**, Seoul (KR); **Taeyang LEE**, Seoul (KR)(21) Appl. No.: **19/203,452**(22) Filed: **May 9, 2025****Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation of application No. 17/972,835, filed on Oct. 25, 2022, now Pat. No. 12,329,076, which is a continuation of application No. 16/447,088, filed on Jun. 20, 2019, now Pat. No. 11,778,964.

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(2013.01); **A01G 9/249** (2019.05); **F25D**
17/06 (2013.01); **F25D 23/003** (2013.01);
F25D 23/006 (2013.01); **F25D 23/062**
(2013.01)

(57)

ABSTRACT

An apparatus for cultivating plants may include a cabinet having a cultivation space; a door that opens and closes the cultivation space; at least one bed disposed in the cultivation space and on which plants are cultivated; at least one light assembly that radiates light for photosynthesis toward the at least one bed; a water tank that stores water to be supplied to the at least one bed; a machine compartment separated from the cultivation space at a lower portion in the cabinet, that communicates with an outside of the apparatus, and that accommodates a compressor and a condenser forming a cooling cycle for controlling a temperature of the cultivation space; an air duct that connects the machine compartment and the cultivation space and guides air in the machine compartment to the cultivation space; and a return duct that connects the cultivation space and the machine compartment and guides air in the cultivation space to the machine compartment.

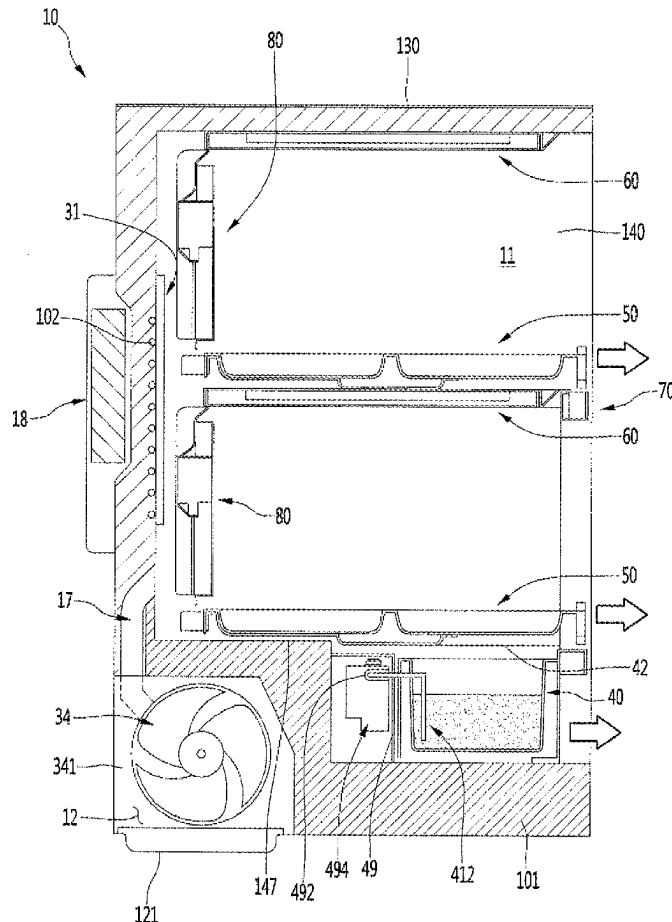


FIG. 1

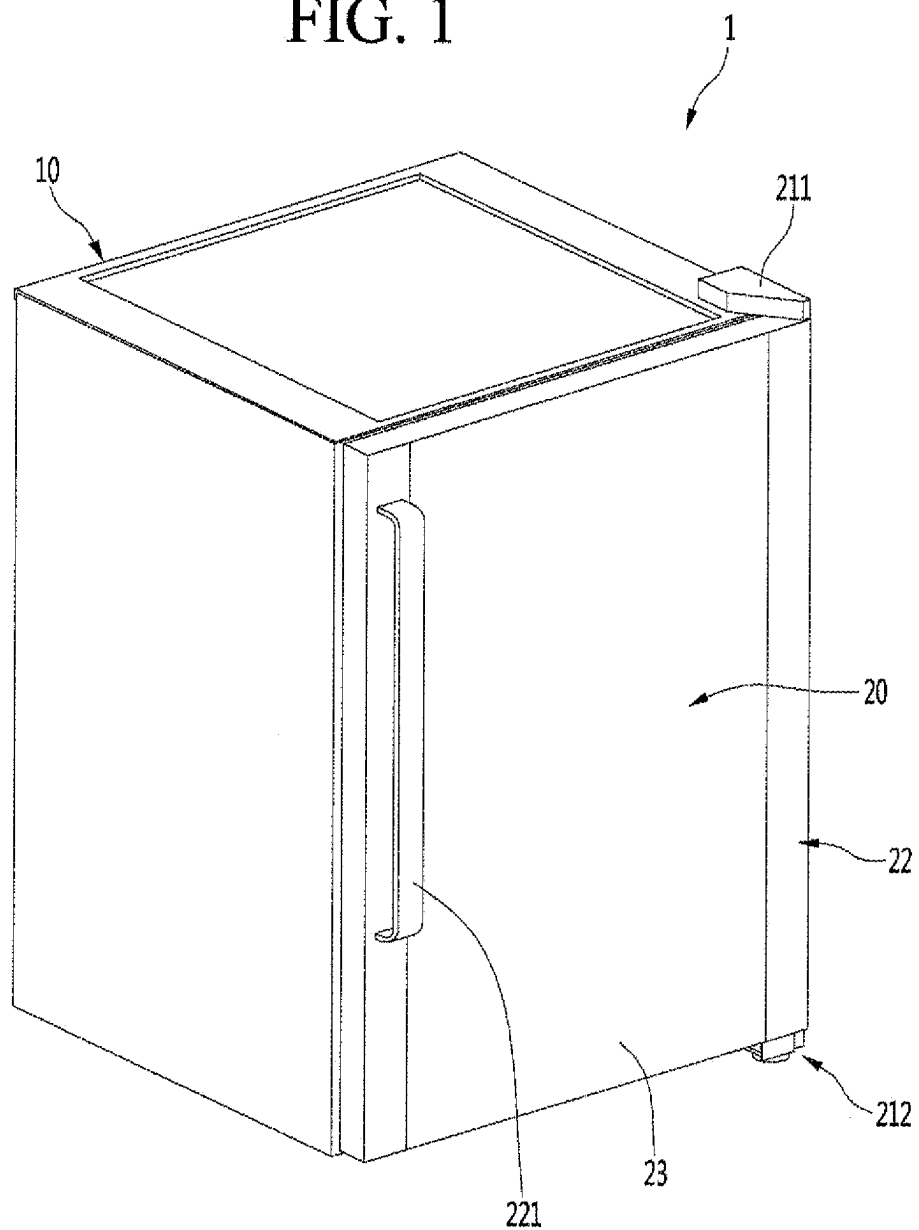


FIG. 2

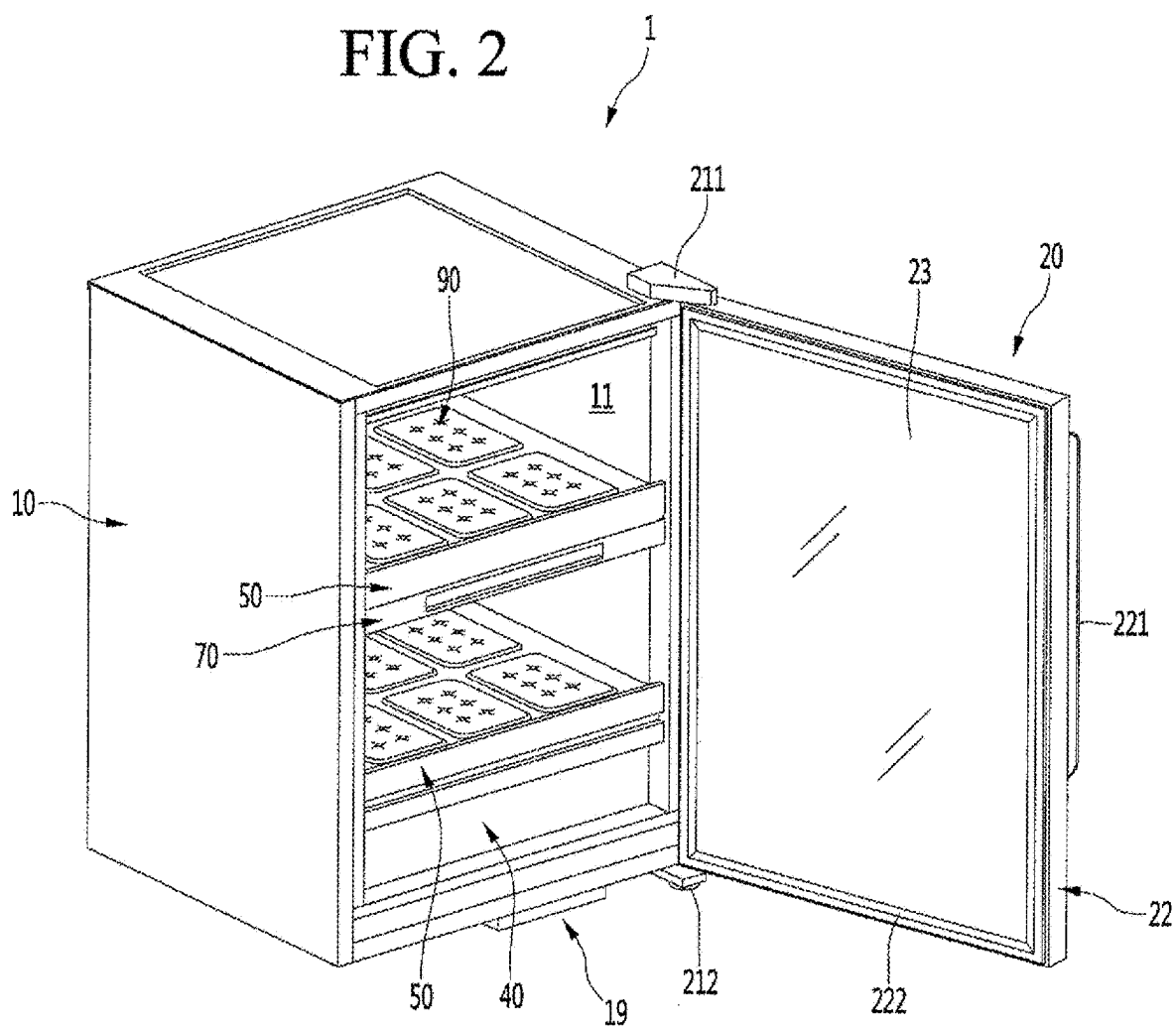


FIG. 3

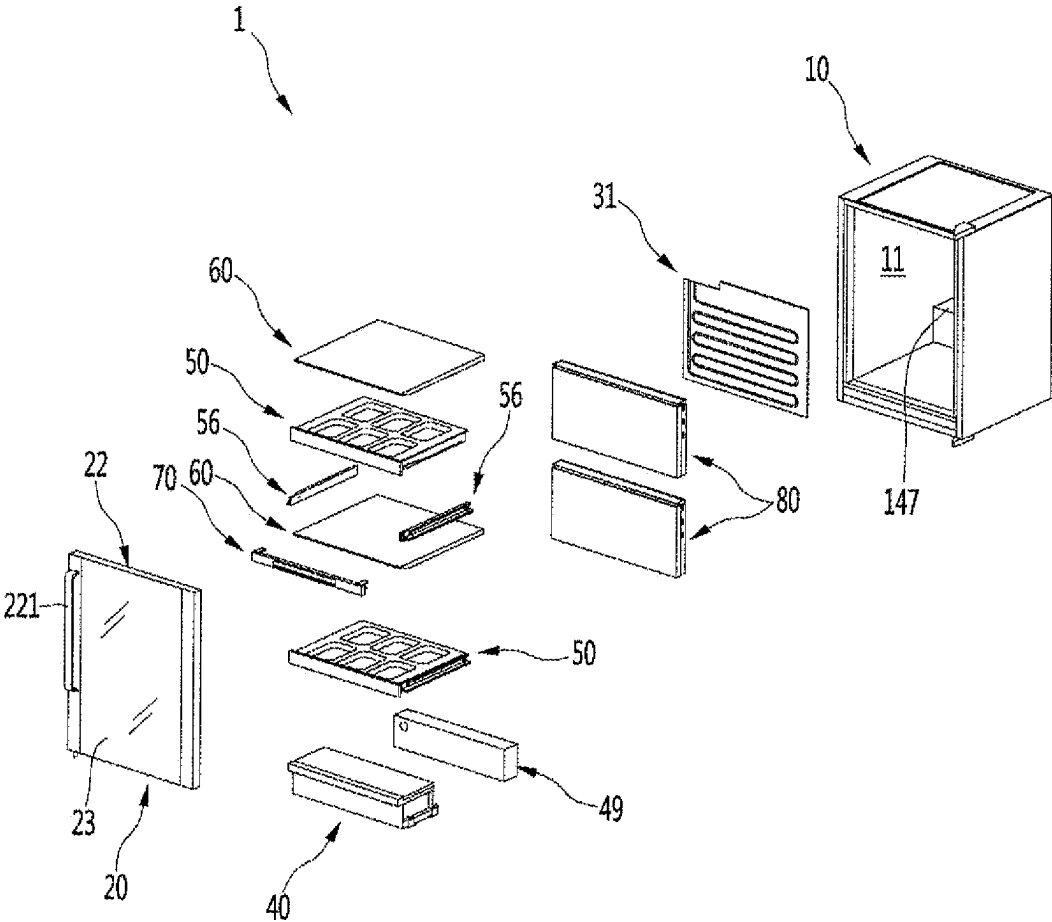


FIG. 4

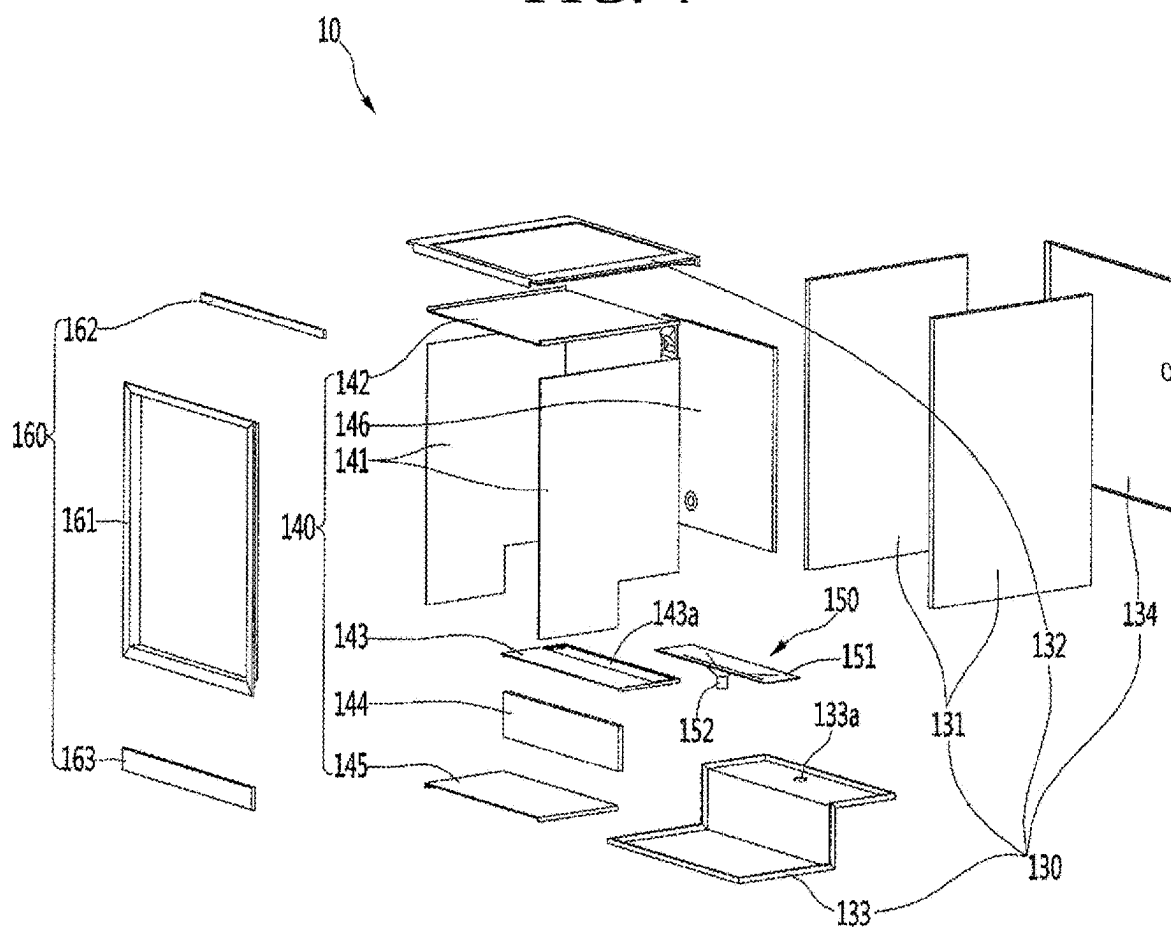


FIG. 5

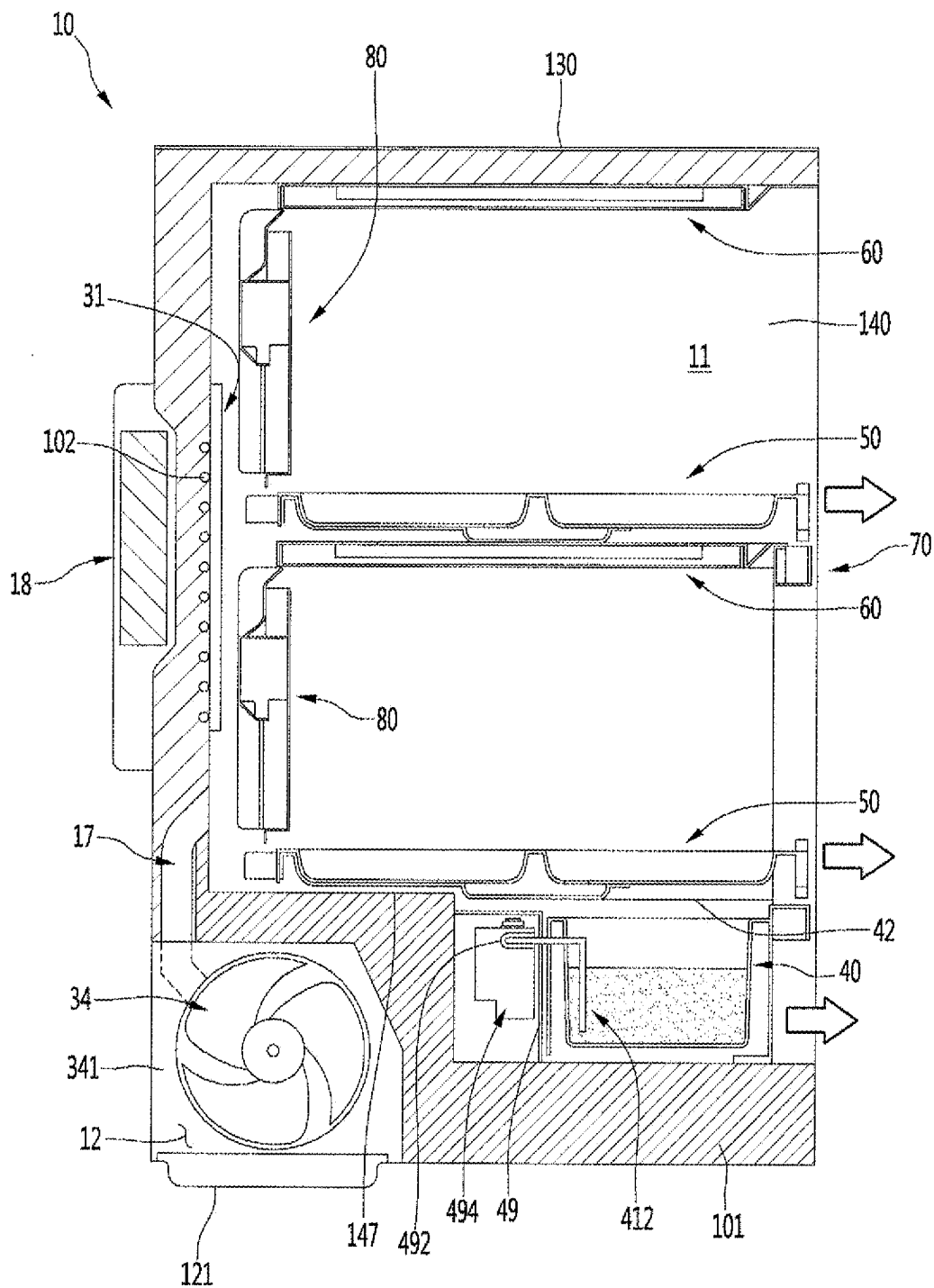


FIG. 6

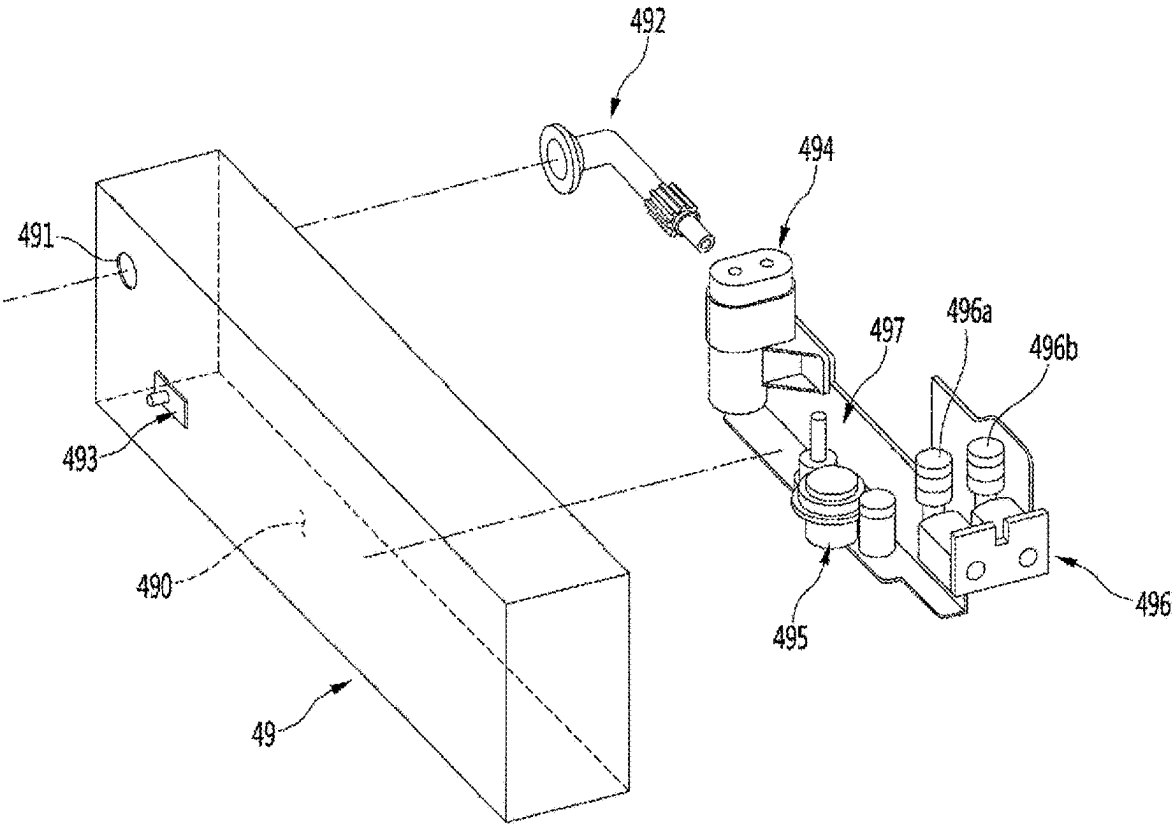


FIG. 7

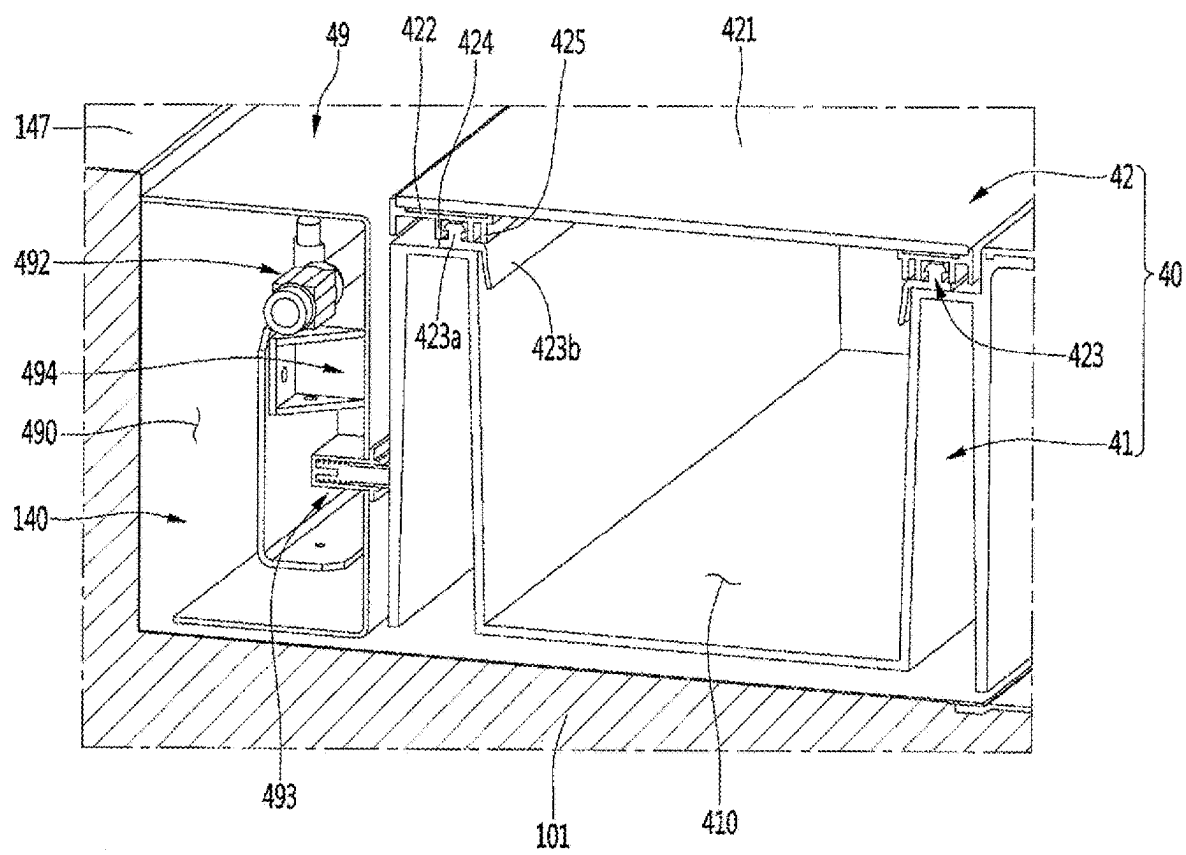
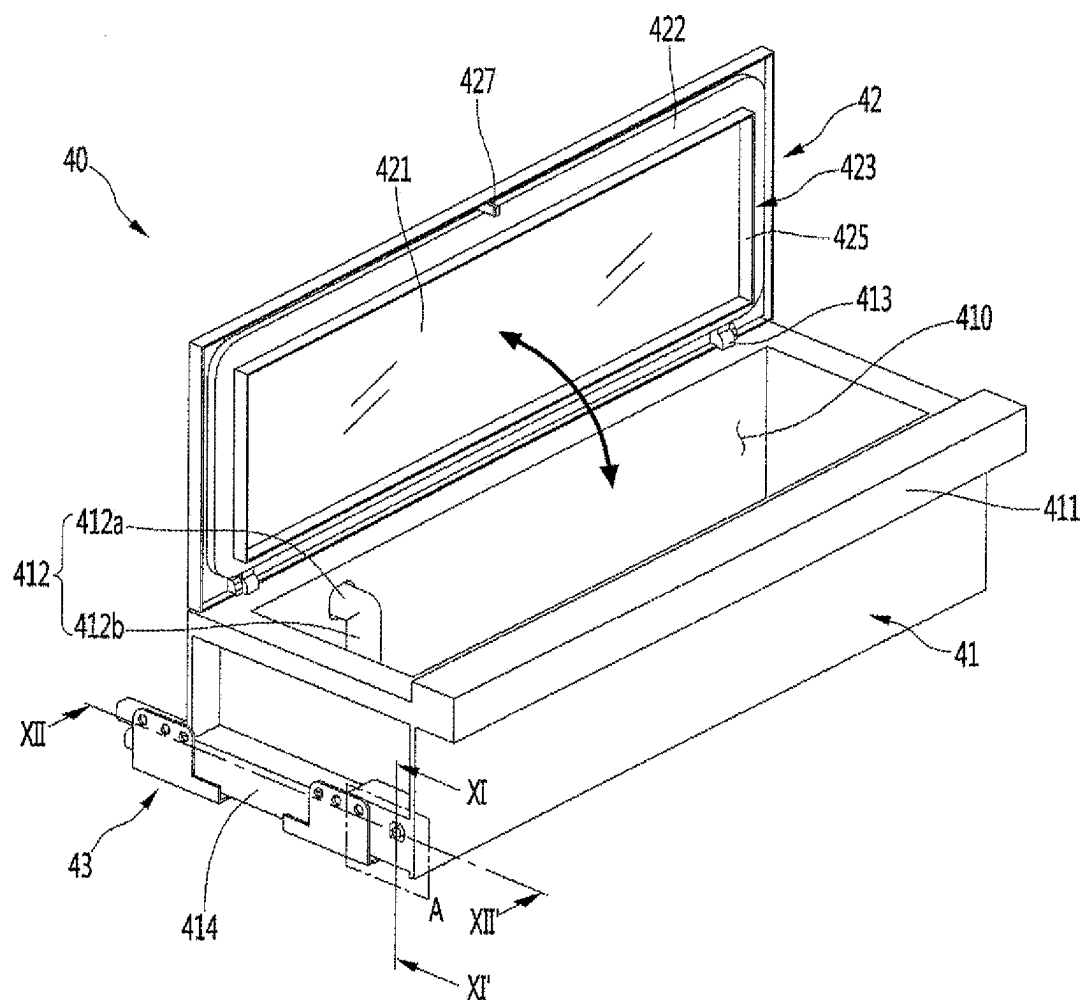


FIG. 8



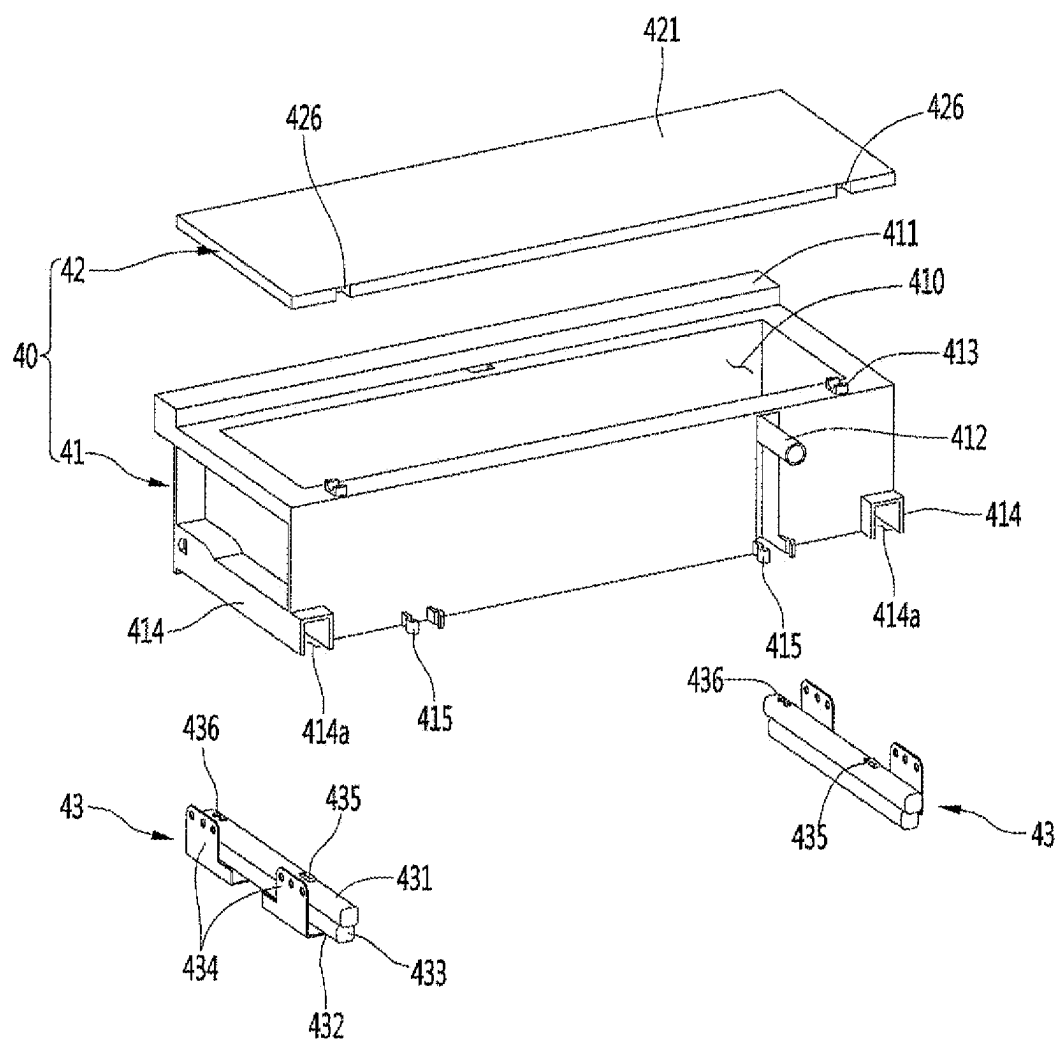


FIG. 10

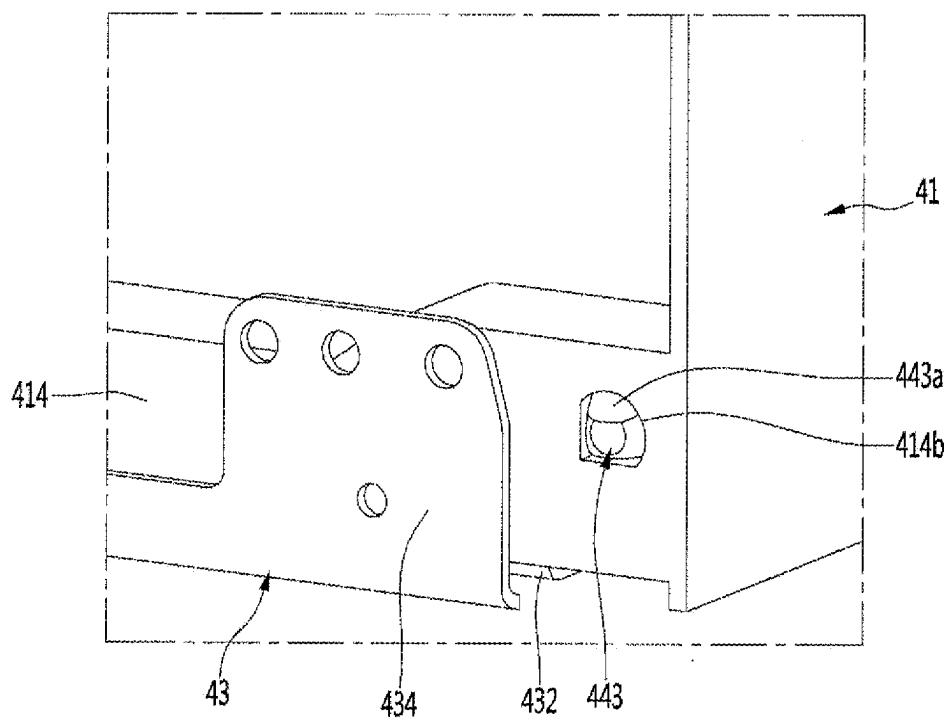


FIG. 12

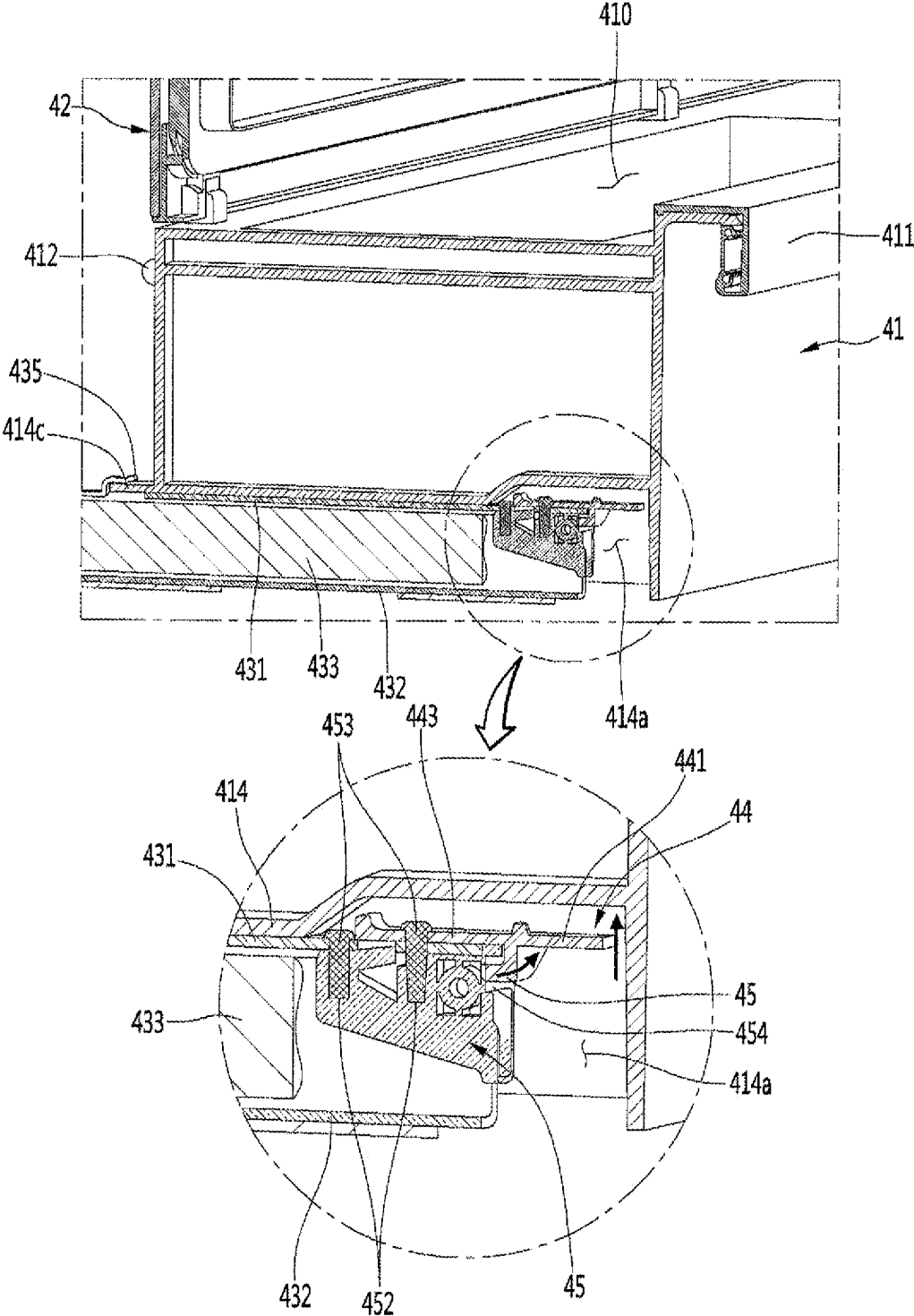


FIG. 13

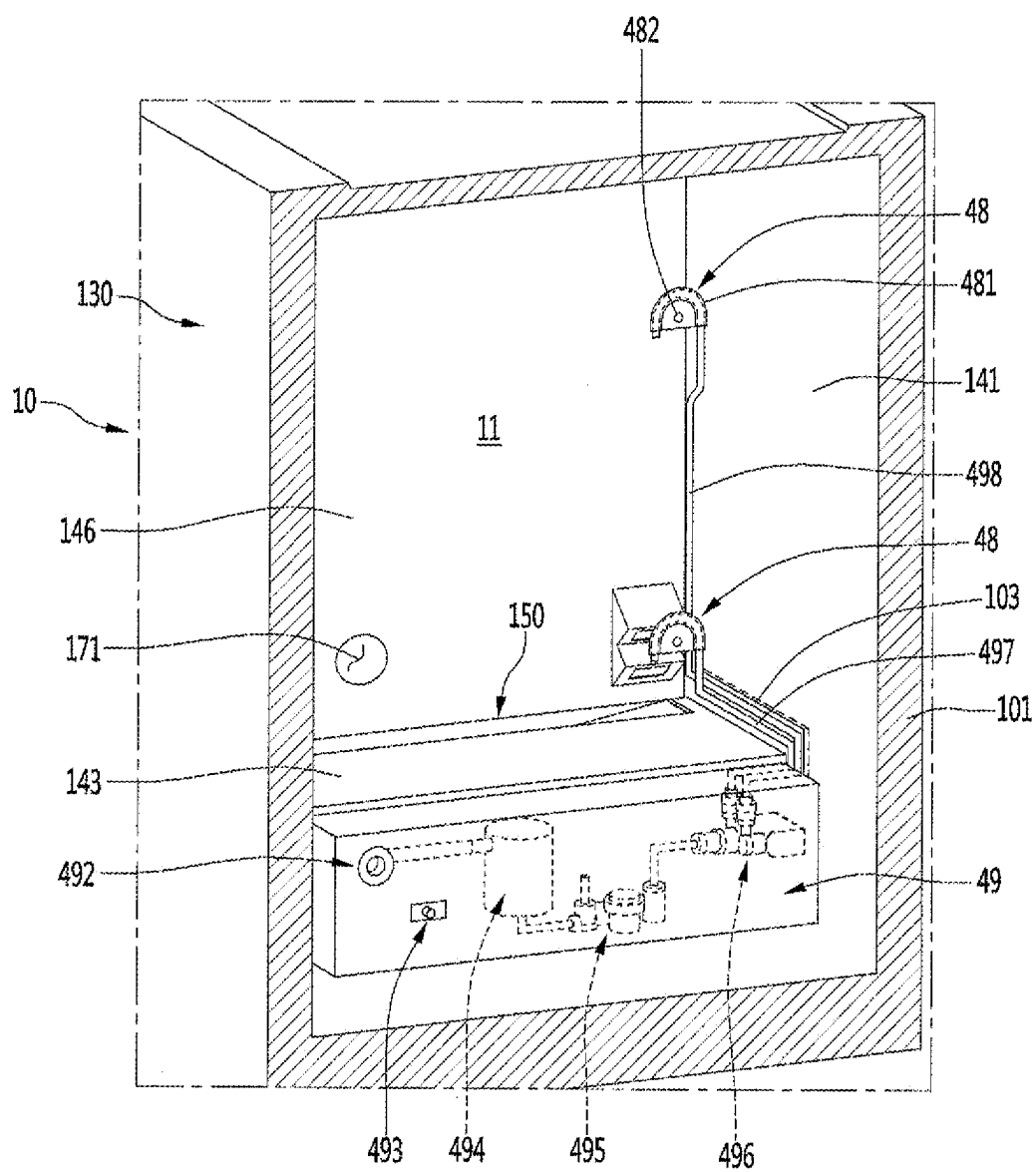


FIG. 14

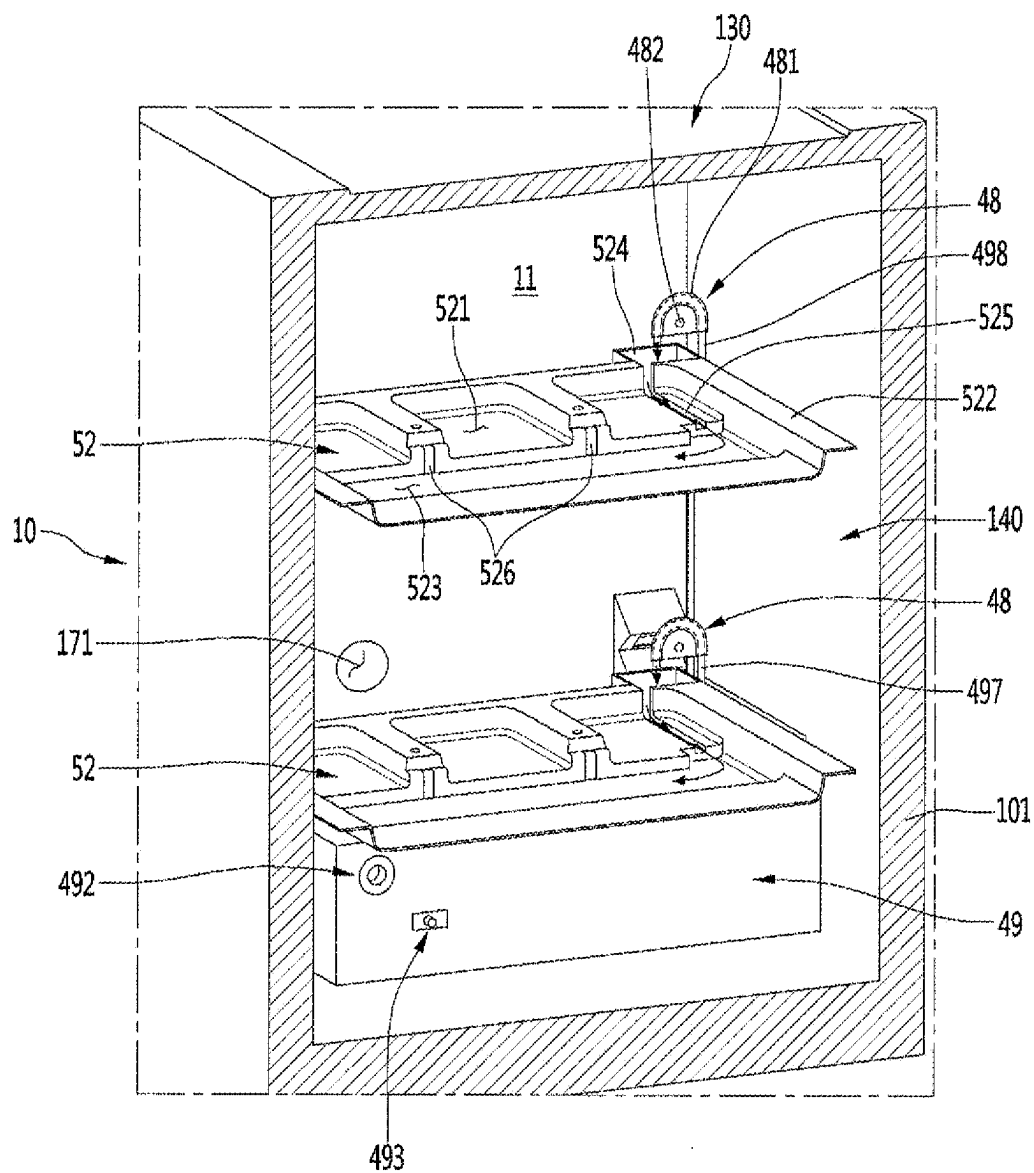


FIG. 15

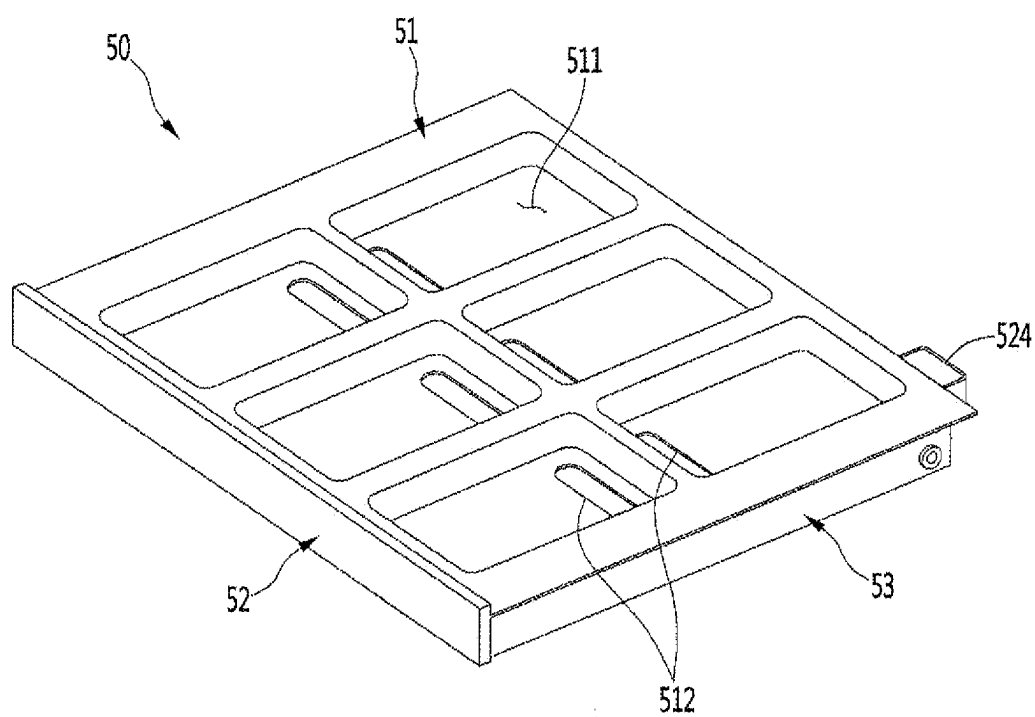


FIG. 16

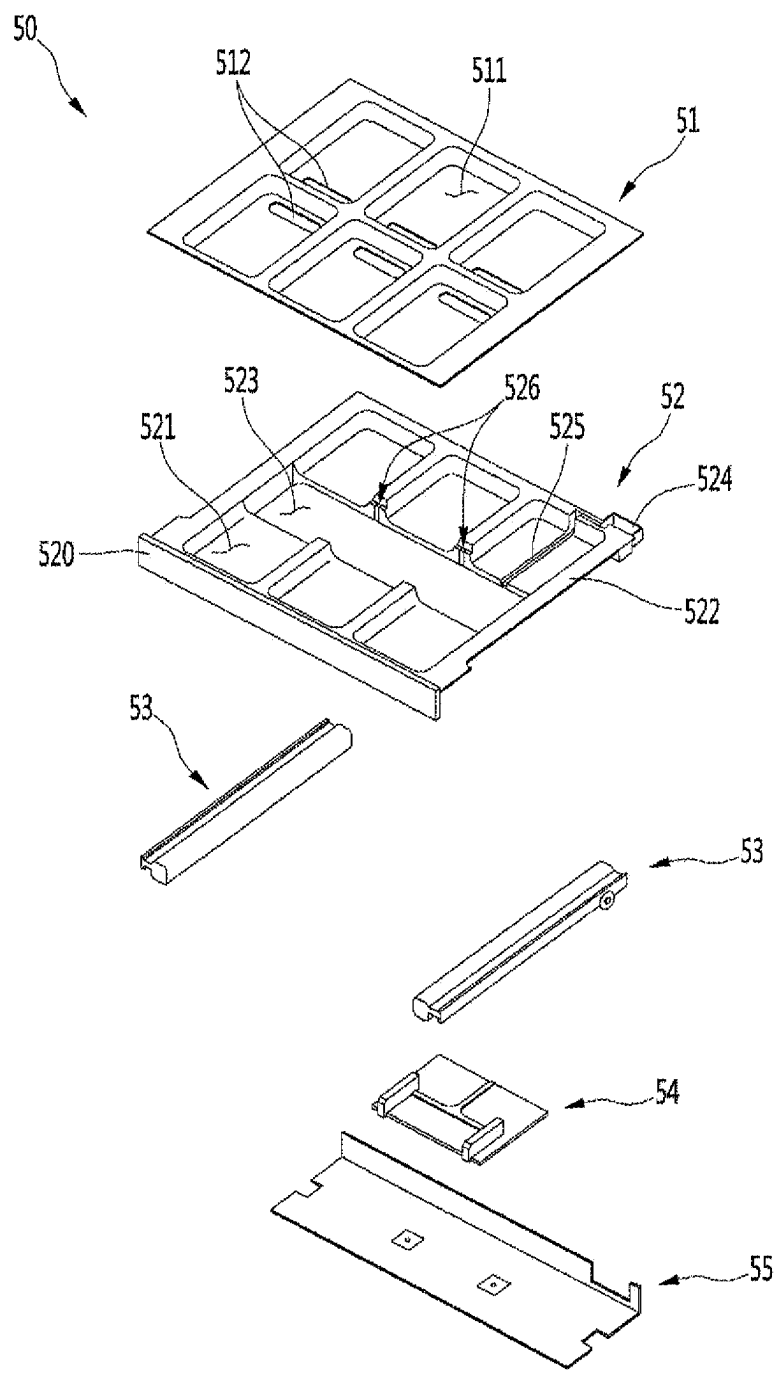


FIG. 17

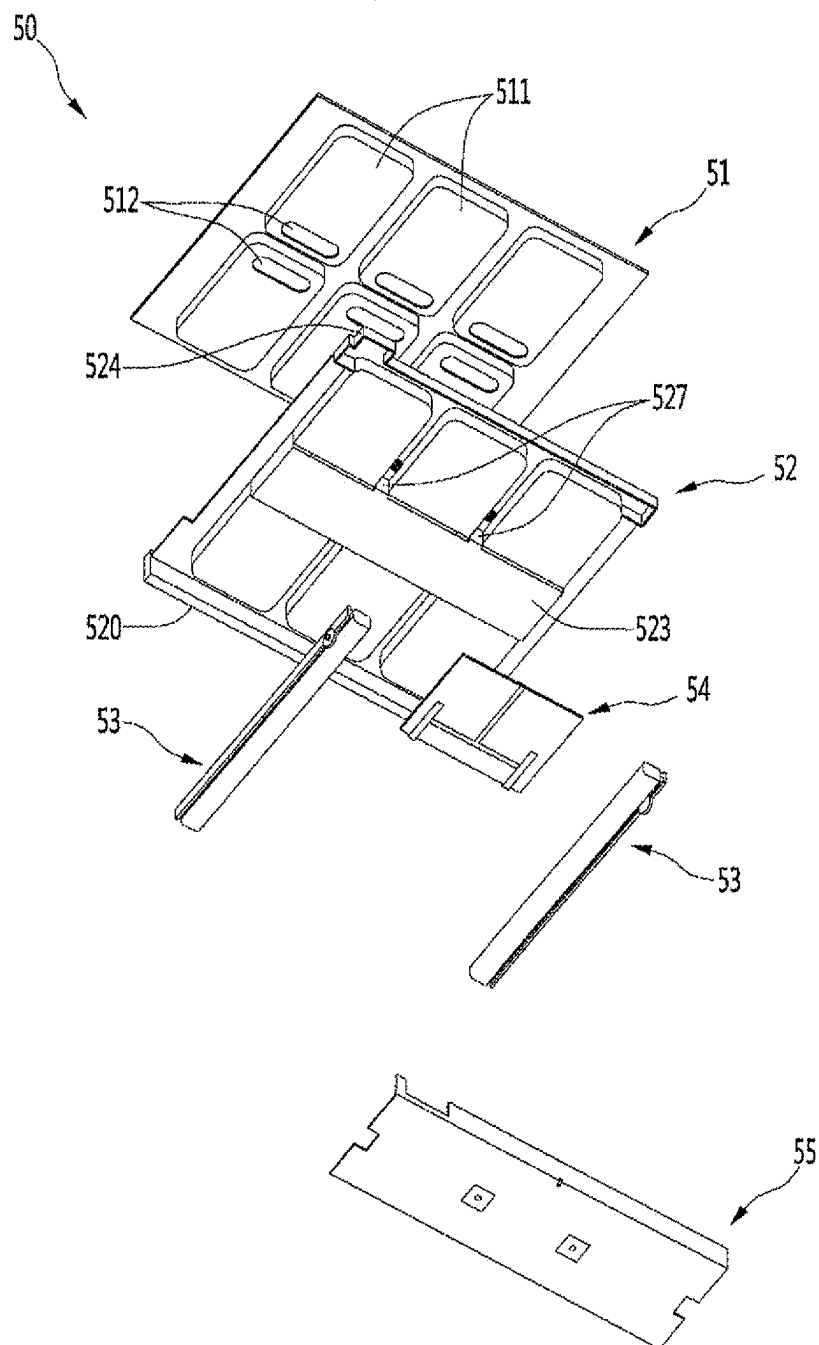


FIG. 18

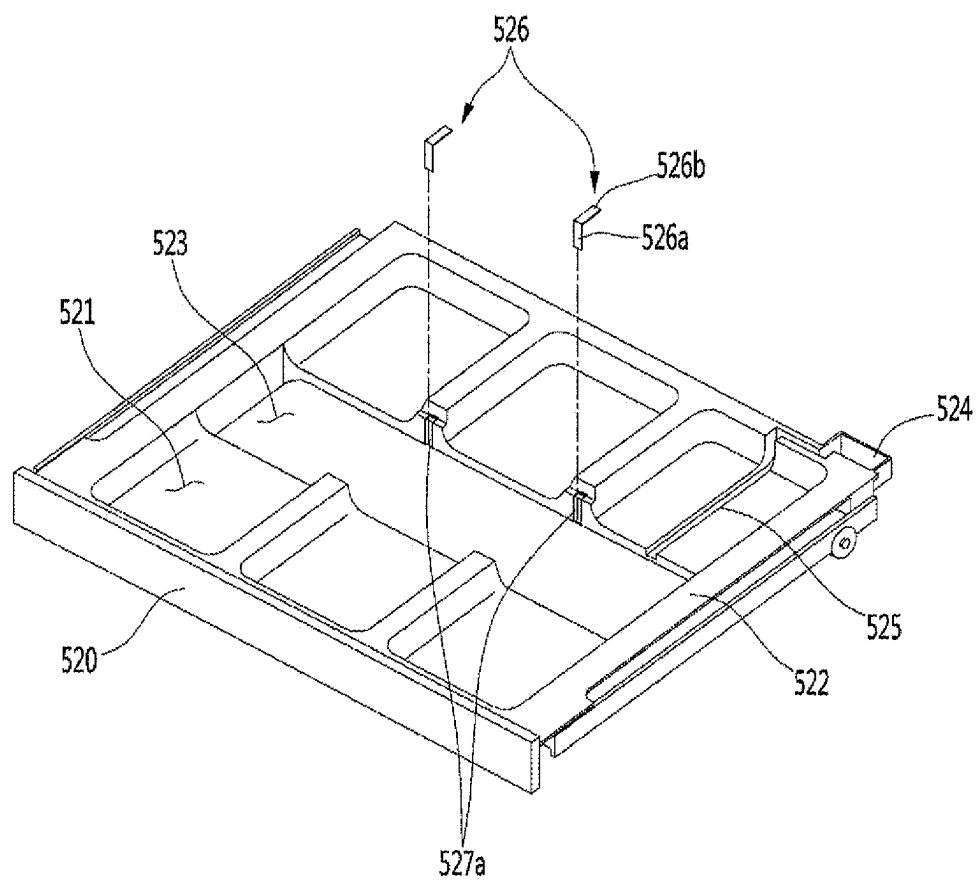


FIG. 19

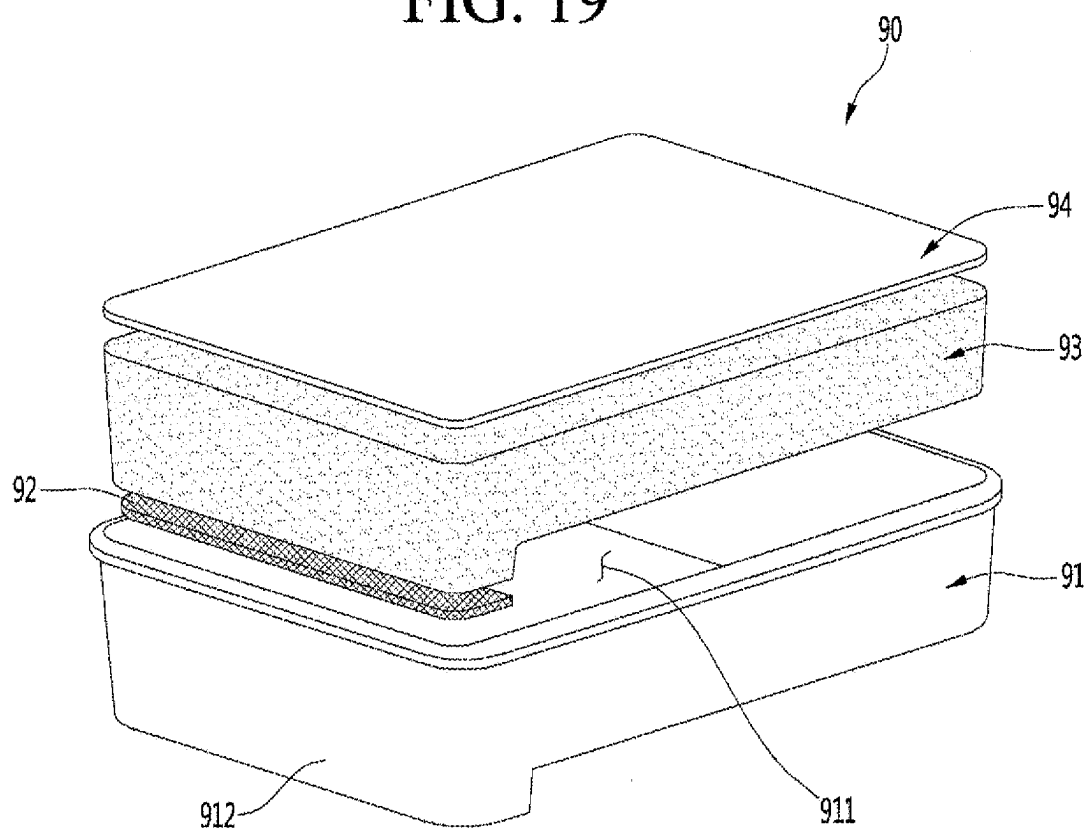


FIG. 20

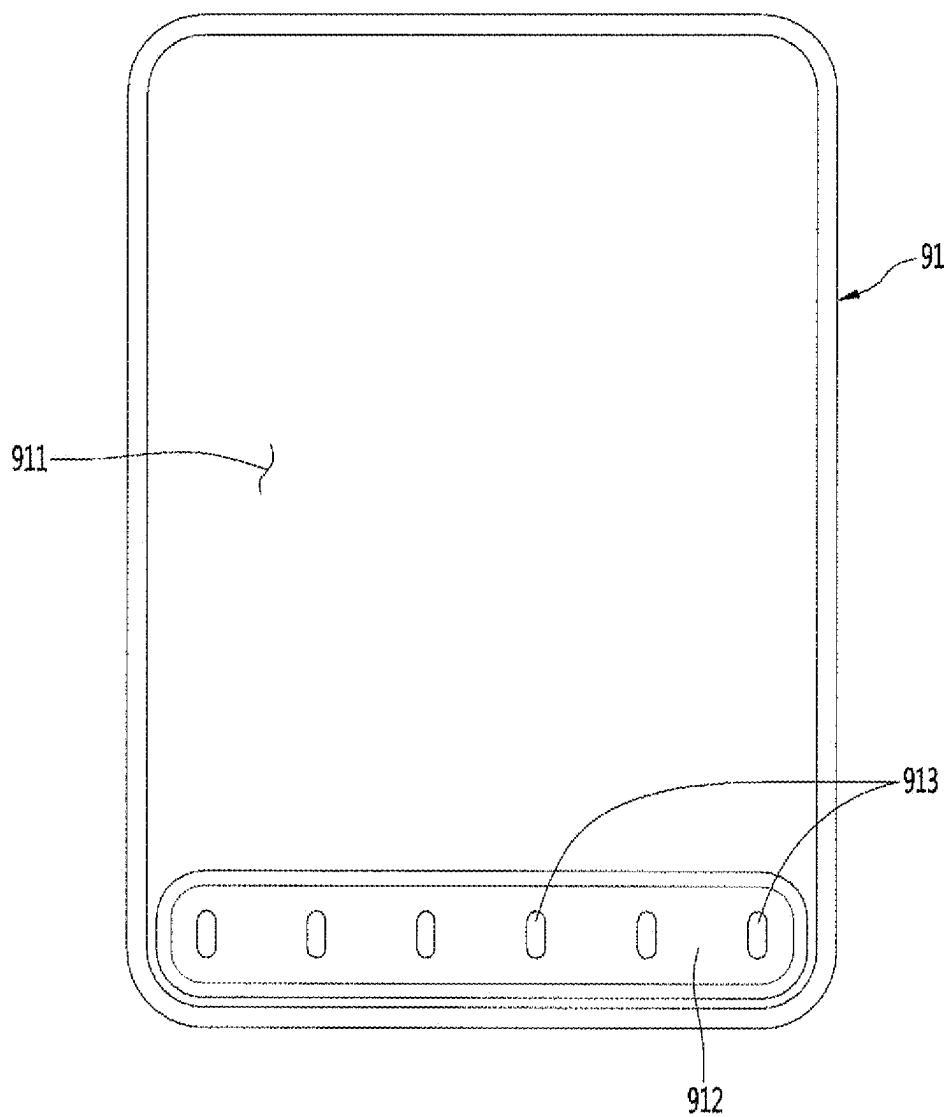


FIG. 21

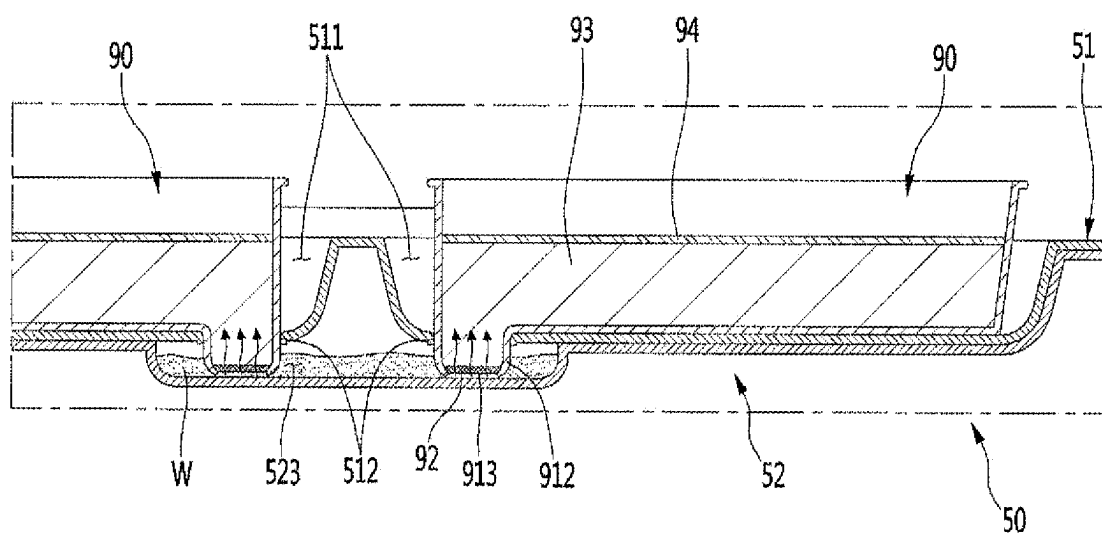


FIG. 22

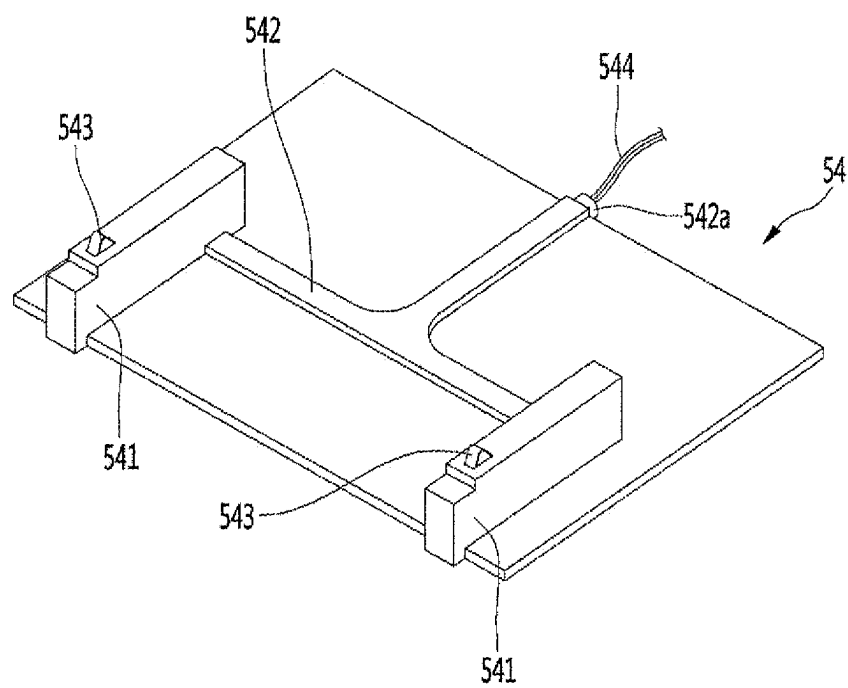


FIG. 23

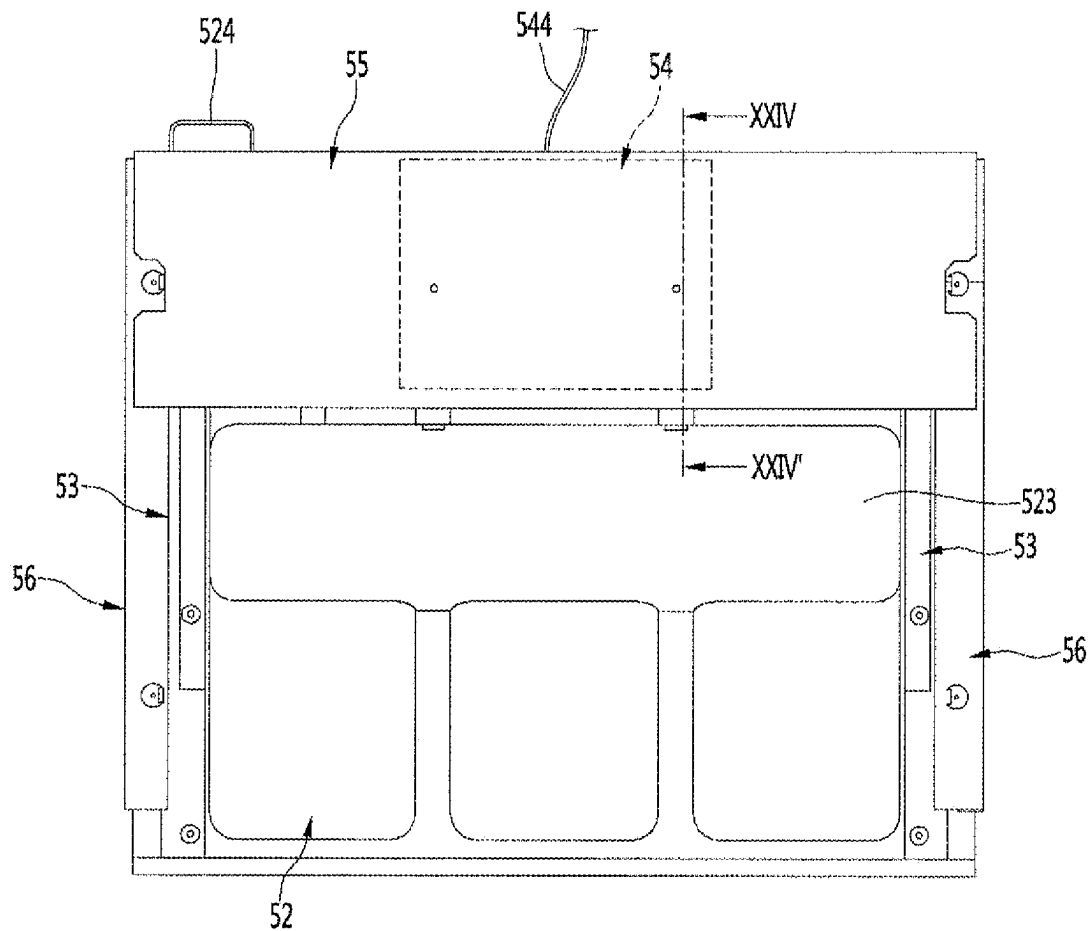


FIG. 24

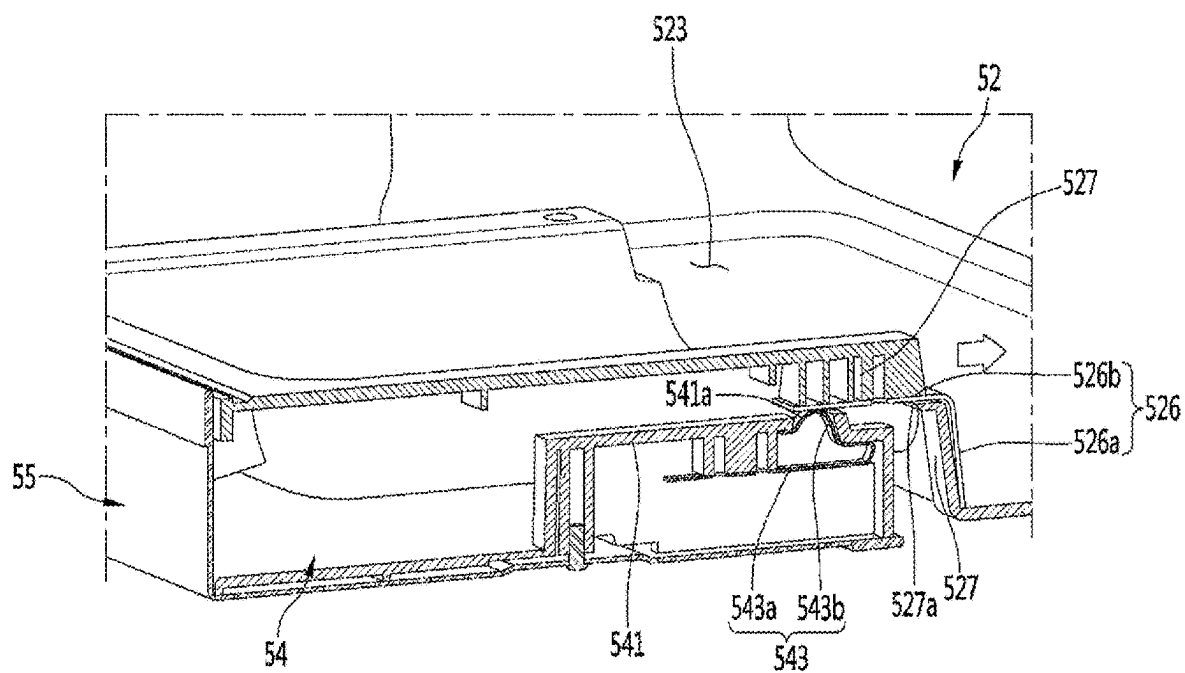


FIG. 25

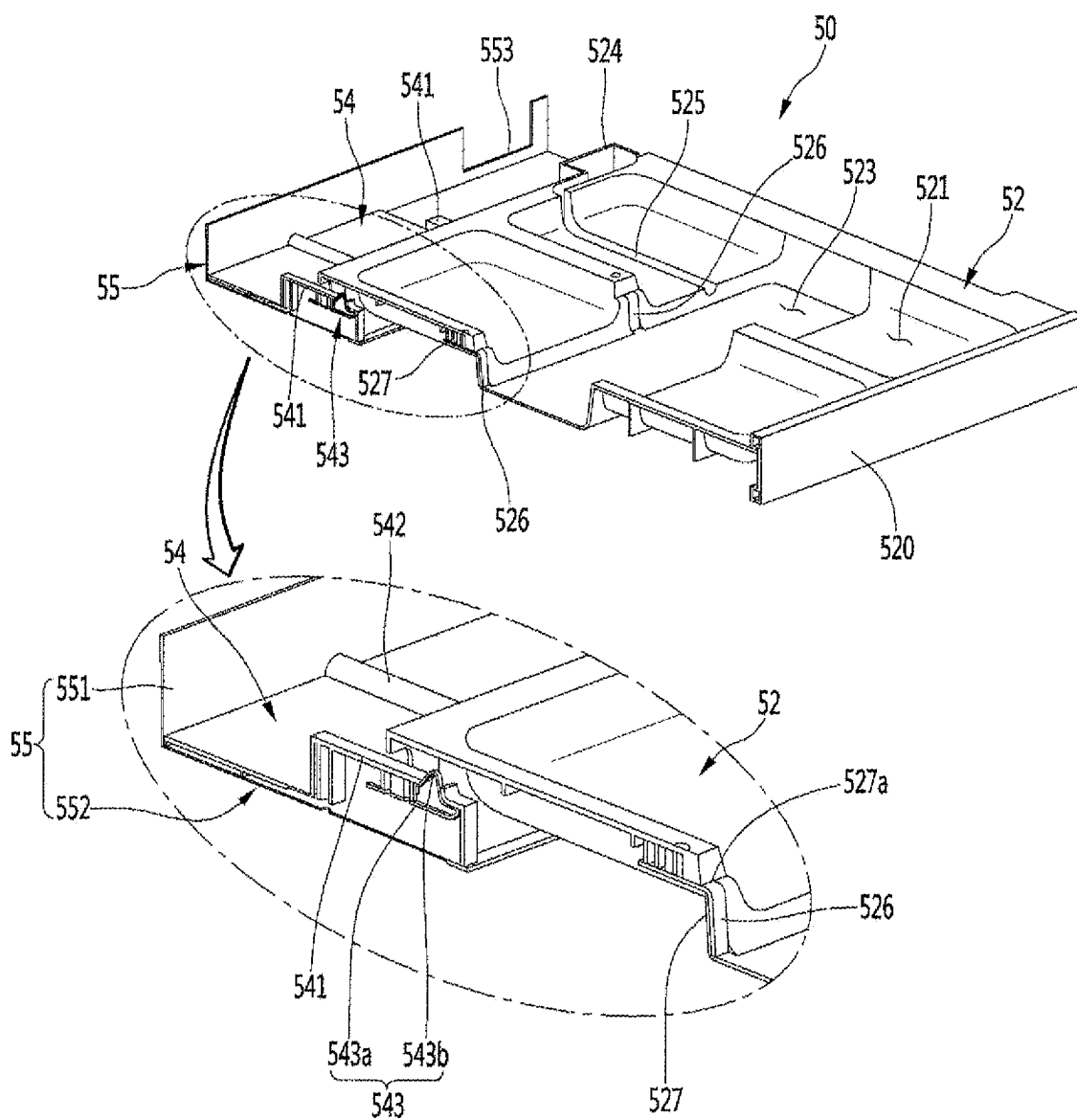


FIG. 26

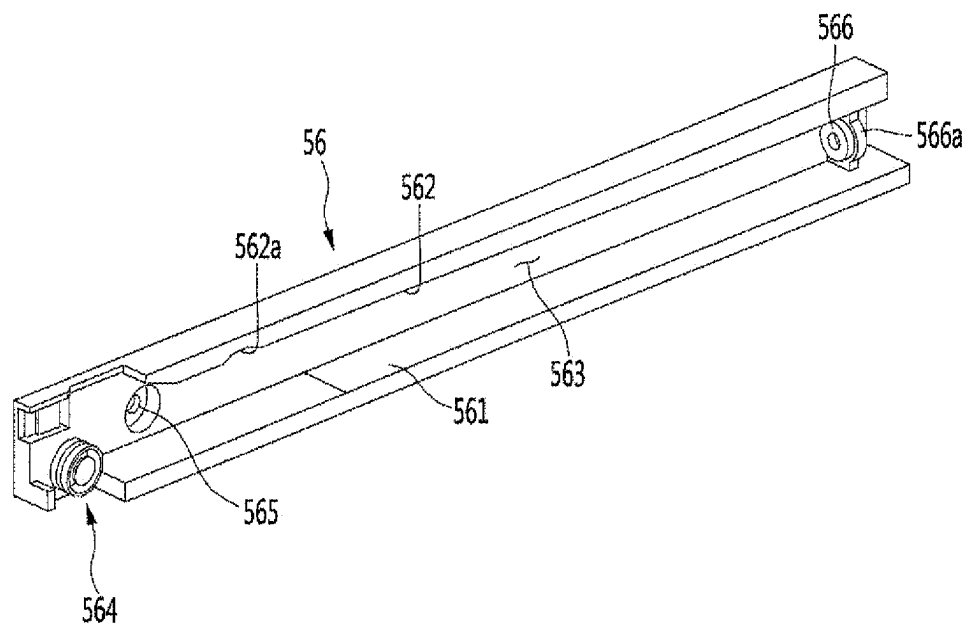


FIG. 27

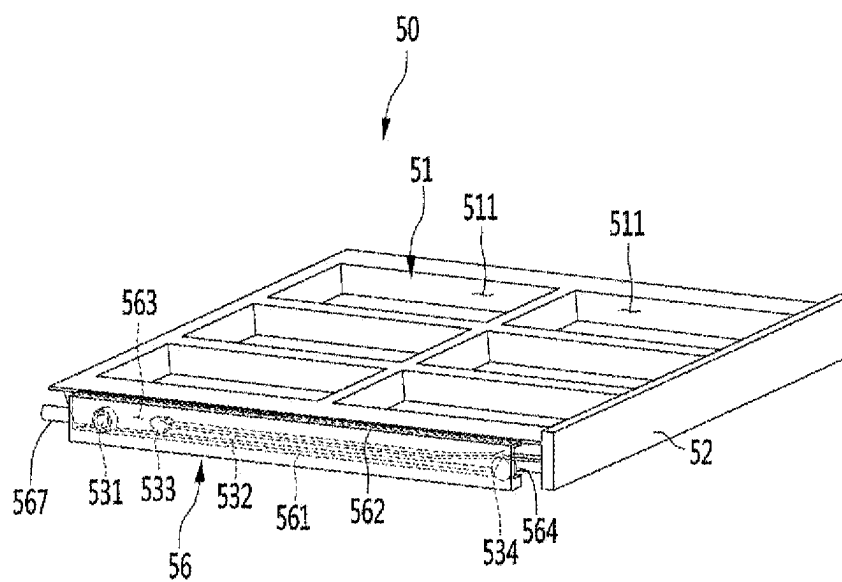


FIG. 28

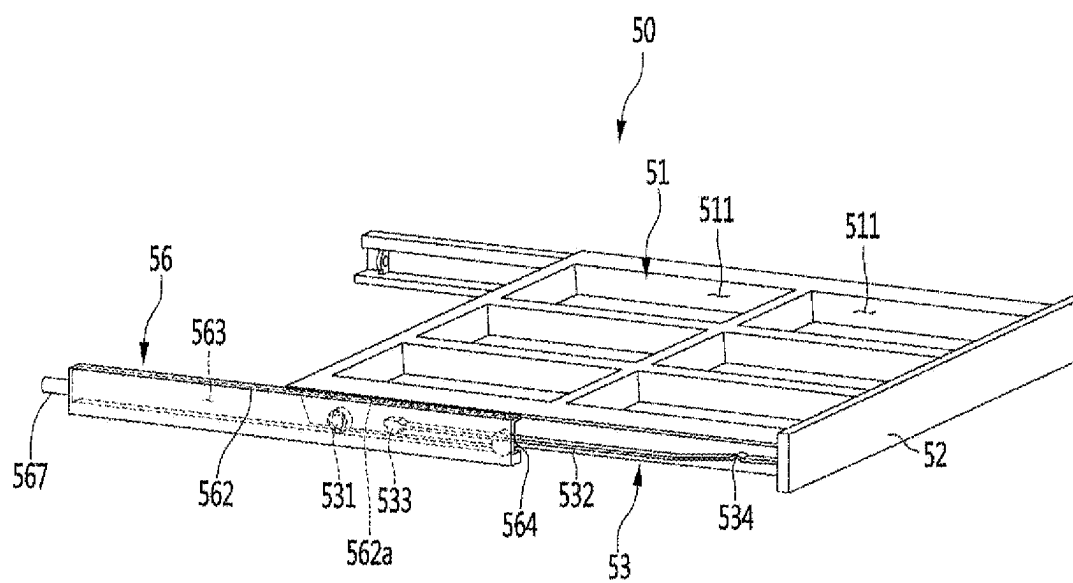


FIG. 29

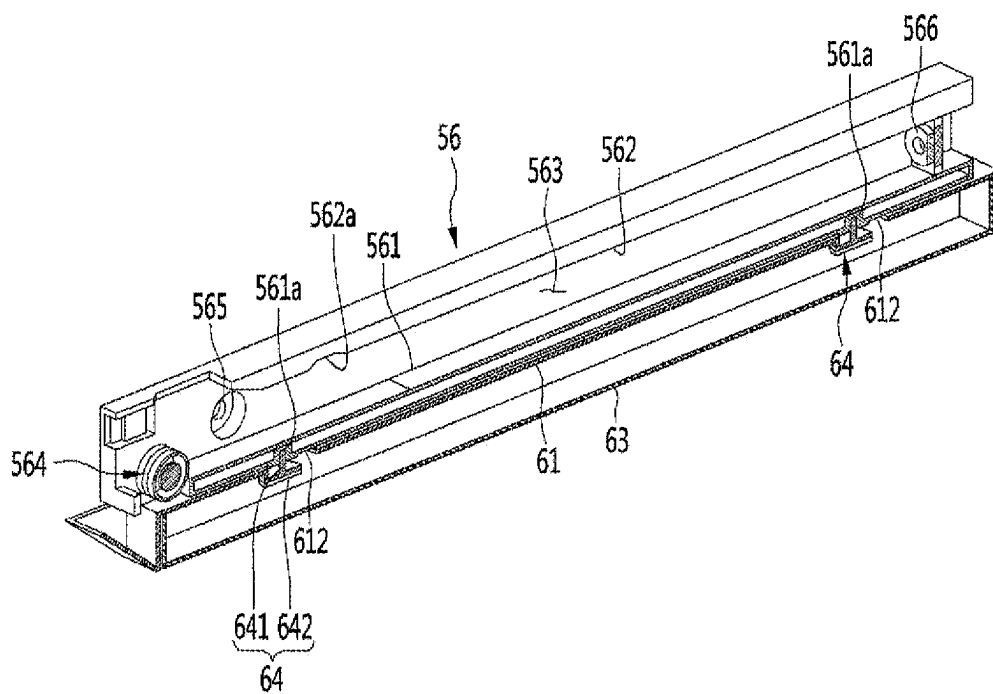


FIG. 30

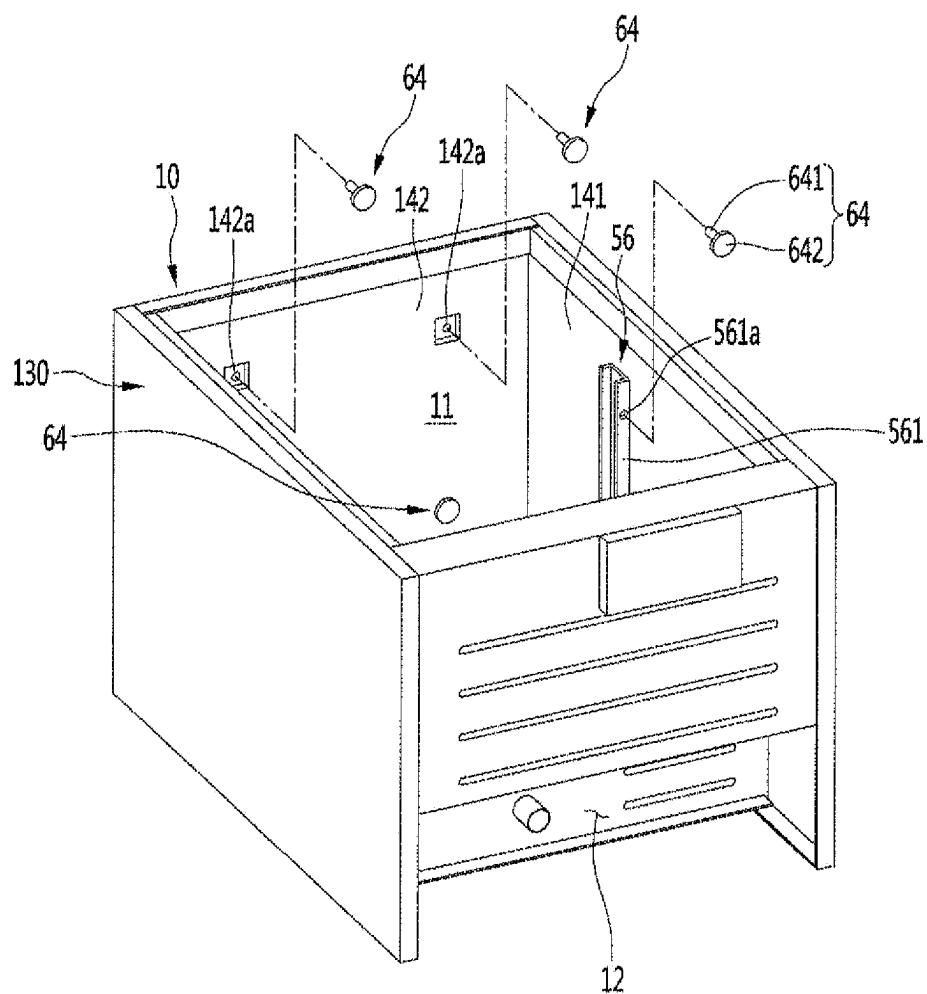


FIG. 31

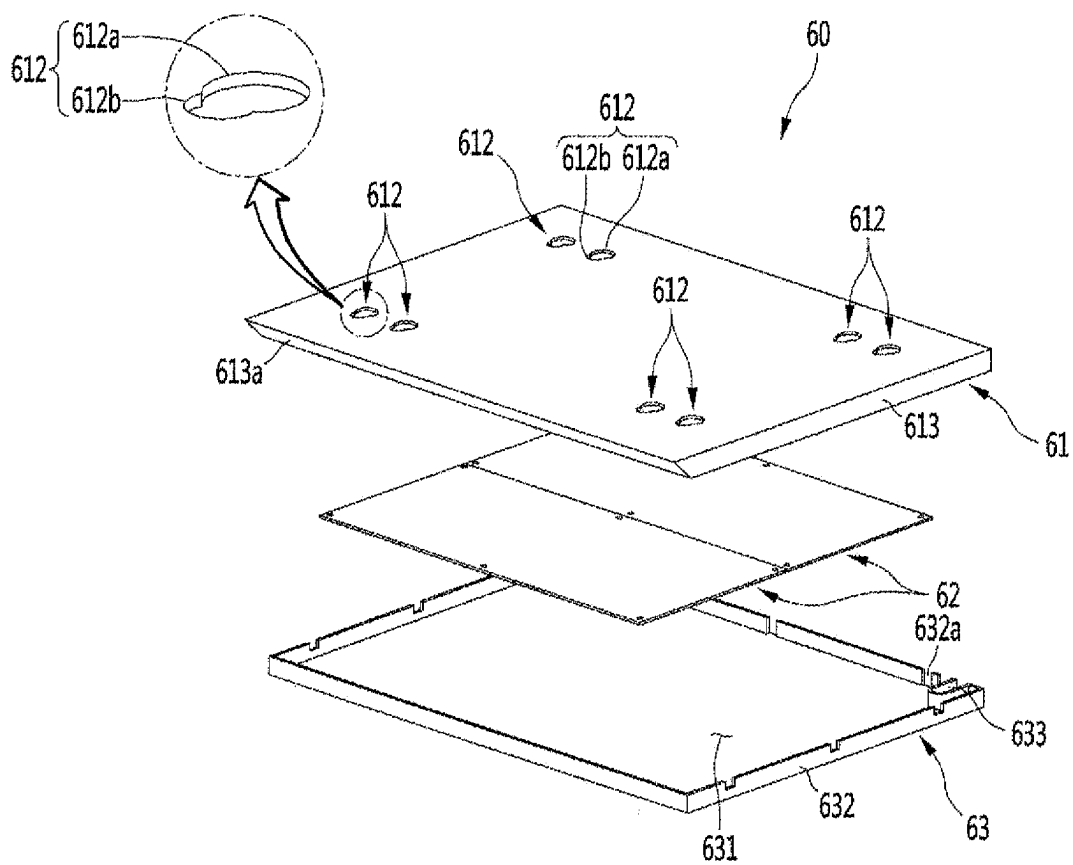


FIG. 32

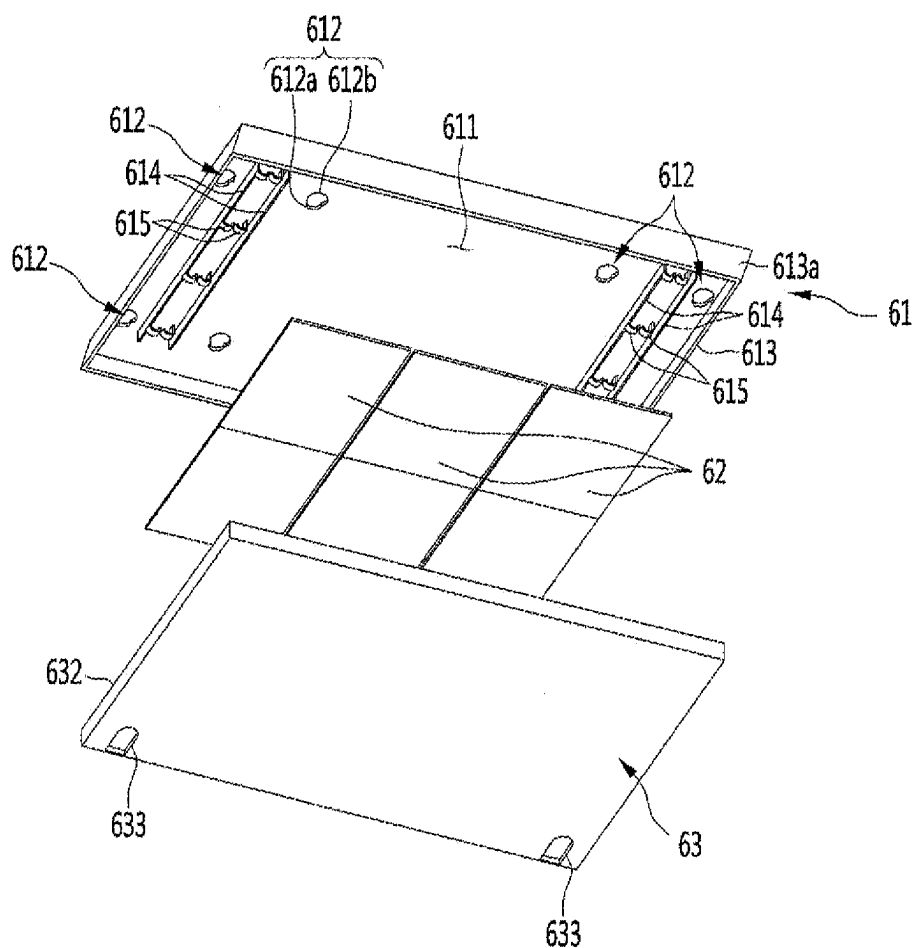


FIG. 33

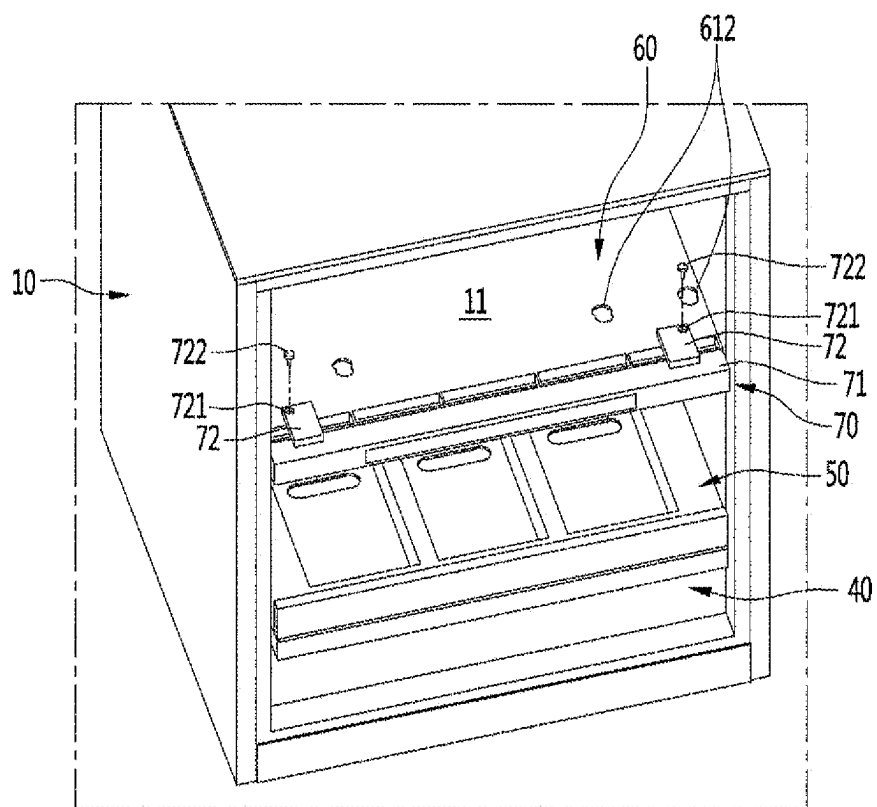


FIG. 34

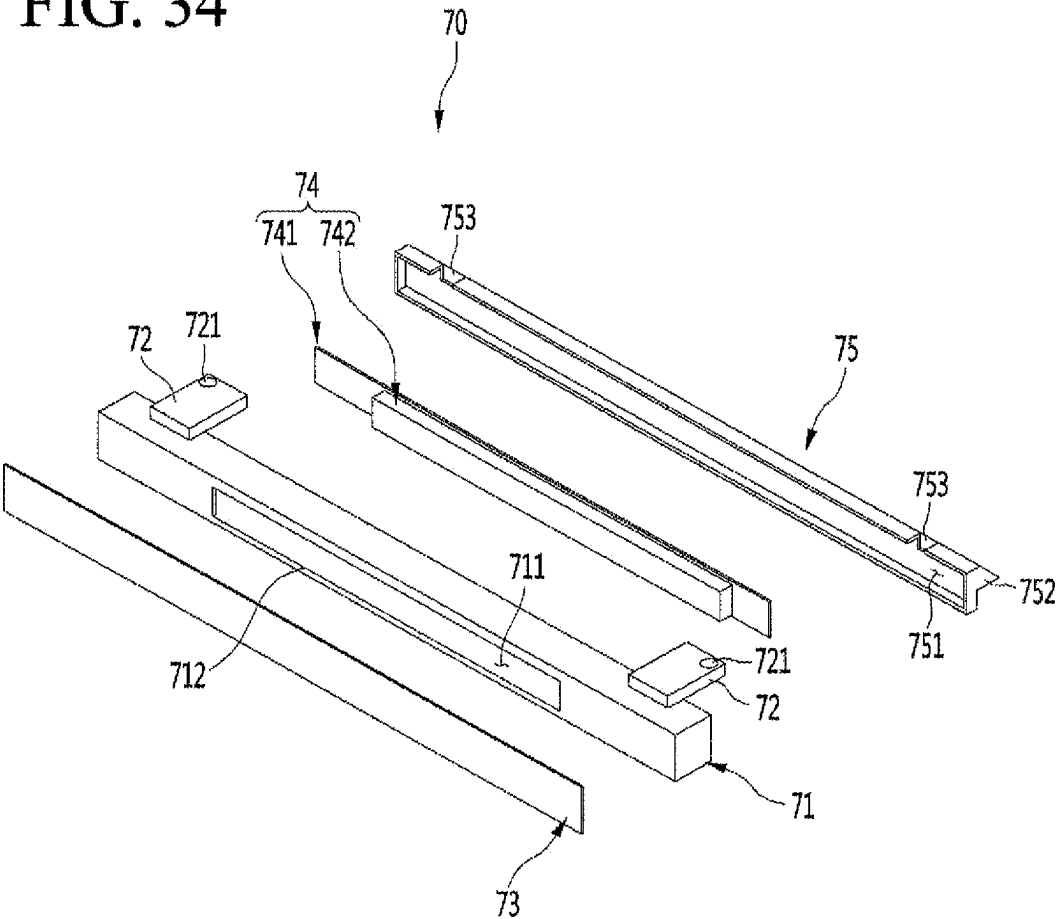


FIG. 35

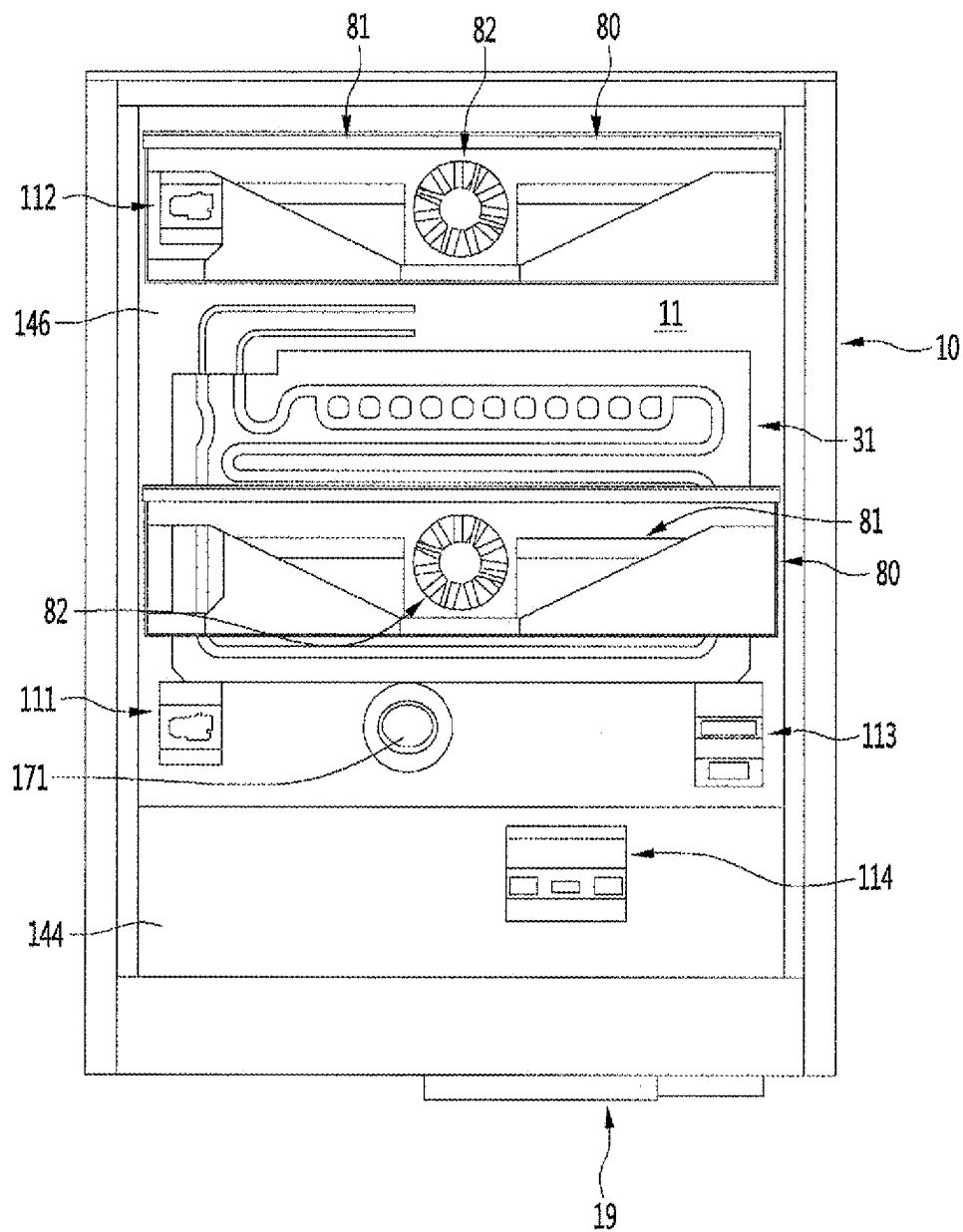


FIG. 36

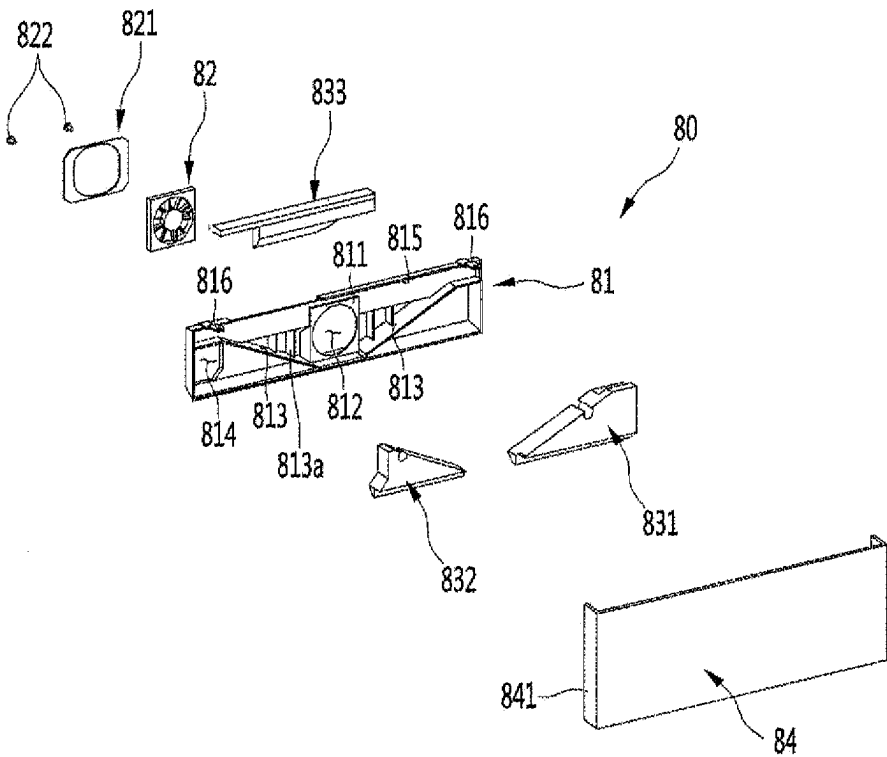


FIG. 37

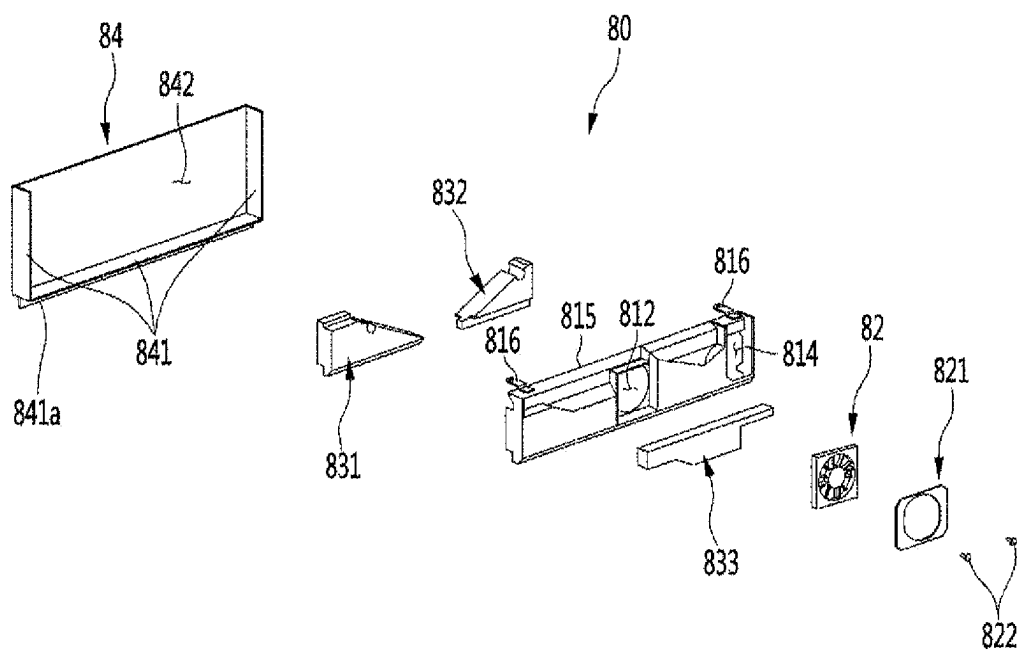


FIG. 38

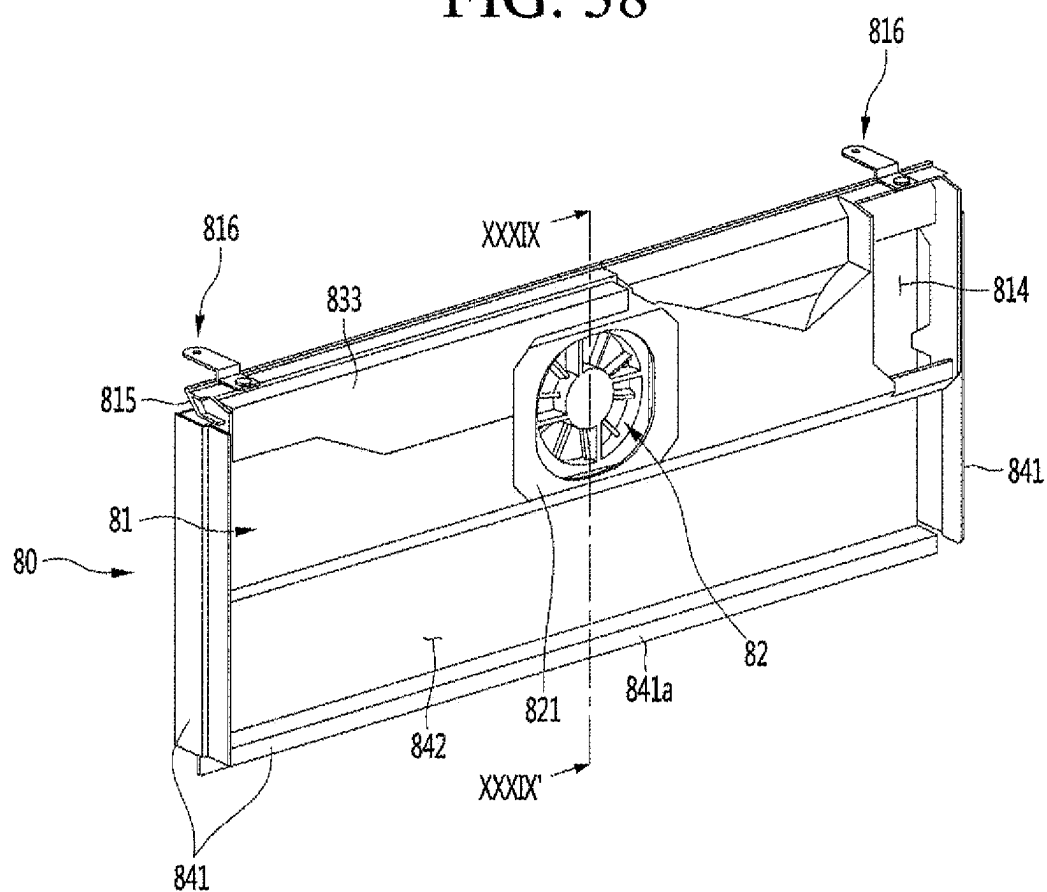


FIG. 39

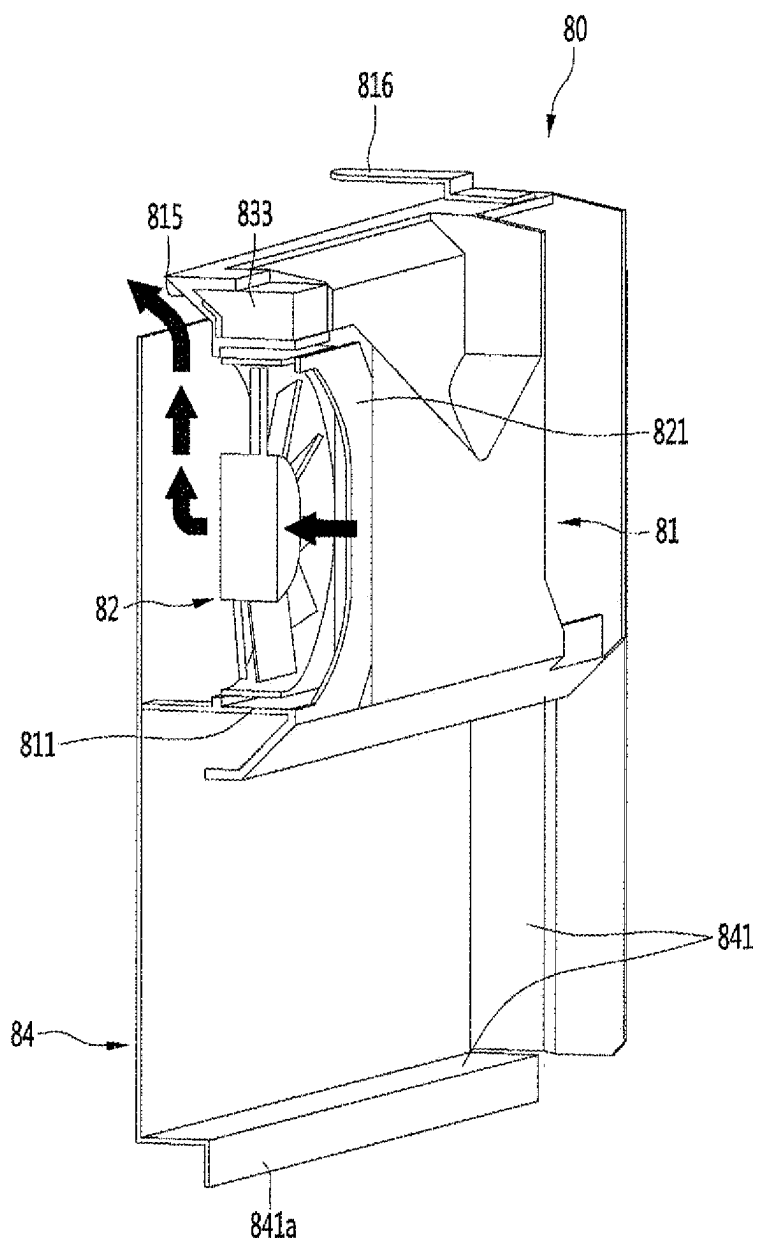


FIG. 40

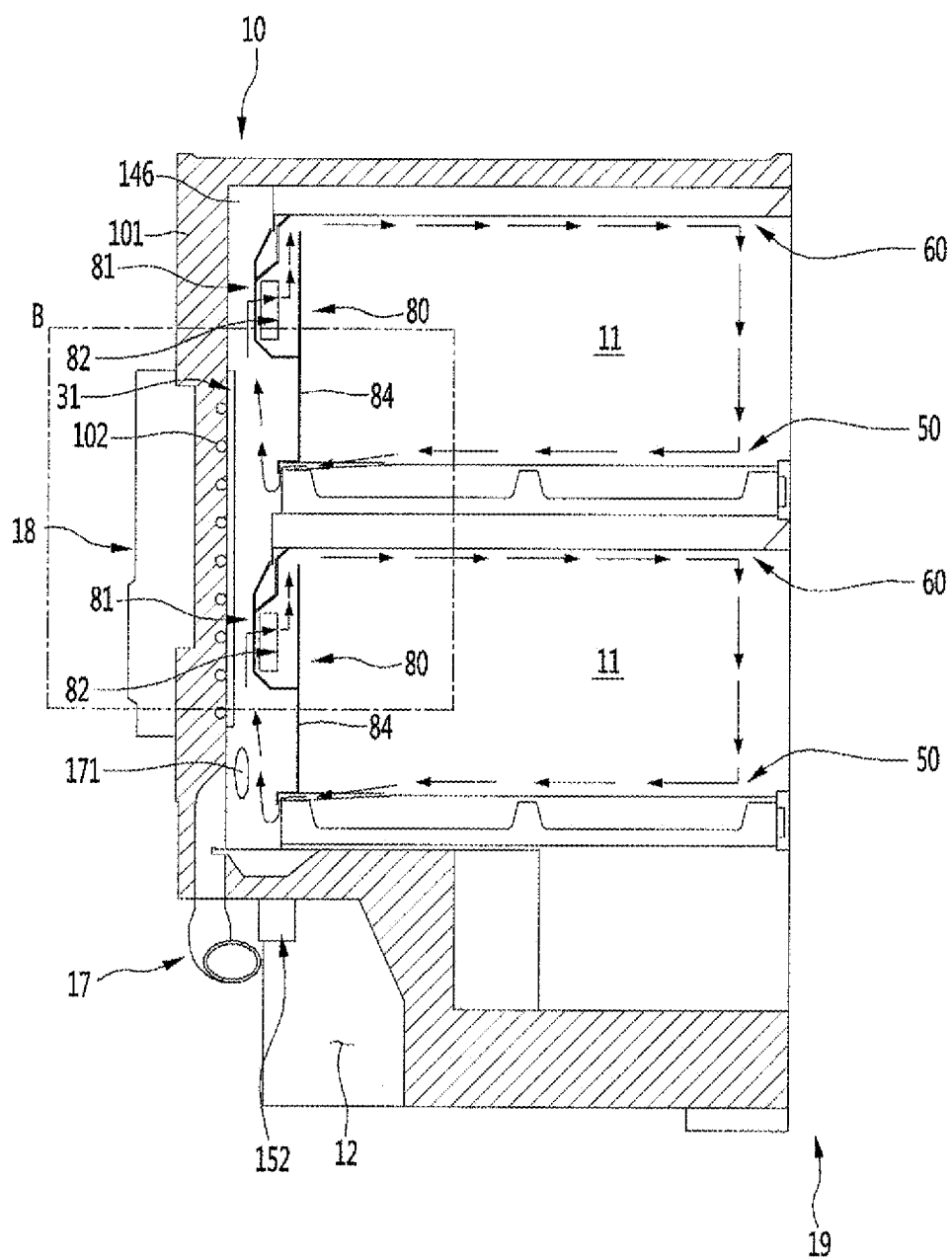


FIG. 41

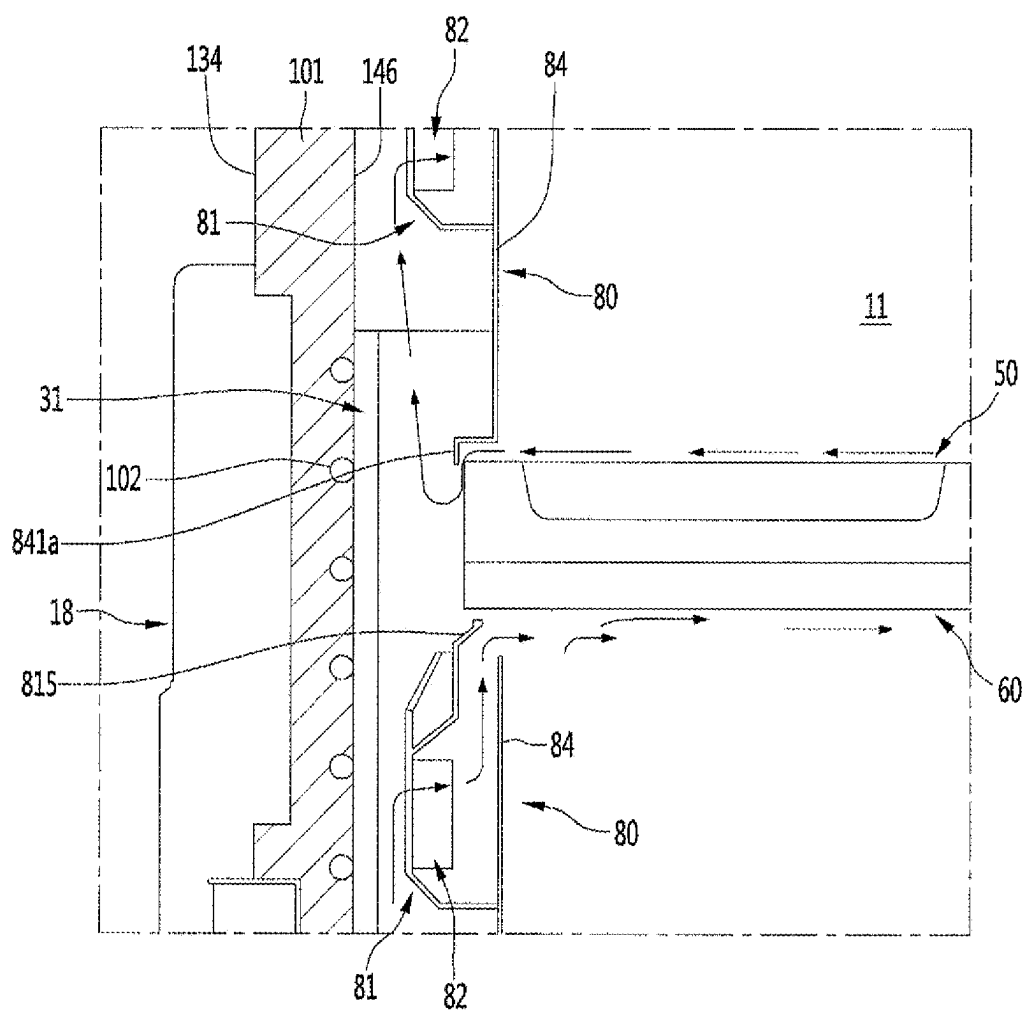


FIG. 42

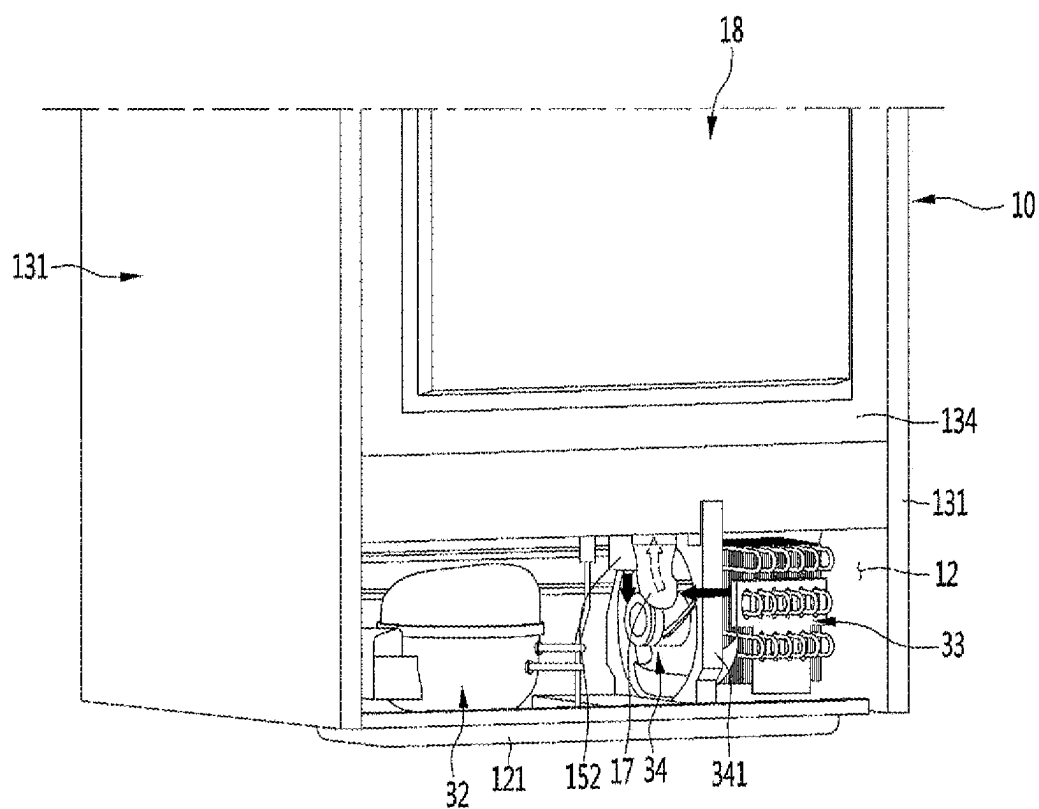


FIG. 43

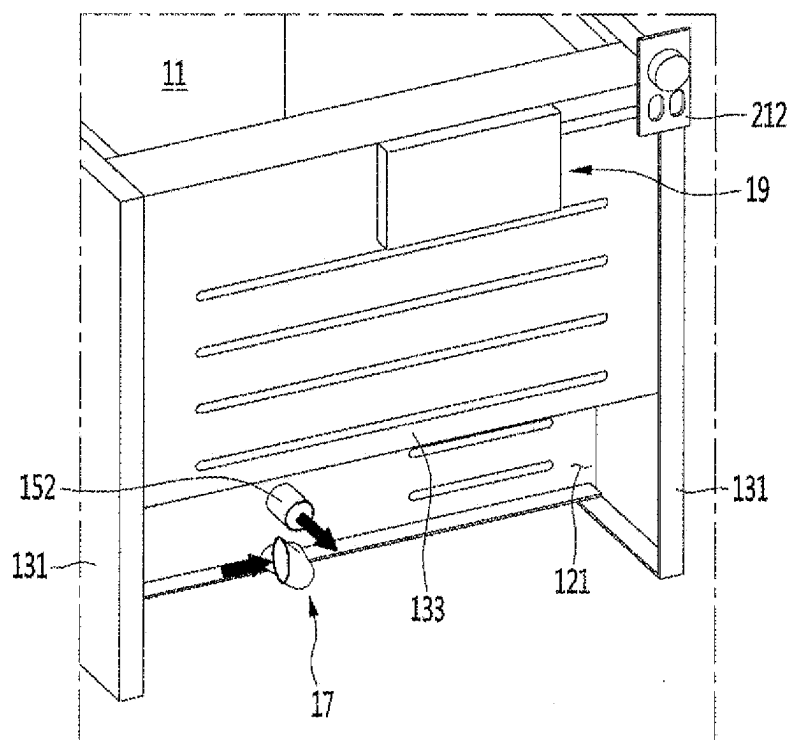


FIG. 44

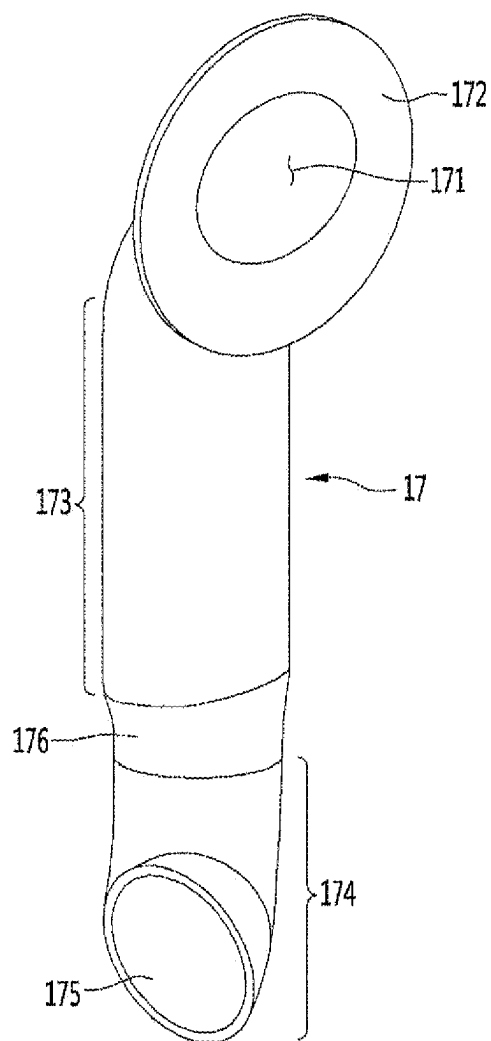


FIG. 45

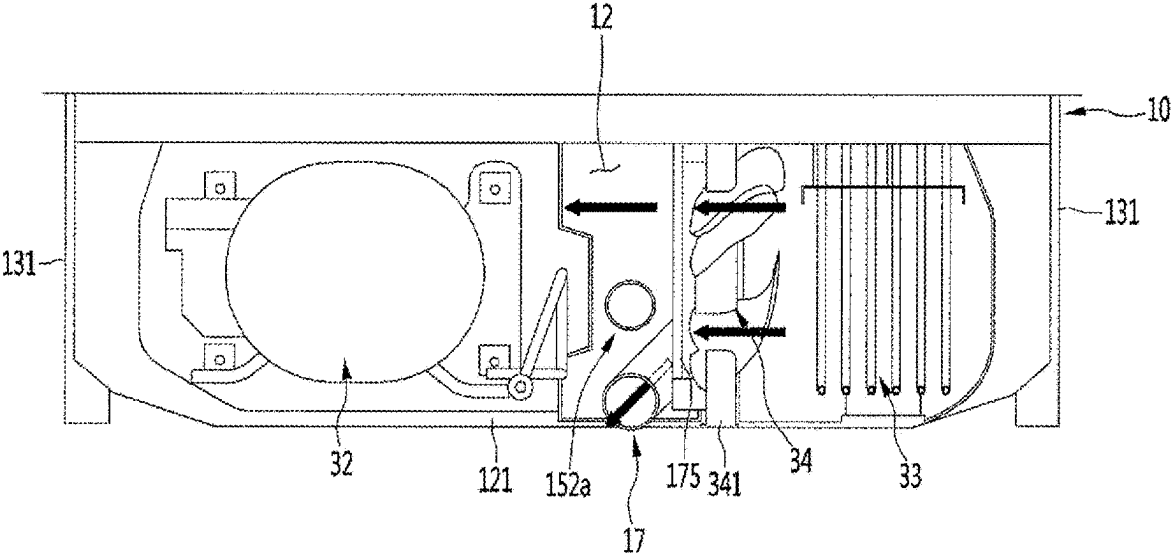


FIG. 46

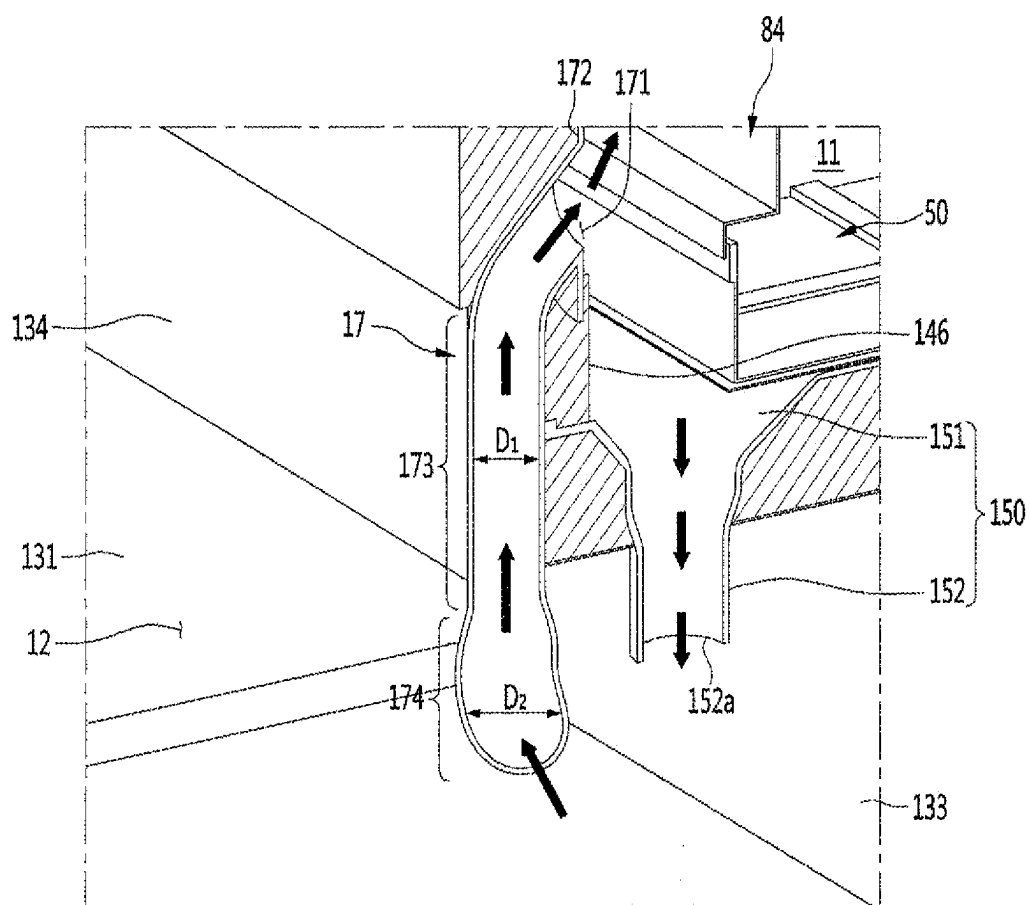


FIG. 47

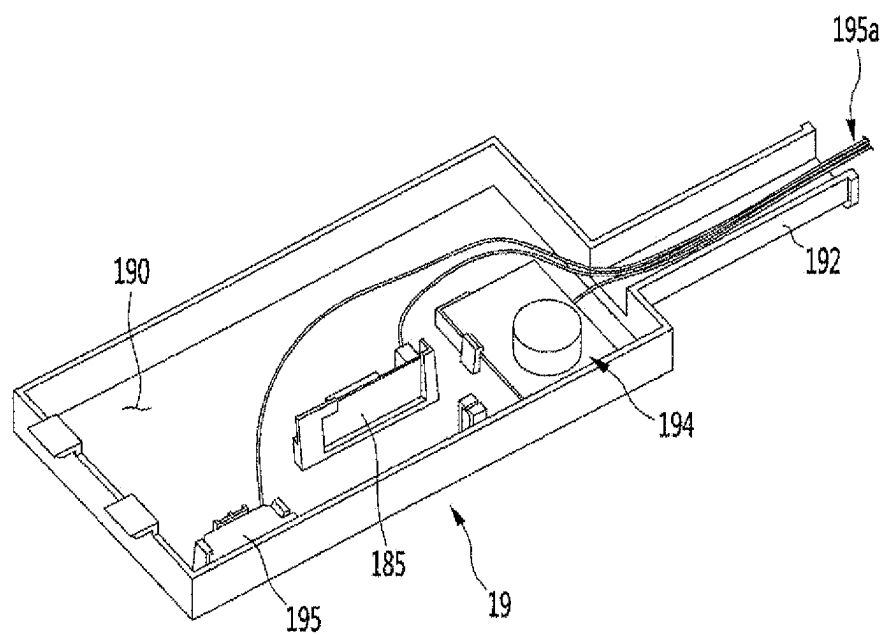


FIG. 48

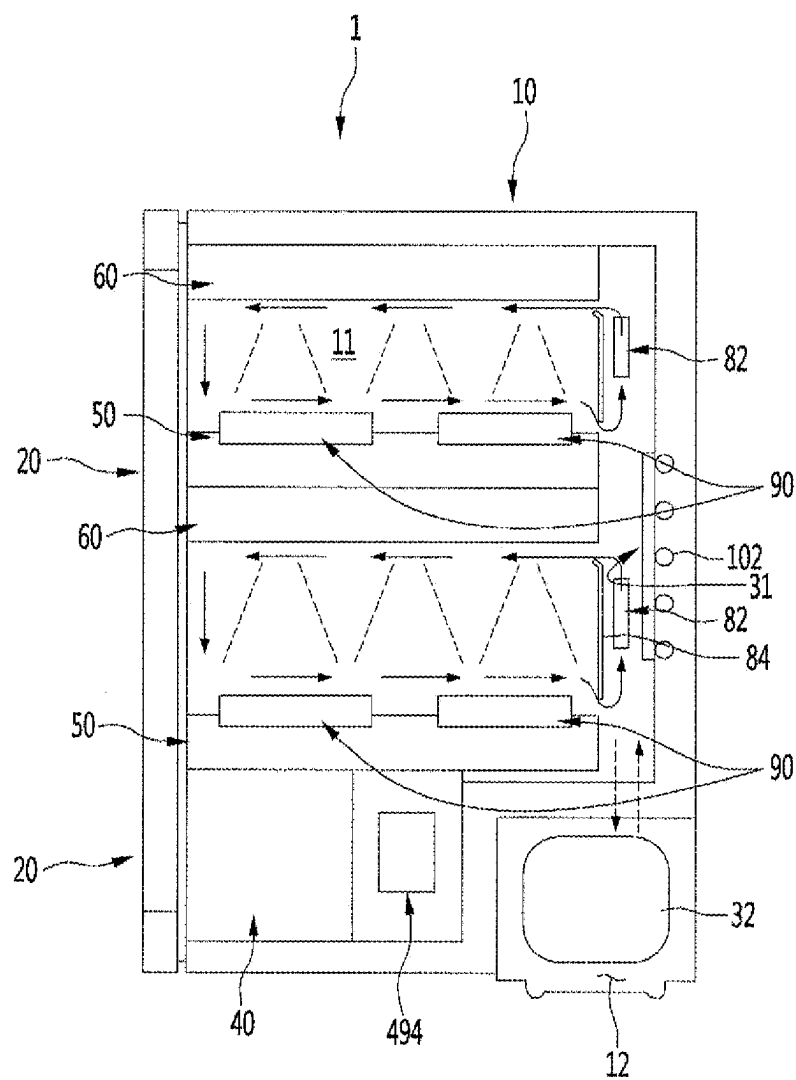
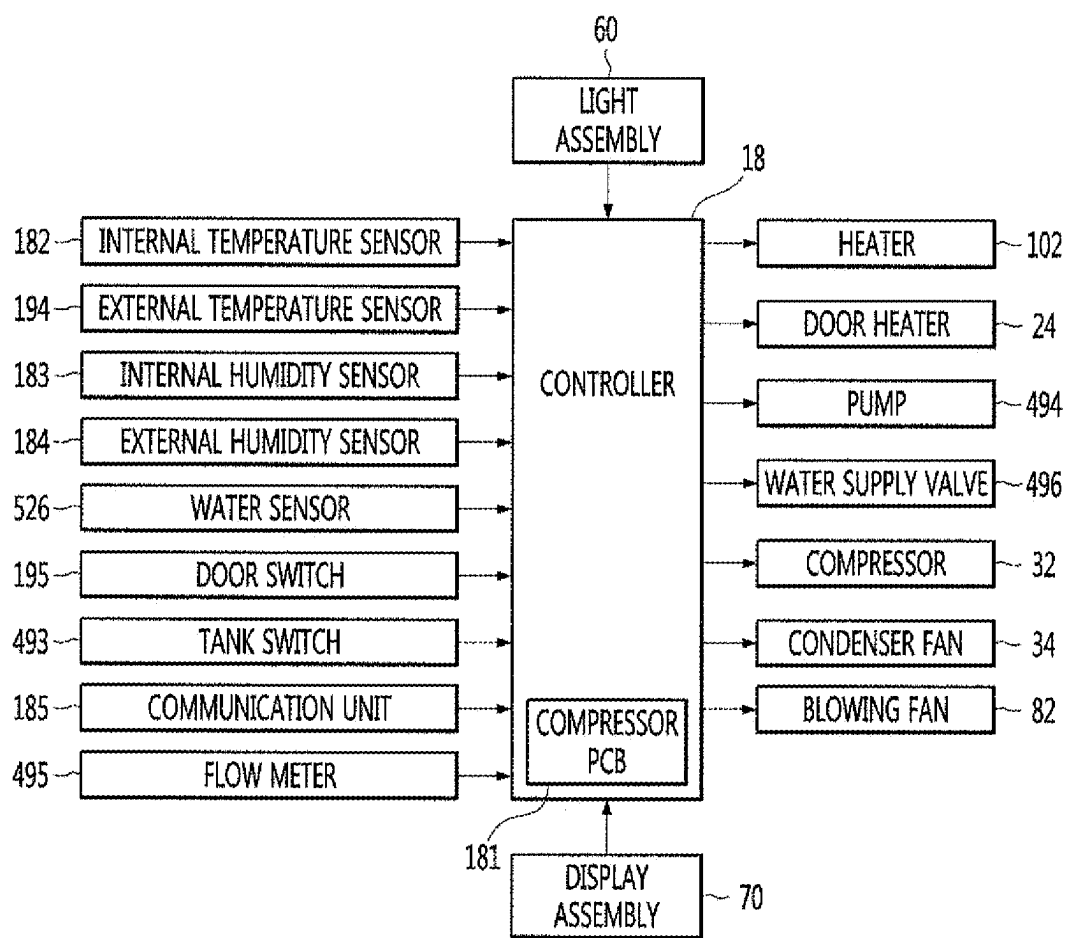
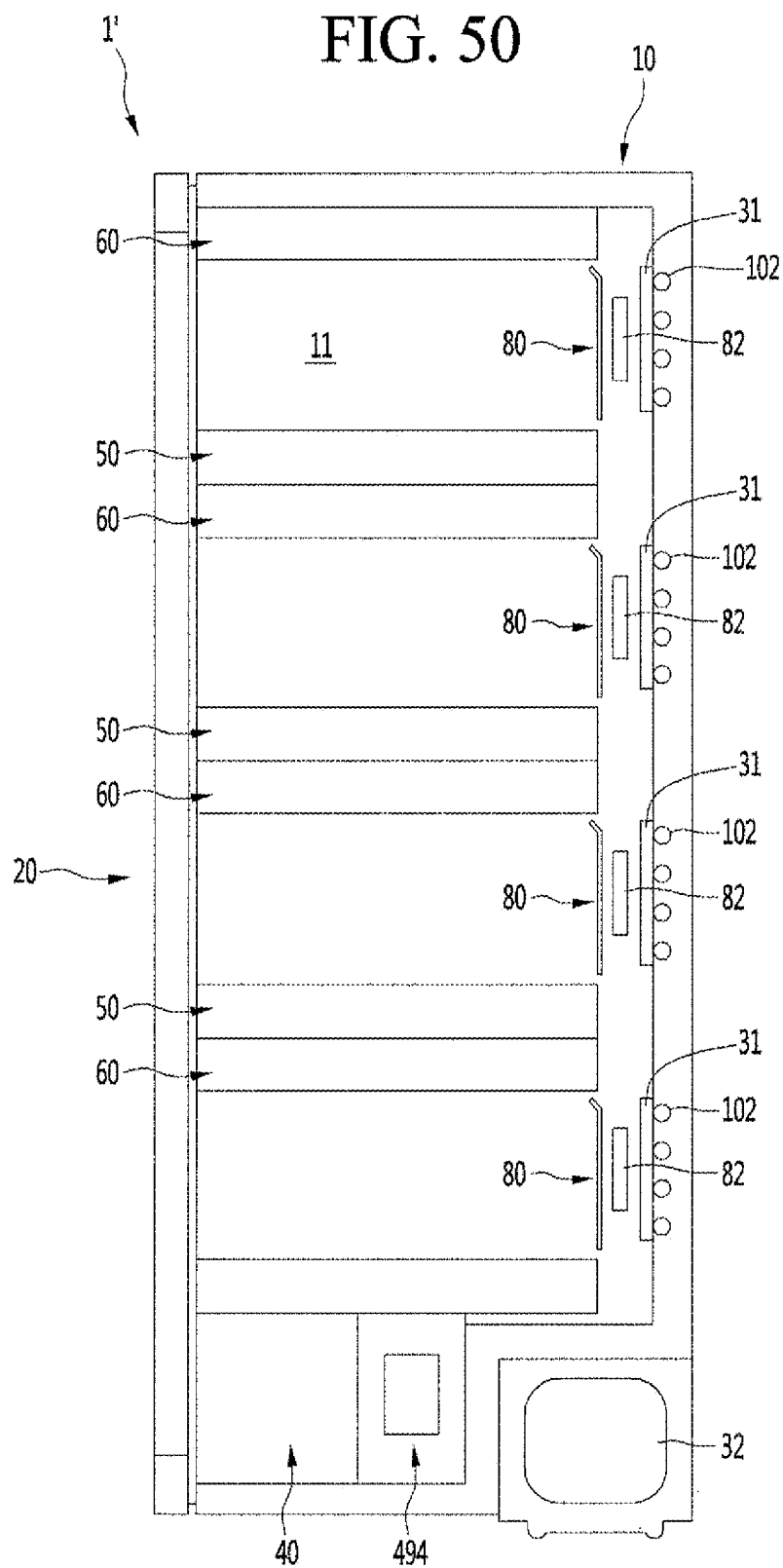


FIG. 49





APPARATUS FOR CULTIVATING PLANTS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

[0001] This application is a Continuation application of prior U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/972,835 filed Oct. 25, 2022, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 16/447,088 filed Jun. 20, 2019, which claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Korean Application No. 10-2019-0018866 filed on Feb. 18, 2019, whose entire disclosures are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Field

[0002] An apparatus for cultivating Eukaryote cells, for example, plants is disclosed herein.

2. Background

[0003] In general, an apparatus for cultivating plants includes a predetermined cultivating chamber having an environment appropriate to grow the plants, and the plants are stored in the predetermined cultivating chamber. The apparatus for cultivating plants has components to supply nutrients and light energy required for plant growth, and the plants are grown by the supplied nutrients and light energy.

[0004] An apparatus for cultivating plants according to the related art is disclosed in Korean Patent Registration No. 10-1240375, which is hereby incorporated by reference. The related art discloses structure in which a multi-stage tray is disposed inside a cabinet, light is irradiated from a light irradiation unit to the tray, a nutrient solution is supplied to the tray through a nutrient solution recovery container, and an inner portion of the cabinet is maintained at a set or predetermined temperature by an air conditioning cycle and an air circulation fan. However, in the related art, there is no configuration for supplying carbon dioxide for photosynthesis of plants, so growth of plants is slow in a closed space.

[0005] A refrigerator type vegetable cultivation system for home use has been disclosed in Korean Patent Application Publication No. 2013-0089393, which is hereby incorporated by reference, in which a shelf on which plants are cultivated is disposed in a body, and which includes a nutrient solution supplier that supplies nutrient solution to the shelf, an LED unit, and a carbon dioxide supplier that supplies carbon dioxide. However, in this structure, a separate device for supplying carbon dioxide is installed. The device for supplying carbon dioxide has a tank structure, so there is a very dangerous problem with respect to safety, such as explosions. Further, as a configuration for separately supplying carbon dioxide and a complicated channel structure are necessarily required, there is a problem in that the structure is complicated and manufacturing costs are increased.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] Embodiments will be described in detail with reference to the following drawings in which like reference numerals refer to like elements and, wherein:

[0007] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0008] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants of FIG. 1, the door of which is open;

[0009] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants of FIG. 1;

[0010] FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view of the cabinet which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0011] FIG. 5 is a longitudinal sectional view of the cabinet according to an embodiment;

[0012] FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view of a water supply assembly which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0013] FIG. 7 is a cut-out perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants having a water tank serving as one component;

[0014] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the water tank, the cover of which is open;

[0015] FIG. 9 is an exploded perspective view of the water tank according to an embodiment;

[0016] FIG. 10 is an enlarged view of portion A of FIG. 8;

[0017] FIG. 11 is a cut-out perspective view of a portion of FIG. 8, taken along line XI-XI;

[0018] FIG. 12 is a cut-out perspective view of a portion of FIG. 8, taken along line XII-XII;

[0019] FIG. 13 is a view illustrating a layout of water supply pipes inside the cabinet according to an embodiment;

[0020] FIG. 14 is a view illustrating that a bottom bed is mounted in FIG. 13;

[0021] FIG. 15 is a perspective view of the bed which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0022] FIG. 16 is an exploded perspective view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the top;

[0023] FIG. 17 is an exploded perspective view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the bottom;

[0024] FIG. 18 is a perspective view of the bottom bed;

[0025] FIG. 19 is an exploded perspective view of a seed package seated on the bed according to an embodiment;

[0026] FIG. 20 is a plan view of a port which is one component of the seed package according to an embodiment;

[0027] FIG. 21 is a cross sectional view illustrating the seed package seated on the bed;

[0028] FIG. 22 is a perspective view illustrating a bed bracket which is one component of the bed according to an embodiment;

[0029] FIG. 23 is a bottom view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the bottom;

[0030] FIG. 24 is a cut-at perspective view of a portion of FIG. 23, taken along line XXIV-XXIV;

[0031] FIG. 25 is a cut-out perspective view illustrating the bottom bed is withdrawn;

[0032] FIG. 26 is a perspective view of an introduction/withdrawal guide for introducing or withdrawing the bed according to an embodiment;

[0033] FIG. 27 is a view illustrating that the bed is introduced;

[0034] FIG. 28 is a view illustrating that the bed is withdrawn;

[0035] FIG. 29 is a sectional view illustrating a state in which a light assembly is mounted on the introduction/withdrawal guide;

[0036] FIG. 30 is a view illustrating a coupling structure of a light mount to mount the light assembly according to an embodiment;

[0037] FIG. 31 is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed above;

[0038] FIG. 32 is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed below;

[0039] FIG. 33 is a view illustrating the state in which a display assembly, which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment, is mounted;

[0040] FIG. 34 is an exploded perspective view of the display assembly of FIG. 33;

[0041] FIG. 35 is a view illustrating a state in which a blower assembly, which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment, is mounted;

[0042] FIG. 36 is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed from the front;

[0043] FIG. 37 is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed from the rear;

[0044] FIG. 38 is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed from the rear;

[0045] FIG. 39 is a cut-out perspective view of portion of FIG. 38, taken along line XXXIX-XXXIX;

[0046] FIG. 40 is a sectional view illustrating an air circulation state in the cabinet;

[0047] FIG. 41 is an enlarged view of portion B in FIG. 40;

[0048] FIG. 42 is a perspective view of a machine compartment of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0049] FIG. 43 is a partial perspective view of the cabinet when viewed from the bottom;

[0050] FIG. 44 is a perspective view of a supply duct which is a component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0051] FIG. 45 is a plan view illustrating an arrangement of a supply duct and a return duct in the machine compartment according to an embodiment;

[0052] FIG. 46 is a view illustrating supply and discharge states of CO₂ through the supply duct and the return duct;

[0053] FIG. 47 is a perspective view illustrating an internal structure of the bottom case, which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0054] FIG. 48 is a block diagram illustrating a flow of a control signal of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment;

[0055] FIG. 49 is a view schematically illustrating an operating state of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment; and

[0056] FIG. 50 is a view illustrating an internal structure of an apparatus for cultivating plants according to another embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0057] Hereinafter, embodiments will be described with reference to accompanying drawings. However, embodiments are not limited to the disclosed embodiments suggesting the spirit. In addition, another embodiment falling within the scope may be easily suggested by adding, modifying, or deleting components.

[0058] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an apparatus for cultivating Eukaryote cells, for example, plants according to an embodiment. FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants of FIG. 1, the door of which is

open. FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants of FIG. 1.

[0059] As illustrated in the drawings, the apparatus 1 for cultivating Eukaryote cells, for example, plants according to an embodiment may have an outer appearance formed by a cabinet 10 having an internal space in which plants may be cultivated and a door 20 to open/close the cabinet 10. The cultivated plants may be plants, such as leaves or herbs that are usually used for wrapping or salad, for example, that a user can eat and easily cultivate, and that do not occupy a lot of space.

[0060] The cabinet 10 may have a front surface which is open and may be provided therein with an interior or cultivating space 11. The cabinet 10 may be insulated. Accordingly, the cultivating space may maintain a set or predetermined temperature.

[0061] A plurality of beds 50 may be vertically arranged inside the cabinet 10. According to one embodiment, two beds 50 may be vertically provided and may be referred to as an upper bed 50 and a lower bed 50, respectively, for convenience of explanation. In addition, at least two beds 50 may be further included depending on a size of the cabinet 10.

[0062] Each bed 50 may have a structure in which a plurality of seed packages 90 having seeds of plants and necessary food is seated. The bed 50 may be referred to as a shelf or a tray. The seed package 90 may include a suitable combination of various types of seeds and food appropriate to the seeds, and may be selected as a product that a user wants to cultivate. In addition, the bed 50 may have structure to seat the seed package 90 and maintain a seated state.

[0063] The bed 50 may have a fluid passage allowing water supplied from a water tank 40 to flow therethrough. The bed 50 may maintain a proper water level to always supply water to the seed package 90.

[0064] An introduction/withdrawal guide 56 may be provided at opposite side surfaces of the cabinet 10. Opposite ends of the bed 50 may be supported by the introduction/withdrawal guide 56 in a state in which the bed 50 is seated on the introduction/withdrawal guide 56. The bed 50 may be introduced/withdrawn into and from the cabinet 10 by the introduction/withdrawal guide 56. The bed 50 may be introduced into or withdrawn from the cultivating space 11. In the state in which the bed 50 is withdrawn, the seed package 90 may be easily seated on the bed 50 and managed.

[0065] The cabinet 10 may have a cooling cycle including a compressor 32, a condenser 33, and an evaporator 31. The internal temperature of the cultivating space 11 may be adjusted through the cooling cycle. In this case, the evaporator 31 may be disposed on an inner rear wall surface of the cabinet, and remaining components, such as the compressor 32 and the condenser 33, may be disposed in a machine compartment 12 provided at a rear lower portion of the cabinet 10. The machine compartment 12 may be separated from the cultivating space 11, thereby preventing noise from being introduced, maintaining insulating of the cultivating space 11, and ensuring safety of a user.

[0066] The evaporator 31 may include a roll-bond type evaporator, which is called a heat exchanger. The evaporator 31 may have a plate structure which is easily attached to an inner rear wall surface of the cabinet 10. In addition, the plate structure of the evaporator 31 may minimize loss of the

cultivating space 11. The evaporator 31 may be close to the cultivating space 11 to effectively adjust the temperature of the cultivating space 11.

[0067] In addition, a blower assembly 80 may be provided in front of the evaporator 31. A plurality of blower assemblies 80 may be provided vertically arranged and having a same structure and shape except for mounting positions thereof. The blower assemblies 80 may be provided in number corresponding to the number of beds 50 and may blow air forward from a rear portion of the beds 50. Accordingly, air circulation may be independently performed in each of internal spaces of the cultivating space 11 partitioned by the beds 50.

[0068] The internal air of the cultivating space 11 may be circulated by the blower assembly 80 and the circulated air may pass through the evaporator 31, so the cultivating space 11 may have a uniform temperature throughout an inner entire portion thereof, and the temperature may be rapidly adjusted. The air circulated by the blower assembly 80 may flow while passing through and along a top surface of the bed 50 and a bottom surface of the light assembly 60.

[0069] The air flowing by the blower assembly 80 may allow the plants grown from the bed 50 to more smoothly breathe and to be properly shaken by passing through the top surface of the bed 50, thereby adjusting stress. Accordingly, the blower assembly 80 may provide air flow optimized to the growth of the plants. In addition, the air flowing by the blower assembly 80 may prevent the light assembly 60 from being overheated by passing through and along the bottom surface of the light assembly 60.

[0070] The light assembly 60 may be provided above the bed 50. The light assembly 60 may irradiate the bed 50 with light to provide light necessary for the plants. An amount of light irradiated from the light assembly 60 may be set to be similar to sunlight. The light assembly 60 may be set with an amount of light and light irradiation time optimized to plant cultivation.

[0071] The water tank 40 may be provided on an inner bottom surface of the cabinet 10. The water tank 40 may store water to be supplied to the bed 50. The water tank 40 may be positioned under a bed 50 positioned at a lowest portion of a plurality of beds 50 and a front surface of the water tank 40 may be positioned at a position corresponding to a front end of the bed 50.

[0072] A widthwise length of the water tank 40 may correspond to a width of the inner space of the cabinet 10. A vertical-direction length of the water tank 40 may be formed to correspond to a distance between the bed 50 positioned at the lowest portion and a 11. In other words, the water tank 40 may occupy a space under the bed 50 positioned at the lowest portion and a space in front of the water tank 40 may be covered by the water tank 40.

[0073] A water supply case 49 may be provided in the space covered by the water tank 40. The water supply case 49 may be provided therein with a pump 494, a flow meter 495, and a water supply valve 496 described hereinafter. The water supply case 49, internal components of the water supply case 49, and pipes linked to components may be referred to as a water supply unit or a water supply assembly.

[0074] The water tank 40 may be mounted inside the cabinet 10 to be introduced or withdrawn in a frontward-backward direction and may have a separable structure. Accordingly, the water tank 40 may have a structure to easily supply water, be cleaned, and maintained.

[0075] A display assembly 70 may be provided at an open first half portion of the cabinet 10. The display assembly 70 may output an operating state of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants to the outside. In addition, the display assembly 70 may include an input unit to receive input by a user such that a whole operation of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants may be set and input. For example, the display assembly 70 may include a touchscreen and may include structure, such as a button, or a switch, for example.

[0076] The display assembly 70 may be positioned on a same front plane as the front end of the bed 50. The display assembly 70 may be positioned at a front end of the open front surface of the cabinet 10. The display assembly 70 may be disposed significantly closely to a rear surface of the door 20, when the door 20 is closed.

[0077] The door 20 may be formed in a size to cover the open front surface of the cabinet 10. An upper hinge 211 and a lower hinge 212 may be shaft-coupled to an upper end and a lower end of one side of opposite left and right or lateral sides of the door 20. The door 20 may be rotatably coupled to the cabinet 10 by the upper hinge 211 and the lower hinge 212 and the cultivating space 11 may be open/closed due to rotation of the door 20.

[0078] The door 20 may have a see-through structure in at least a portion thereof. Even when the door 20 is closed, the cultivating space 11 may be viewed and checked.

[0079] The door 20 may include a door frame 22 to form a circumference of the door 20 with an opening formed at a center thereof, and a door panel 23 to cover the opening of the door frame 22. The door panel 23 may be formed of glass or a transparent plastic material, for example, such that an inner portion of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants is viewable therethrough. The door panel 23 may be colored, color-coated, or deposited with metal, or have a film attached thereto, for example, such that the cultivating space 11 may be selectively viewed or not viewed.

[0080] For example, when the light assembly 60 is turned on in a state in which the door 20 is closed, the inner portion of the cultivating space 11 may be brightened such that the inner portion of the cultivating space 11 is viewed through the door panel 23. In contrast, when the light assembly 60 is turned off in the state in which the door 20 is closed, the inner portion of the cultivating space 11 may be darkened such that the cultivating space 11 is not viewable due to the color or optical characteristic of the door panel 23. Due to the above structure, the inner portion of the cultivating space 11 may be easily recognized even in the state in which the door 20 is closed. Accordingly, a growing state of the plants may be checked. In addition, an interior effect may be exhibited. In addition, when it is unnecessary to view the inner portion of the cultivating space 11, a neat outer appearance may be maintained.

[0081] When the light assembly 60 is turned on, the display assembly 70 may be viewed through the door panel 23. Accordingly, a user may recognize information through the display assembly 70 in the state in which the door 20 is closed. In addition, even if the light assembly 60 is turned off, when the display assembly 70 is turned on to emit light, only the display assembly 70 may be viewed through the door 20.

[0082] A plurality of door panels 23 may be disposed back and forth, and an insulating space may be formed between the plurality of door panels 23. In addition, if necessary, the

door panel **23** may include insulation glass. Accordingly, the inner portion of the cabinet **10** may be insulated from the outside.

[0083] The door frame **22** may be provided at one side of a front surface thereof with a door handle **221** to rotate the door **20**. In addition, the door frame **22** may be provided on a circumference of a rear surface thereof with a gasket **222** to make air tightness between the cabinet **10** and the door **20**. In addition, although not illustrated, the door **20** may have a door heater to prevent dew from being condensed on the surface of the door **20**.

[0084] The bottom surface of the cabinet **10** may be slightly spaced apart from a ground surface on which the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants is installed. The cabinet **10** may be provided on the bottom surface thereof with a bottom case **19**. Electrical components, such as a door switch **195**, an external temperature sensor **194**, an external humidity sensor **184**, and a communication unit **185** described hereinafter, which are disposed outside the cabinet **10**, may be received in the bottom case **19**. The bottom case **19** may be provided on the bottom surface of the cabinet **10** and may be configured not to be exposed to the outside when the door **20** is closed.

[0085] Hereinafter, structure of the cabinet **10** will be described with reference to accompanying drawings.

[0086] FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view illustrating the cabinet which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment. FIG. 5 is a longitudinal sectional view of the cabinet according to an embodiment.

[0087] As illustrated, the cabinet **10** may include an outer case **130** to form an outer appearance thereof and an inner case **140** to form the cultivating space **11**. An insulating material **101** may be interposed between the outer case **130** and the inner case **140** to insulate the inner portion of the cabinet **10** from the outside.

[0088] The outer case **130** may be formed of a metal material, for example, and may include at least one plate to form an outer surface of the cabinet **10**. For example, the outer case **130** may include outer side plates **131** forming left and right or lateral side surfaces, an outer upper plate **132** forming a top surface, an outer rear plate **134** forming a rear surface, and an outer bottom plate **133** forming a bottom surface.

[0089] The outer bottom plate **133** may be bent such that the machine compartment **12** is provided at a corner portion of a rear lower end of the cabinet **10**. Accordingly, the machine compartment **12** including the compressor **32**, the condenser **33**, a condenser fan **34**, or a fan guide **341** may be provided in a space separate from the cultivating space **11**. In addition, the bottom surface of the machine compartment **12** may be formed by a machine compartment base **121**. A rear surface of the machine compartment **12** may be covered by a machine compartment grill (not illustrated).

[0090] A controller **18** may be provided on a rear surface of the cabinet **10**, that is, a rear surface of the outer rear plate **134**. The controller **18** may be configured to control the overall operation of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants. The controller **18** may include a compressor printed circuit board **181** additionally provided to control the compressor **32**.

[0091] The inner case **140** may include a metal material, for example, and may include a plurality of plates defining the inside of the cabinet **10**, that is, the cultivating space **11**.

In this case, at least a portion of the inner case **140** may be formed a plastic material, for example.

[0092] The inner case **140** may be formed of a metal material having excellent thermal conductivity performance similarly to aluminum. The inner case **140** formed of the metal material may have excellent heat transfer performance such that the inner portion of the cultivating space **11** has a more uniform temperature distribution when the cultivating space **11** is heated or cooled. In addition, the inner case **140** may be configured to reflect light irradiated from the light assembly **60**. The light irradiated from the light assembly **60** may be reflected from the surface of the inner case **140** of the metal material and uniformly irradiated to plants in the entire area of the bed **50**, thereby resolving the problem of a shadow area to which the light is not irradiated. To this end, surface treatment, coating, or attachment of a film may be further performed with respect to surfaces of the inner case **140** to improve reflective performance.

[0093] For example, the inner case **140** may include inner side plates **141** forming opposite side surfaces, an inner upper plate **142** forming a top surface, an inner rear plate **146** forming a rear surface, and an outer bottom plate **143, 144, 145** forming a bottom surface. The evaporator **31** may be disposed on a front surface of the inner rear plate **146** and a heater **102** may be disposed on a rear surface of the inner rear plate **146**. Therefore, heating and cooling may be performed in the rear region of the cultivation space.

[0094] The evaporator **31** may be interposed between the inner rear plate **146** and the blower assembly **80** and may be cooled by refrigerant flowing due the driving of the compressor **32**. The cooled air may be circulated in the cultivating space **11** by the blower assembly **80** to uniformly cool the cultivating space **11**.

[0095] The heater **102** may be disposed on the rear surface of the inner rear plate **146** and may be filled with the insulating material **101**. The heater **102** may be disposed in an area corresponding to the evaporator **31**. A humid environment may be created inside the cultivating space **11** due to continuous moisture supply and the breathing of plants. The heater **102** may be disposed on the rear surface of the inner rear plate **146** not to be exposed to the inside of the cultivating space **11**, for safety and durability.

[0096] An area of the inner rear plate **146** may be heated by the driving of the heater **102**. The heated air may be circulated inside the cultivating space **11** by the blower assembly **80** to uniformly heat the cultivating space **11**. As the heater **102** is positioned in an area corresponding to the evaporator **31**, the heater **102** may be operated when the evaporator **31** is frozen and used to defrost the evaporator **31**.

[0097] The inner portion of the cultivating space **11** may be maintained at a temperature appropriate for growing plants (for example, 18° C.-28° C.) by the evaporator **31** and the heater **102**. The internal temperature of the cultivating space **11** may be sensed by an internal temperature sensor **182** and may be uniformly maintained regardless of the external temperature of the cabinet **10**.

[0098] The inner bottom plates **143, 144, and 145** may be formed in a shape corresponding to the shape in which the outer bottom plate **133** is bent, and may be formed with the first bottom plate **143**, the second bottom plate **144**, and the third bottom plate **145** coupled to each other.

[0099] The first bottom plate **143** may have a return duct hole **143a** formed therein for mounting a return duct **150**.

The return duct **150** may communicate with the machine compartment **12** to discharge the internal air of the cultivating space **11** to the machine compartment **12**.

[0100] The return duct **150** may include a duct mount **151** mounted in the return duct hole **143a** and a discharge pipe **152** that extends from a center of the duct mount **151** into the machine compartment **12** through an opening **133a** of the outer bottom plate **133**.

[0101] The duct mount **151** may be inclined toward the discharge pipe **152**. The duct mount **151** may be disposed adjacent to a lower portion of the inner rear plate **146** and a lower portion of the evaporator **31** to discharge water to the machine compartment **12** when dew condenses inside the cultivating space **11**. In this case, the machine compartment **12** may be provided therein with a dry fan (not shown) to collect water discharged through the return duct **150**.

[0102] The machine compartment **12** may communicate with the cultivating space **11** through a supply duct **17**. Accordingly, carbon dioxide (CO₂) required for plant growth may be supplied from the machine compartment **12** to the cultivating space **11**. In addition, the internal air in the cultivating space **11** may be discharged through the return duct **150**. At least one side of the supply duct **17** and the return duct **150** may have a structure capable of opening and closing, and may be opened when carbon dioxide (CO₂) is supplied.

[0103] A decoration member **160** may be provided on the front surface of the cabinet **10**. The decoration member **160** may connect a front end of the inner case **140** to a front end of the outer case **130** to form a front outer appearance of the cabinet **10**. The decoration member **160** may include a decoration frame **161** formed along a circumference of an open front surface of the cabinet **10** and an upper decoration portion **162** and a lower decoration portion **163** forming an upper end and a lower end of the front surface of the cabinet **10**.

[0104] Regarding the arrangement in an inner lower space of the cabinet **10**, as the machine compartment **12** is disposed, a step **147** may be formed to protrude inward from the bottom surface of the cultivating space **11**. In other words, the step **147** may protrude from a rear end portion of the bottom surface of the cultivating space **11**. The step **147** may be formed higher than a first half of the cultivating space **11** as the machine compartment **12** is formed.

[0105] The rear portion of the bed **50** positioned at the lowest portion may be seated on a top surface of the step **147**. The water tank **40** and the water supply case **49** may be arranged in the frontward-rearward direction in a space between the bottom surface of the bed **50** and the front portion of the step **147**. In this case, heights of the water tank **40** and the water supply case **49** may correspond to a height of the step **147**. Therefore, when the bed **50** is seated, a stable mounting structure may be provided such that the bed **50** is in a horizontal state without interfering with not only the step **147**, but the water tank **40** and the water supply case **49** in front of the step **147**.

[0106] The bed **50** may be seated on the step **147** at the bottom surface of the cultivating space **11** and the water tank **40** and the water supply case **49** may be positioned in the space provided between the bottom surface of the cultivating space **11** in front of the step **147** and the bed **50**. A height for disposing the beds **50** in multiple stages may be ensured through the above space structure, and the water tank **40**

having a sufficient capacity and a water supply assembly may be effectively disposed without loss of space.

[0107] A lower structure of the cabinet **10** will be described again with reference to FIG. 5. The machine compartment **12** may be separated from the cultivating space **11** and the step **147** formed inside the cultivating space **11**. The cabinet **10** may have the lower structure in which the water tank **40** and the water supply case **49** are subsequently disposed in front of the step **147**. Accordingly, the machine compartment **12**, the water tank **40**, and the water supply assembly may be disposed and fully filled in the space under the bed **50** positioned at the lowest portion, thereby preventing loss of the cultivating space **11**. In addition, the water tank **40** may be disposed adjacent to the open front surface of the cabinet **10** to facilitate access by the user.

[0108] The water tank **40** may be disposed inside the cabinet **10** such that the water tank **40** may be introduced or withdrawn by sliding for water supply and service. In addition, as the water supply case **49** may be maintained in a fixed state inside the cabinet **10**, a connection pipe **492** provided in the water case **49** and a suction pipe **412** provided inside the water tank **40** may be selectively connected to or disconnected from each other.

[0109] Hereinafter, structure of the water supply assembly will be described with reference to drawings.

[0110] FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective of a water supply assembly which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment. FIG. 7 is a cut-out perspective view of the apparatus for cultivating plants having the water tank serving as one component.

[0111] As illustrated in the drawings, the water supply case **49** may be formed in the shape of a box having an open rear surface. In addition, an inner space **490** of the water supply case **49** may be provided to receive the connection pipe **492**, the pump **494**, the flow meter **495**, and the water supply valve **496** therein.

[0112] A height of the water supply case **49** may be formed higher than or slightly lower than the height of the step **147** in a state in which the water supply case **49** is mounted inside the cultivating space **11**. In addition, the open rear surface of the water supply case **49** may be covered by the front surface of the step **147**.

[0113] The water supply case **49** may include at a first side of a front surface thereof a case hole **491** that communicates with the connection pipe **492**. The case hole **491** may be formed at a position corresponding to an inlet of the connection pipe **492**. In addition, when the water tank **40** is mounted, the suction pipe **412** may be connected with the connection pipe **492** through the case hole **491**.

[0114] A tank switch **493** may be mounted on the first side of the front surface of the water supply case **49**. The tank switch **493** may protrude toward the water tank **40**. As illustrated in FIG. 7, when the water tank **40** is mounted, the tank switch **493** may be configured to be pressed by a rear surface of the water tank **40**.

[0115] Accordingly, the tank switch **493** may sense whether the water tank **40** is normally mounted to supply water and may transmit the sensed result to the controller **18**. When the mounting signal of the water tank **40** is not input by the tank switch **493**, the pump **494** may not be operated. In addition, information on the water tank **40**, which is not mounted, may be displayed on the display assembly **70** such that the user recognizes the information on the water tank **40**.

[0116] A bracket 497 may be provided inside the water supply case 49. The bracket 497 may allow the mounting of the pump 494, the flow meter 495, and the water supply valve 496.

[0117] The connection pipe 492 may be sequentially connected to the pump 494, the flow meter 495, and the water supply valve 496 through a pipe. The water in the water tank 40 may be supplied to the bed 50 through the flow meter 495 and the water supply valve 496, due to operation of the pump 494.

[0118] The flow meter 495 may sense a flow rate of water to be supplied, and prevent water from being excessively supplied to the bed 50 to overflow. A constant amount of water may be supplied by the flow meter 495 to adjust an amount of water to be supplied to the bed 50. Accordingly, an optimized amount of water may be supplied to the bed 50 according to a growing step of plants to prevent water from being excessively stored in the bed 50. Accordingly, the bed 50 may be always maintained in a clean state and humidity in the bed 50 and the cultivating space 11 may be properly maintained.

[0119] The water supply valve 496 may be opened when the pump 494 is driven such that water may be supplied to the bed 50. A plurality of water supply valves 496 may be provided depending on the number of beds 50, or water may be supplied to a plurality of beds 50 through a branch from one water supply valve 496.

[0120] According to one embodiment, one water supply valve 496 may be branched into an upper fitting 496a and a lower fitting 496b, and an upper water supply pipe 498 and a lower water supply pipe 497 may be connected to the upper fitting 496a and the lower fitting 496b, respectively, to supply water independently to the beds 50 (upper bed 50 and lower bed 50) at upper and lower positions. Accordingly, mutually different water supply environments may be provided to the beds 50 at the upper and lower positions, and an appropriate amount of water may be supplied to the beds 50, respectively.

[0121] The water tank 40 may be disposed in front of the water supply case 49, and the tank switch 493 may be pressed in a state in which the water tank 40 is completely introduced. A top surface of the water tank 40 and a top surface of the water supply case 49 may have heights equal to or slightly lower than the top surface of the step 147.

[0122] Accordingly, when viewed from the front, a lower area of the lower bed 50 may be completely covered by the water tank 40. In addition, the lower bed 50 and the top surface of the water tank 40 may be positioned significantly close to each other. Accordingly, a volume of the water tank 40 may be ensured and the water tank 40 and the lower bed 50 may produce a sense of unity. That is, as the front surface of the water tank 40 may be positioned on the same plane as the front surface of the lower bed 50, and may be vertically disposed adjacent to each other, the water tank 40 and the lower bed 50 may produce a sense of unity.

[0123] Hereinafter, structure of the water tank 40 will be described with reference to accompanying drawings.

[0124] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the water tank, the cover of which is open. In addition, FIG. 9 is an exploded perspective view of the water tank according to an embodiment.

[0125] The water tank 40 may include a tank body 41 having a top surface open to receive water and a tank cover 42 to open and close the top surface of the tank body 41. The

tank cover 42 may be pivotably coupled to the tank body 41 and the tank body 41 may be opened or closed by the pivoting of the tank cover 42. A cover engaging groove 426 and a cover engaging protrusion 413 may be formed at an upper end of the tank body 41 and a first end of the tank cover 41.

[0126] At least a portion of the tank cover 42 may be transparent such that an inner portion 410 of the tank cover 42 may be viewed even when the tank cover 42 is closed. The tank cover 42 may include a cover frame 422 having an opening at a center thereof and a cover plate 421 to cover the opening from a top surface of the cover frame 422. The cover plate 421 may be transparent such that a water level inside the tank body 41 may be viewed.

[0127] The cover engaging groove 426 may be formed in the first end of the cover frame 422, and a restricting protrusion 427 may be further formed on an opposite second side to the cover engaging groove 426 to maintain the tank cover 42 to be closed. When the tank cover 42 is closed, the restricting protrusion 427 may be inserted into a restricting groove (not shown), which is formed in the upper end of the tank body 41, to be restricted.

[0128] A gasket groove 424 formed of rubber or silicon, for example, may be formed along a circumference of a bottom surface of the cover frame 422. A cover gasket 423 may be mounted in the gasket groove 424. The cover gasket 423 may contact the upper end of the tank body 41 in a state in which the tank cover 42 is closed so that the water tank 40 is airtight.

[0129] The cover gasket 423 may be formed along the circumference of the cover frame 422. The cover gasket 423 may include a gasket mount 423a inserted and fixed in the gasket groove 424 and an airtightness portion 423b extending downward from one side of the gasket mount 423a. The airtightness portion 423b may be inserted into the open top surface of the tank body 41 and may closely contact an inner surface of the tank body 41 to completely seal the inner portion of the tank body 41 with air tightness.

[0130] A frame rib 425 may be further formed on a bottom surface of the cover frame 422 to press the airtightness portion 423b. The frame rib 425 may extend downward from the bottom surface of the cover frame 422 corresponding to the airtightness portion 423b and may contact an upper end of the airtightness portion 423b. Accordingly, in a state in which the tank cover 42 is closed, the frame rib 425 may press the airtightness portion 423b to maintain the airtightness portion 423b in close contact with the tank body 41.

[0131] The suction pipe 412 may be provided inside the tank body 41. The suction pipe 412 may be provided at a position corresponding to the connection pipe 492 and may extend to the inner portion 410 of the tank body 41 by passing through a rear surface of the tank body 41.

[0132] The suction pipe 412 may include a horizontal portion 412a and a vertical portion 412b. One end of the horizontal portion 412a may extend rearward through the rear surface of the tank body 41, that is, the surface facing a front surface of the water supply case 49. The horizontal portion 412a may be formed in a size to be press-fitted into the connection pipe 492.

[0133] The vertical portion 412b may be positioned inside the tank body 41 and may extend vertically downward from an end of the horizontal portion 412a passing through the rear surface of the tank body 41. The vertical portion 412b may extend to a position adjacent to the bottom surface of

the tank body 41. Therefore, the water contained inside of the tank body 41 may flow into the connection pipe 492 through the vertical portion 412b and the horizontal portion 412a.

[0134] A tank handle 411 may be provided to protrude forward from an upper end of the front surface of the tank body 41. The tank handle 411 may extend from a first lateral end portion of the tank body 41 to a second lateral end portion of the tank body 41, and have a bottom surface open such that a user may insert his or her hand into the bottom surface to pull out or push in the water tank 40, thereby withdrawing or introducing the water tank 40. A front surface of the tank handle 411 may be positioned on a same plane as the front surface of the bed 50 and may be formed of a material the same as or similar to a material of the bed 50 such that the tank handle 411 and the bed 50 produce a sense of unity.

[0135] A tank fixing portion 415 may be formed at a lower end of the rear surface of the tank body 41. A pair of tank fixing portions 415 may be provided at lateral sides, and the tank fixing portion 415 may be configured to be coupled to a protrusion provided on one side of the inner portion of the cabinet 10 when the water tank 40 is completely introduced.

[0136] The tank fixing portion 415 may include a pair of ribs rearwardly extending, a distance between end portions of the ribs may be slightly narrower than a distance between protrusions, and a distance between intermediate portions of the ribs may have a size corresponding to the protrusions. When the water tank 40 is completely introduced, an entrance of the tank fixing portion 415 may be elastically deformed while expanding. The protrusion may be press-fitted into the recessed intermediate portion of the tank fixing portion 415. When the water tank 40 is completely introduced as described above, the press-fitting of the protrusion into the tank fixing portion 415 may be recognized through a sound or press-fitting feeling.

[0137] Therefore, a connection state of the suction pipe 412 and the connection pipe 492, which is not viewed when the water tank 40 is introduced as the water tank 40 is disposed at a rear portion, may be recognized through coupling of the tank fixing portion 415. In addition, the water tank 40 may be maintained in an exact and firm introduction state by the tank fixing portion 415.

[0138] Rail mounts 414 may be formed at lower end portions of lateral side surfaces of the tank body 41. The rail mount 414 may extend from a front end portion to a rear end portion of the tank body 41 and provide a space 414a for mounting a tank rail 43 to withdraw or introduce the water tank 40.

[0139] The rail mount 414 may be open downward. Accordingly, the tank body 41 may have a structure of being seated from an upper portion to a lower portion of the tank rails 43 disposed at opposite sides of the tank body 41 and may be coupled to the tank rails 43.

[0140] The tank rail 43, which has a rail structure for multi-stage withdrawal and introduction, may have a compact structure. The tank rail 43 may include an upper rail 431, a lower rail 432, and a middle rail 433 connecting the upper rail 431 and the lower rail 432. The upper rail 431 may be inserted into the rail mount 414 and fixed to the rail mount 414. Rail brackets 434, which are provided at the lower rail 432, may be fixedly mounted on opposite sidewalls of the cultivating space 11. The middle rail 433 may be slidably coupled to the upper rail 431 and the lower rail 432 to

connect the upper rail 431 to the lower rail 432. Accordingly, when a user holds the tank handle 411 and pulls forward or pushes the water tank 40, the tank rail 43 may slide to withdraw or introduce the water tank 40. Thus, the tank body 41 may be configured to be easily mounted and separated from the tank rail 43 without additional tools or assembling or disassembling coupling members for cleaning or managing the tank body 41.

[0141] FIG. 10 is an enlarged view of portion A of FIG. 8. FIG. 11 is a cut-out perspective view of a portion of FIG. 8, taken along line XI-XI. FIG. 12 is a cut-out perspective view of a portion of FIG. 8, taken along line XII-XII.

[0142] As illustrated in the drawings, the tank rail 43 may be inserted into the rail mount 414. A rear end portion of the rail mount 414 may be inserted into a rail restricting portion 435 protruding from a top surface of the upper rail 431 such that the rear end portion of the tank body 41 may be fixed to the tank rail 43.

[0143] The rail restricting portion 435 may be formed by cutting out a portion of the upper rail 431. In addition, when the rear end portion of the rail mount 414 is moved back and inserted as upper and front portions are bent, a second half of the tank rail 43 and the rail mount 414 may be restricted with respect to each other.

[0144] The tank rail 43 may be provided at a front end portion thereof with a rail locker 44 to restrict a front end portion of the tank rail 43 in the rail mount 414 and a locker fixing member 45 to mount the rail locker 44. The rail locker 44 may be coupled to the tank rail 43 and selectively coupled to or decoupled from the tank body 41 through handling of the user. Accordingly, the user may couple or decouple the tank body 41 to or from the tank rail 43 through the handling of the rail locker 44.

[0145] The lock fixing member 45 may be inserted and mounted into the open front end portion of the upper rail 431. In addition, a screw 453 passing through a screw hole 436 formed in a top surface of the upper rail 431 may be coupled to the locker fixing member 45 such that the locking fixing member 45 is fixed into the upper rail 431.

[0146] The locker fixing member 45 may include a plurality of coupling grooves 452 for coupling the screw 453. A pair of screws 453 may not only couple the locker fixing member 45, but couple the rail locker 44 to the top surface of the upper rail 431.

[0147] As illustrated in FIG. 12, the screw 453 at a rear portion may pass through the screw hole 436 at the rear portion to be coupled to the coupling groove 452 formed in the rear portion of the locker fixing member 45, thereby coupling the upper rail 431 with the locker fixing member 45. In addition, the screw 453 at a front portion may pass through the rail locker 44 and the screw hole 436 at the front portion of the upper rail 431 and then be coupled to the coupling groove 452 formed in the front portion of the locker fixing member 45, thereby maintaining a coupling state of the rail rocker 44, the upper rail 431, and the locker fixing member 45.

[0148] The rail locker 44, which extends forward from the top surface of the upper rail 431, may extend forward beyond the front end portion of the upper rail 431. In addition, a locker restricting portion 442 may protrude from the bottom surface of the rail locker 44 at the front portion of the upper rail 431. The locker restricting portion 442 may extend downward and protrude toward the front surface of the locker fixing member 45.

[0149] The front end portion of the locker fixing member 45 may be exposed through the open front surface of the upper rail 431. In addition, a locker restricting groove 454 may be formed in the front surface of the locker fixing member 45, and the locker restricting portion 442 may be selectively inserted into the locker restricting groove 454 to fix the rail locker 44.

[0150] A locker restricting protrusion 443 may be formed to protrude in a sideways direction from a side portion of the locker restricting portion 442. In addition, the locker restricting protrusion 443 may be inserted into a mount opening 414b open in a side surface of the rail mount 414. In other words, in a state in which the locker restricting protrusion 443 is inserted into the mount opening 414b, a front end portion of the tank rail 43, that is, the front end portion of the upper rail 431 may be fixed inside of the rail mount 414. As described above, the rear end portion and the front end portion of the tank rail 43 may be restricted by the rail mount 414 and fixed. In particular, in the state in which the locker restricting protrusion 443 is inserted into the mount opening 414b, the locker restricting portion 442 is locked and restricted by the locker restricting groove 454, so the tank rail 43 may be prevented from being easily separated from the rail mount 414.

[0151] The rail locker 44 may be formed of a plastic material, for example, and may be formed with predetermined elasticity. In addition, the locker restricting protrusion 443 may be formed at an upper portion thereof with an inclined surface 443a. Accordingly, when the user lifts the rail locker 44, the locker restricting protrusion 443 may be out of the mount opening 414b by the inclined surface 443a, and the tank rail 43 may be separated from the rail mount 414. In such a state, when the tank body 41 is drawn forward, the rear portion of the tank rail 43 may be separated from the tank body 41.

[0152] As described above, as the water tank 40 is separated from the tank rail 43, cleaning and service are possible and management is more easily performed. In addition, the tank rail 43 may be coupled to the rail mount 414 again, and the water tank 40 may be introduced or withdrawn in the state in which the tank rail 43 is coupled to the rail mount 414.

[0153] The water in the water tank 40 may be supplied to the bed 50 through the pump 494 and the water supply valve 496.

[0154] FIG. 13 is a view illustrating a layout of water supply pipes inside the cabinet according to an embodiment. FIG. 14 is a view illustrating that a bottom bed is mounted in FIG. 13.

[0155] As illustrated in FIG. 14, the upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be connected to the water supply valve 496 to supply water to the upper bed 50 and the lower bed 50, respectively. The upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be provided independently from each other and may extend toward the rear end portion of the bed 50, thereby supplying water necessary for the growth of plants.

[0156] End portions of the upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be connected to the water supply valve 496 provided in the water supply case 49. The water supply valve 496 may include the upper fitting 496a and the lower fitting 496b independently configured. The upper water supply pipe 498 may be connected to the

upper fitting 496a, and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be connected to the lower fitting 496b.

[0157] To ensure the space of the water tank 10 and facilitate the fluid passage arrangement, the connection pipe 492, the pump 494, the flow meter 495, and the water supply valve 496 may be subsequently arranged in a widthwise direction. The water supply valve 496 may be positioned at an outermost portion of the water supply case 49, and the upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be arranged to pass through sidewall surfaces of the water supply case 49.

[0158] A water supply pipe guide 103 may be formed on an inner sidewall surface of the cabinet 10 adjacent to the water supply valve 496. The water supply pipe guide 103 may be formed as one sidewall of opposite lateral sidewalls of the storage space, that is, the inner side plate 141 is recessed or open.

[0159] The water supply pipe guide 103 may extend upward from one side adjacent to the water supply valve 496 and then may extend rearward along the upper end portion of the step 147. Accordingly, the upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 connected to the water supply valve 496 may be guided to a rear wall surface of the cultivating space 11, that is, a position of the inner rear plate 146 along a sidewall of the cultivating space 11.

[0160] In order to mount the lower bed 50, the introduction/withdrawal guides 56, which may be mounted on opposite side surfaces of the cultivating space 11, may be configured to cover a section, which is the water supply pipe guide 103, extending in the frontward-rearward direction. Therefore, in the state in which the lower bed 50 is mounted, the water supply pipe guide 103 is not exposed to the outside, thereby making a more neat outer appearance.

[0161] The upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be positioned in corner areas of the rear and side surfaces of the cultivating space 11. That is, the upper water supply pipe 498 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may be bent upward in a corner area in which the inner rear plate 146 and the inner side plate 141 are adjacent to each other and may extend. The upper water supply pipe 498 may extend to a water supply portion 524 of the upper bed 50 and the lower water supply pipe 497 may extend to a water supply portion 524 of the lower bed 50, thereby supplying water to the upper bed 50 and the lower bed 50.

[0162] The water supply pipes 497 and 498 are guided along the inner portion of the cultivating space 11 and easily placed. The water supply pipes 497 and 498 extend upward along an edge area of the cultivating space 11 to minimize interference between internal components.

[0163] As the water supply pipes 497 and 498 are disposed at a position apart from a side of the evaporator 31 so as not to interfere with the evaporator 31 mounted on the front surface of the inner rear plate 146, water flowing along the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may be prevented from being frozen or excessively lowered in temperature due to the cooled air of the evaporator 31. In addition, the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may have structures of being prevented from interfering with the internal component of the cabinet 10, such as the evaporator 31, and of facilitating placement work.

[0164] The water supply pipes 497 and 498 may be formed of a metal pipe, such as stainless steel, for example. Therefore, the water supply pipe 497 and 498 may be sanitarially managed and may be maintained firmly in shape,

thereby preventing the fluid passage from being deformed or bent and clogged. Accordingly, a reliable water supply is possible.

[0165] The water supply pipes 497 and 498 may extend upward through the water supply portion 524 and then be bent toward the water supply portion 524. The outlets of the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may be formed to be directed toward an inside of the water supply portion 524 from an upper portion adjacent to the water supply portion 524.

[0166] A water supply pipe holder 48 may be provided at a position corresponding to the water supply portion 524. The water supply pipe holder 48 may be formed of a plastic or rubber material, for example, and may be fixedly mounted on the inner rear plate 146. Water supply pipe holders 48 may fix the water supply pipes 497 and 498 such that outlets of the water supply pipes 497 and 498 are always directed toward the inside of the water supply portion 524 at a set or predetermined height thereof.

[0167] The water supply pipe holder 48 may be formed in a semicircular shape, and may include a rounded portion 481 allowing the water supply pipes 497 and 498 to pass therethrough along a rounded circumference of the water supply pipe holder 48. The rounded portion 481 may correspond to a bended shape of the water supply pipes 497 and 498, and a rear surface of the rounded portion 481 may be formed in an open or recessed shape to receive the bent portions of the water supply pipes 497 and 498. The outlets of the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may extend further downward through the rounded portion 481 to be closer to the water supply portion 524.

[0168] A holder fixing hole 482 may be formed at a center of the water supply pipe holder 48 to receive, for example, a screw. The screw may pass through the holder fixing hole 482 and may be fastened to the inner rear plate 146 such that the water supply pipe holder 48 may be maintained in a fixed state at a preset or predetermined position.

[0169] The water supply pipes 497 and 498 and the water supply pipe holder 48 may be covered when the blower assembly 80 is mounted on the inner rear plate 146, and may not be exposed to the outside when the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants is generally used.

[0170] The upper bed 50 and the lower bed 50 have the same water supplying structure except for vertical positions thereof. Water supplied to the water supply portion 524 may be stored in a water collecting portion 523 inside the bed 50 to provide moisture to the seed package 90 mounted on the bed 50.

[0171] Hereinafter, structure of bed 50 will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. Although a plurality of beds 50 is provided, the beds 50 may have the same structure except for mounting positions thereof. Accordingly, the following description will be made with respect to only one bed 50.

[0172] FIG. 15 is a perspective view illustrating the bed which is one component of the apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment. FIG. 16 is an exploded perspective view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the top. FIG. 17 is an exploded perspective view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the bottom. FIG. 18 is a perspective view of the bottom bed.

[0173] As illustrated in the drawings, the bed 50 may be formed in a rectangular plate shape dividing the cabinet 10, and may be seated on guides 56 for withdrawal and intro-

duction, which may be mounted on opposite side surfaces of the cabinet 10, such that the beds 50 are withdrawn or introduced.

[0174] The bed 50 may include a bottom bed 52 to form a lower structure for totally supplying water. The bottom bed 52 may form a whole shape of the bed 50 and may be formed of a plastic material, for example.

[0175] The bottom bed 52 may include bed flanges 522 that extend at a side portion from opposite side end portions of the bottom bed 52. A bed side 53 may be coupled to a bottom surface of the bed flange 522.

[0176] The bottom bed 52 may include a recess 521, and an upper bed 51 may be seated in the recess 521. The recess 521 may be provided in a shape corresponding to the shape of the upper bed 51. In other words, the recess 521 may be formed at a position corresponding to a package seat 511 formed in the upper bed 51, and may be recessed in the shape corresponding to the package seat 511 such that the package seat 511 is stacked up the recess 521.

[0177] In addition, the bottom bed 52 may include the water supply portion 524 and the water collecting portion 523 to store water supplied through the water supply portion 524. The water stored in the water collecting portion 523 may be constantly supplied to the seed package 90.

[0178] The water collecting portion 523, which is positioned at the center of the bottom bed 52, may extend from a left or first side end portion of the bottom bed 52 to a right or second side end portion of the bottom bed 52. In addition, the water collecting portion 523 may be recessed to a position lower than the recess 521 such that water may be stored only in the water collecting portion 523. The water collecting portion 523 may be formed to have a predetermined width in the frontward-rearward direction such that all seat openings 512 formed in the upper bed 51 are received in the water collecting portion 523.

[0179] The water supply portion 524 may be formed at a corner of a rear end portion of the bottom bed 52. The water supply portion 524 may have a shape of protruding slightly rearward from the bottom bed 52, an open top surface, and be recessed. Accordingly, the water supply portion 524 may receive water from the water supply pipes 497 and 498 positioned above. In addition, the water supply portion 524 may be positioned higher than the water collecting portion 523 such that the water naturally flows from the water supply portion 524 to the water collecting portion 523.

[0180] A water guide 525 may be recessed and formed between the water supply portion 524 and the water collecting portion 523. The water supply portion 524 may be connected with the water collecting portion 523 by the water guide 525. The water supplied to the water supply portion 524 may flow to the water collecting portion 523 along the water guide 525. The water guide 525 may have a slope that declines toward the water collecting portion 523 from the water supply portion 524. Accordingly, when water is supplied to the water supply portion 524, the water may be naturally supplied to the water collecting portion 523 along the water guide 525.

[0181] The water collecting portion 523 may include a water sensor 526 to sense a water level. Accordingly, when it is necessary to supply water to the plants being cultivated, the water level of the water collecting portion 523 or the existence of moisture may be identified through the water sensor 526 and then whether the water is supplied from the water tank 40 to the bed 50 may be determined.

[0182] A pair of water sensors 526 may be provided, for example, and may be spaced apart from each other. The water sensor 526 may be disposed at opposite sides of the water collecting portion 523 to facilitate sensing of moisture and placement of a wire 544 for supplying power to the water sensor 526.

[0183] Sensor mounts 527 may be formed to be recessed to mount the water sensors 526 at front end portions of lateral sides of the recess 521 formed at the center of the bottom bed 52. The sensor mounts 527 may be recessed in a same shape as a shape of the water sensor 526 and may longitudinally extend in a vertical direction. In addition, the sensor mount 527 may include in an upper end thereof a slot 527a through which the water sensor 526 may pass.

[0184] The water sensor 526 may be formed of a metal material having conductivity, for example, and may be formed in a bent plate shape such that the water sensor 526 may be mounted in the sensor mount 527 through the slot 527a. A vertically extending portion 526a, which extends in the vertical direction, in the water sensor 526 may have a lower end extending to a bottom surface of the water collecting portion 523. The water sensor 526 may be configured such that a rear end portion of a horizontally extending portion 526b horizontally extending to the bottom bed 52 is exposed to the bottom surface of the bottom bed 52 through the slot 527a. The horizontally extending portion 526b exposed to the bottom surface of the bottom bed 52 may be fixed and mounted to the bottom bed 52 by, for example, a screw.

[0185] Power may be supplied to a pair of water sensors 526. When water is present in the water collecting portion 523, electricity may be conducted between the pair of water sensors 526. In addition, when water is absent in the water collecting portion 523, electricity is not conducted between the pair of water sensors 526. In this case, the pump 494 may be driven to supply water to the water collecting portion 523. In other words, the pair of water sensors 526 may serve as electrodes inside the water collecting portion 523, and whether to supply water from the water tank 10 may be determined depending on conduction of electricity between the pair of water sensors 526.

[0186] The guides 56, which may be seated on lateral sides of the bottom bed 52, may include the bed sides 53 to guide the withdrawal and the introduction of the bed 50. The bed sides 53 may have a structure of being coupled to opposite end portions of the bottom bed 52 after separately being molded. Alternatively, the bed sides 53 may be formed integrally with the bottom bed 52 when the bottom bed 52 is molded.

[0187] A bed handle 520 may be formed on a front surface of the bottom bed 52. The bed handle 520 may have a structure in which a bottom surface thereof is recessed such that the user holds the bed 50 when the bed 50 is introduced or withdrawn. In addition, a front surface of the bed handle 520 may be formed of the same material as a material of the tank handle 411 or of a material having a same texture as the material of the tank handle 411 such that the bed handle 520 and the tank handle 411 produce a sense of unity.

[0188] The upper bed 51 may be seated on a top surface of the bottom bed 52 and may form an outer appearance of the top surface of the bed 50. The upper bed 51 may be formed of a metal pipe such as a stainless steel pipe, for example, to form a neat outer appearance and to be sanitarily managed.

[0189] The upper bed 51 may be formed in a size to cover the recess 521 of the bottom bed 52 and may be formed in a plate shape. In addition, a plurality of package seats 511 may be formed in the upper bed 51 to seat the seed package 920. The package seats 511 may be formed in a shape corresponding to a shape of the seed package 920, and a plurality of package seats 511 may be subsequently disposed. Accordingly, a plurality of seed packages 90 may be disposed in the upper bed 51.

[0190] A plurality of package seats 511 may be disposed at each of a first half and a second half of the center, and may be formed in equal size. In addition, a seat opening 512 may be formed in the package seat 511. The seat opening 512 allows a portion of the seed package 90 to pass through the seat opening and to make contact with water collected in the bottom bed 52.

[0191] At least one seat opening 512 may be formed in each package seat 511. One or more seat openings 512 may be formed depending on the structure of the seed package 90. In addition, the seat opening 512 may be positioned in an area corresponding to the water collecting portion 523. When the upper bed 51 is seated in the bottom bed 52, the seat opening 512 may be positioned on the water collecting portion 523 such that the water stored in the water collecting portion 523 may be supplied to the seed package 90 through the seat opening 512.

[0192] According to an embodiment, the water collecting portion 523 may be provided to extend in a widthwise direction at the center of the bottom bed 52. Accordingly, the seat openings 512 may be formed to be positioned closely to the center of the upper bed 51 such that the seat openings 512 are positioned at an upper portion corresponding to an inner portion of the water collecting portion 523. The seat openings 512 may be variously positioned depending on an arrangement and shape of the water collecting portion 523.

[0193] A bed bracket 54 may be provided on the bottom surface of the bottom bed 52. The bed bracket 54 may be positioned at a center of the second half of the bottom bed 52. The bed bracket 54 may be positioned to cover the water sensor 526 exposed to the bottom surface of the bottom bed 52 at a lower portion. In addition, the bed bracket 54 may be fixedly mounted on the bottom cover 55.

[0194] The bottom cover 55 may be formed in a plate shape, and may be bent to have a bottom surface and a rear surface to cover the second half of the bottom bed 52 from below. In addition, the bed bracket 54 may be mounted on the bottom case 19.

[0195] The bottom cover 55 may be fixedly mounted on the inner case 140. Accordingly, the bottom cover 55 may be maintained in a fixed state even when the bed 50 is withdrawn or introduced. In addition, when the bottom bed 52 is introduced, it is possible to supply power to the water sensor 526. In contrast, when the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn, it is impossible to supply power to the water sensor 526.

[0196] FIG. 19 is an exploded perspective view of a seed package seated on the bed according to an embodiment. FIG. 20 is a plan view of a port which is one component of the seed package according to an embodiment. FIG. 21 is a cross sectional view illustrating the seed package seated on the bed.

[0197] As illustrated in the drawings, the seed package 90 seated on the upper bed 51 may include a medium 93 having a seed and a nutrient solution provided in a port 91 having a shape corresponding to the package seat 511. The seed

package 90 may be configured to include a nutrient solution suitable for the plant being cultivated.

[0198] The seed package 90 may be configured according to types of plants that may be cultivated by the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants. In this case, the seed packages 90 having various types of plants have a same size and may have a size set to be received in the package seat 511. Accordingly, the user may select the seed package 90 of the plant to be cultivated and may seat the seed package 90 at a desired position on the bed 50 to start cultivating the plant.

[0199] The port 91 of the seed package 90, which is a container to form a space 911 receiving the seed and the medium, has an open top surface and has a size and shape corresponding to a size and shape of the package seat 511. In addition, a port protrusion 912 may be formed on a bottom surface of the port 91 to have a shape corresponding to the seat opening 512. The port protrusion 912 may pass through the seat opening 512 when the seed package 90 is seated in the package seat 511.

[0200] In addition, the port protrusion 912 may extend to the position in which a lower end of the port protrusion 912 makes contact with or is adjacent to the bottom surface of the water collecting portion 523. In addition, a water inlet 913 may be formed in the bottom surface of the port protrusion 912. An absorption sheet 92 may be provided inside the port protrusion 912 to absorb water. The absorption sheet 92 may be formed of various materials, such as non-woven fabric, felt, or sponge, for example, to absorb water.

[0201] Accordingly, as illustrated in FIG. 21, in a state in which the seed package 90 is seated in the package seat 511, the port protrusion 912 is positioned inside the water collecting portion 523 having water. In addition, the water in the water collecting portion 523 may be introduced through the water inlet 913 of the port protrusion 912 and may be supplied into the port 91 through the absorption sheet 92. The water supplied into the port 91 may be mixed with the nutrient solution of the medium 93, and may be supplied to the seed or the plants such that the seed or the plants are actively grown. In addition, package cover 94 may be provided on an inner top surface of the port 91, that is, a top surface of the medium 93 to protect the seed in the medium 93 and the port 91.

[0202] The medium 93 may include the nutrient solution necessary for grow the plants and may be configured such that the plants are grown at a proper speed only when water is supplied without supplying additional ingredients. In addition, the nutrient solution may be present only in a cartridge and only water supplied to the bed 50 inside the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants. Accordingly, the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants, especially, the water tank 40 and the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may be basically prevented from being contaminated due to the nutrient solution. The inner portion of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants may be constantly maintained in a clean state due to the above structure. In addition, even under the environment that various types of plants are cultivated, proper nutrients may be supplied.

[0203] To easily seat the seed package 90 and facilitate management and harvest of the plants grown on the bed 50, the bed 50 may have a structure that the bed 50 may be introduced or withdrawn. In the procedure that the bed 50 is withdrawn, the water may be prevented from being supplied. The water has to be supplied after the water level is

identified by the water sensor 526 in the state in which the bed 50 is introduced. The bed 50 may have a structure that power is selectively supplied to the water sensor 526 when the bed 50 is introduced or withdrawn.

[0204] Hereinafter, structure for supplying power to the water sensor 526 will be described in more detail with reference to accompanying drawings.

[0205] FIG. 22 is a perspective view illustrating a bed bracket which is one component of the bed according to an embodiment. FIG. 23 is a bottom view of the bed when the bed is viewed from the bottom. FIG. 24 is a cut-out perspective view of a portion of FIG. 23, taken along line XXIV-XXIV. FIG. 25 is a cut-out perspective view illustrating the bottom bed is withdrawn.

[0206] As illustrated in the drawings, the bed 50 has the structure of being introduced or withdrawn through the introduction/withdrawal guide 56 disposed at opposite side portions of the bed 50, in a state in which the bed 50 is disposed in the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants. In this case, the bottom cover 55 which forms the bottom surface of the rear portion of the bed 50 and the bed bracket 54 coupled to the bottom cover 55 are maintained in a state of being fixedly mounted on the inside of the cultivating space 11, and the bottom bed 52 and the upper bed 51 seated in the bottom bed 52 are introduced or withdrawn.

[0207] When the bottom bed 52 moves back and forth, the water sensor 526 may be selectively connected to or disconnected from a power terminal 543 of the bed bracket 54. Accordingly, in a state in which the bottom bed 52 is completely introduced, power is supplied to the water sensor 526 such that sensing of water is activated. In contrast, in a state which the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn, it is impossible to supply power. As described above, water may be supplied to the bottom bed 52 depending on a state of the water sensor 526 and a sensing state of water by the water sensor 526.

[0208] The bottom cover 55 may be formed in a shape of a plate including a metal material, corresponding to a width of the bed 50, and opposite end portions of the bottom case 55 may be fixedly mounted on the inner case 140. In addition, the bottom cover 55 may cover a portion of the bottom surface and the rear surface of the bottom bed 52 in a state in which the bottom cover 55 is mounted. The bottom cover 55 may include a bottom surface 552 vertically bent and a rear surface 551. The bottom surface 552 may cover the rear portion of the bottom surface of the bottom bed 52 and the rear surface 551 may cover the rear surface of the bottom bed 52.

[0209] The rear surface 551, which extends bi-directionally, may extend to the lower end portion of the blower assembly 80 positioned at an upper portion thereof. The extending upper end portion of the rear surface 551 may be slightly spaced apart from a lower end portion of the blower assembly 80. Flowing air is directed toward an inside of the blower assembly 80 beyond the upper end portion of the rear surface 551 and the lower end portion of the blower assembly 80. In addition, the rear surface 551 may cover the evaporator 31 disposed at a rear portion thereof such that the evaporator 31 is not exposed to the outside in a state in which the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn. The rear surface 551 may be disposed adjacent to the lower end portion of the blower assembly 80 to prevent the evaporator 31 from being exposed to the outside. The rear surface 551 may cover the water supply pipes 497 and 498 provided on the rear surface of the cultivating space 11 and another component, such as

the water supply pipe holder 48 provided in the inner rear plate 146 such that the components are not exposed to the outside.

[0210] A rear surface opening 553 may be formed in one side of the rear surface 551 corresponding to the water supply portion 524. The rear surface opening 553 may have a size corresponding to the water supply portion 524. When the bed 50 is introduced, the water supply portion 524 may be inserted to pass through the rear surface opening 553. The actual supplying of water to the water supply portion 524 may be performed in a rear space of the rear surface 551. Accordingly, the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may be prevented from being exposed and the water supplied to the bed 50 may be prevented from being scattered around the bed 50.

[0211] The bottom surface 552 may extend from the rear end portion of the bottom bed 52 to the water collecting portion 523 and may extend to a position to cover a portion of the water sensor 526. The bed bracket 54 may be provided on the bottom surface 552. The bed bracket 54 may be positioned between the bottom bed 52 and the bottom cover 55 and may have a power terminal selectively contacting the water sensor 526.

[0212] The bed bracket 54 may be formed, for example, by injection molding with a plastic material, may be formed in a plate shape, and may be mounted at a center of the bottom surface 552 of the bottom cover 55. A top surface of the bed bracket 54 may be disposed to face a bottom surface of the bottom bed 52.

[0213] A pair of terminal mounts 541 protruding upward from opposite sides of the top surface of the bed bracket 54 may be positioned at positions corresponding to horizontally extending portions 526b. That is, the terminal mount 541 may be positioned vertically below the horizontally extending portion 526b in a state which the bottom bed 52 is introduced. The terminal mount 541 may longitudinally extend in the frontward-backward direction.

[0214] A terminal hole 541a may be formed in a top surface of the terminal mount 541 and a portion of the power terminal 543 may be exposed through the terminal hole 541a. The power terminal 543 may be fixedly mounted in an internal space of the terminal mount 541. The power terminal 543 may include a contact 543b bent to be inclined forward and backward and a fixing portion 543a extending from one side of the contact 543b and fixed to the inside of the terminal mount 541. The fixing portion 543a may be fixed to the terminal mount 541 by, for example, a screw fastened at a lower portion thereof and the contact 543b may be configured to protrude to the outside through the terminal hole 541a. The end portion of the fixing portion 543a may be connected with electric wire 544 introduced into the terminal mount 541 to supply power.

[0215] A wire guide 542 may be interposed between a pair of the terminal mounts 541. The wire guide 542 may be recessed in the bottom surface of the bed bracket 54 and provides a space in which the electric wire 544 may be received when the bed bracket 54 is coupled to the bottom cover 55. In addition, the wire guide 542 may connect both terminal mounts 541 and be configured to extend from the center of the bed bracket 54 to the rear end portion of the bed bracket 54. Therefore, electric wires 544 connected to power terminals 543 disposed on both sides may extend to the rear end portion of the bed bracket 54 along the wire guide 542.

[0216] The rear end portion of the wire guide 542 may further protrude to form a wire outlet 542a. When the bed bracket 54 is mounted on the bottom cover 55, the wire outlet 42a may pass through the rear surface 551, and the electric wires 544 may be connected with connectors 111, 112, and 113 on a rear wall surface of the cultivating space 11 without being exposed to the outside.

[0217] In the state in which the bottom bed 52 is completely introduced, the water sensor 526 may be in contact with the power terminal 543 as illustrated in FIG. 24. In this case, the horizontally extending portion 526b of the water sensor 526 makes contact with the contact 543b of the power terminal 543. The contact 543b may be maintained in contact with the water sensor 526 in the state in which the contact 543b is pressed.

[0218] In this state, power may be supplied to the water sensor 526, and operation of the water sensor 526 may be activated. Accordingly, when the water is stored in the water collecting portion 523, the water sensors 526 at opposite sides may be electrically conducted to prevent the pump 494 from operating. In contrast, when the water is absent in the water collecting portion 523 in the state in which the power is supplied to the water sensor 526, the water sensors 526 at opposite sides are electrically not conducted, and thus, the pump 494 and the water supply valve 496 are driven, so water may be supplied to the bed 50.

[0219] In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 25, when a user withdraws the bed 50, the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn in the state in which the bed bracket 54 and the bottom cover 55 are fixed. At the moment when the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn, the power terminal 543 and the water sensor 526 are separated from each other, and power supply to the water sensor 526 is cut off. In other words, the power supply to the water sensor 526 is stopped from the moment when the bottom bed 52 is withdrawn. In this state, the pump 494 and the water supply valve 496 are forcibly stopped so as not to operate. When the pump 494 is driven or the water supply valve 496 is opened in the state in which the bed 50 is withdrawn, water supplied through the water supply pipes 497 and 498 may not be supplied to the bed 50, but spilled. As described above, operation of the pump 494 or the water supply valve 496 may be prevented by sensing the withdrawn state of the bed 50.

[0220] An additional electric wire is not placed in the bottom bed 52 in which the water sensor 526 is provided, but rather, the electric wire 544 is placed in the fixed bottom cover 55, thereby preventing the electric wires 544 from interfering with each other when the bottom bed 52 is introduced or withdrawn, and smoothly introducing or withdrawing the bottom bed 52.

[0221] Opposite end portions of the bed 50 may be supported by the introduction/withdrawal guides 56 provided on opposite side surfaces inside the cabinet 10, and the bottom bed 52 may slide along the introduction/withdrawal guides 56 such that the introduction or the withdrawal of the bottom bed 52 may be guided. Hereinafter, structure of the guide and the introduction and withdrawal structure of the bed 50 will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0222] FIG. 26 is a perspective view of the introduction/withdrawal guide for introducing or withdrawing the bed according to an embodiment. FIG. 27 is a view illustrating that the bed is introduced. FIG. 28 is a view illustrating that the bed is withdrawn.

[0223] As illustrated in the drawings, a pair of introduction/withdrawal guides **56** may be provided at opposite side portions of the cabinet **10** to support opposite end portions of the bed **50**. The introduction/withdrawal guides **56** may have the same structure and face each other. The introduction/withdrawal guide **56** may longitudinally extend in the frontward-rearward direction such that the bed **50** has a predetermined withdrawal distance.

[0224] A guide groove **563** may be recessed in the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** while extending in the frontward-rearward direction. The guide groove **563** may receive a bed roller **531** mounted on a rear end portion of the bed side **53**. The guide groove **563** may extend from the front end portion to the rear end portion of the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** such that the bed roller **531** moves along the guide groove **563**. In this case, the bed roller **531** may move by rotating while making contact with an inner top surface **562** of the guide groove **563** and an inner bottom surface **561** of the guide groove **563**.

[0225] The top surface **562** of the front end portion of the guide groove **563** may be inclined downward. Accordingly, when the bottom bed **52** is separated and assembled, the bed roller **531** may be easily inserted. In addition, a withdrawal groove **562a** may be formed in one side of the top surface **562** of the guide groove **563**. The withdrawal groove **562a** may receive a portion of the bed roller **531** when the bottom bed **52** is withdrawn by a set or predetermined distance. Accordingly, when the bottom bed **52** is withdrawn by the set or predetermined distance for facilitating work, the guide roller **564** may be received in the withdrawal groove **562a**. In such a state, as the bottom bed **52** is not easily moved in the frontward-rearward direction, but maintained in the withdrawn state by the set distance, a user may easily carry out jobs such as seating the seed package **90** or harvesting the plants.

[0226] A rear stopper **566a** may protrude from the rear end portion of the guide groove **563**. When the bottom bed **52** is completely introduced, the rear stopper **566a** supports the bed roller **531** such that the bed roller **531** does not move further rearward any more. A buffer **566**, which may be formed of an elastic material, such as rubber or urethane, may be mounted on the rear stopper **566a** to reduce impact when making contact with the bed roller **531**.

[0227] The introduction/withdrawal guide **56** may be formed at the rear end portion thereof with a guide protrusion **567** to protrude rearward, be inserted into an inner wall surface of the cultivating space **11**, and be restricted. In addition, the guide groove **563** may be formed in the inner side surface thereof with a screw hole **565** coupled to a screw to fix the introduction/withdrawal guide **56**. Accordingly, the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** may be firmly fixed and mounted to the sidewall of the cultivating space **11** through the guide protrusion **567** and the coupling of the screw.

[0228] The guide roller **564** may be provided on the front end portion of the introduction/withdrawal guide **56**. The guide roller **564** may be positioned at a slightly lower portion from a center of the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** in a vertical direction, and may make contact with side rib **532** formed on the bed side **53** such that the bottom bed **52** may be more smoothly introduced or withdrawn.

[0229] The bed rollers **531** and the side ribs **532** may be formed on both side surfaces of the bottom bed **52**, that is, the bed side **53**. The bed roller **531** may be rotatably

mounted at the rear end portion of the bed side **53** and rotated in a state of being received in the guide groove **563** to smoothly withdraw the bottom bed **52**.

[0230] The side ribs **532** may extend from a front of the bed roller **531** to a front end portion of the bed side **53**. The side ribs **532** may protrude in a sideways or lateral direction from upper and lower central portions of the bed side **53** and allow the guide roller **564** to make contact with the bottom surface of the side ribs **532** to roll.

[0231] In other words, as illustrated in FIG. **28**, the bed roller **531** may contact the guide groove **563** and the guide roller **564** may contact the side rib **532** when the bottom bed **52** is withdrawn. Therefore, the bottom bed **52** may be withdrawn while maintaining a stable supported state without sagging or vertical flowing when the bottom bed **52** is withdrawn.

[0232] A rear restricting portion **533** formed to be inclined downward may be formed at a rear end of the side rib **532**. The rear restricting portion **533** may interfere with the guide roller **564** when the bottom bed **52** is completely withdrawn, such that the bottom bed **52** is not easily released.

[0233] An introduction groove **534** may be formed in the first half of the side rib **532**. The introduction groove **534** may be formed at a position corresponding to the guide roller **564** in a state that the bottom bed **52** is completely introduced.

[0234] The introduction groove **534** may be formed to partially receive an upper portion of the guide roller **564**. Accordingly, as illustrated in FIG. **27**, the guide roller **564** is received in the introduction groove **534** in the state in which the bottom bed **52** is completely introduced. Accordingly, the bottom bed **52** may not be arbitrarily withdrawn, but maintained in the introduced state.

[0235] Through the above structure, the bottom bed **52** may stably maintain the introduction state and the withdrawal state, and may be prevented from moving due to external vibration or impact. In addition, when the user introduces or withdraws the bottom bed **52**, the user may smoothly introduce or withdraw the bottom bed **52** by the bed roller **531** and the guide roller **564**.

[0236] The light assembly **60** to irradiate light toward the bed **50** may be mounted above the bed **50**. Hereinafter, structure and a mounting structure of the light assembly **60** will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0237] FIG. **29** is a sectional view illustrating a state in which a light assembly is mounted on the introduction/withdrawal guide. FIG. **30** is a view illustrating a coupling structure of a light mount to mount the light assembly according to an embodiment.

[0238] The light assembly **60** may be disposed above the bed **50** and may irradiate light upward from the bed **50**. In addition, the light assembly **60** may minimize loss of the cultivating space **11** and may have an arrangement structure representing higher space utilization.

[0239] The light assembly **60** may be disposed at a top surface of the cultivating space **11** and a bottom surface of the bed **50** disposed above. In particular, the light assembly **60** may have the same structure regardless of a mounting position. Therefore, both the light assembly **60** disposed above the bed **50** and the light assembly **60** disposed below the bed **50** may have the same mounting structure.

[0240] Hereinafter, description will be made with reference to the drawings. The light assembly **60** may be mounted on the inner surface of the cabinet **10** and the introduction/

withdrawal guide **56** by a light mount **64**. In other words, light assemblies **60** may be mounted at various positions inside the cultivating space **11** using the same light mount **64**.

[0241] The cabinet **10** may be formed in a top surface thereof with a cabinet coupling hole **142a** to mount the light mount **64**, and the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** may be formed therein with a guide coupling hole **561a**. The cabinet coupling hole **142a** and the guide coupling hole **561a** may have a same shape except for the positions thereof, so the light mounts **64** having the same structure may be mounted in the cabinet coupling hole **142a** and the guide coupling hole **561a**.

[0242] The cabinet coupling hole **142a** may be formed in the inner upper plate **142** defining the top surface of the cultivating space **11**. The cabinet coupling holes **142a** may be provided in a first half and a second half and left and right or lateral sides of the cultivating space **11**, and four cabinet coupling holes **142a** may be formed to stably fix four corners of a top surface of the light assembly **60**.

[0243] The light mount **64** may include a mount coupling portion **641** engaged with the cabinet coupling hole **142a** or the guide coupling hole **561a** and a mount head **642** to restrict the light mount **64**.

[0244] The mount coupling portion **641** may be formed in a shape of a thread and coupled to the cabinet coupling hole **142a** or the guide coupling hole **561a** in a screw scheme to firmly mount the light assembly **60**. In addition, the mount coupling portion **641** may have a length longer than a depth of the cabinet coupling hole **142a** or the guide coupling hole **561a**.

[0245] The mount head **642** may be formed at a lower end portion of the mount coupling portion **641** and may be formed in a shape of a disc having a predetermined size. The mount head **642** may be formed corresponding to a size of an insertion portion **612a** of a case restricting hole **612** formed in the top surface of the light assembly **60**. Accordingly, the mount head **642** may be inserted into the case restricting hole **612** when the light assembly **60** is mounted.

[0246] In a state in which the light mount **64** is coupled to the inner surface of the cabinet **10** or the introduction/withdrawal guide **56**, the mount head **642** may be spaced apart from the inner upper plate **142** and the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** by a set or predetermined distance. The set or predetermined distance may be formed corresponding to a thickness of the light case **61** forming a top surface of the light assembly **60**.

[0247] The case restricting hole **612** formed in the top surface of the light case **61** may include the insertion portion **612a** and a restriction portion **612b**. The insertion portion **612a** is formed in size equal to or slightly larger than the mount head **642** such that the light assembly **60** is inserted into the insertion portion **612a**.

[0248] The restriction portion **612b** may be formed in the shape of more being further recessed forward from the front end portion of the insertion portion **612a** as illustrated in FIG. **31**. The restriction portion **612b** may be formed in size slightly larger than a sectional surface of the mount coupling portion **641** and smaller than a size of the insertion portion **612a**.

[0249] Accordingly, when the light case **61** is moved rearward in a state in which the mount head **642** is inserted into the insertion portion **612a**, the mount coupling portion **641** may be inserted into the restriction portion **612b**. In this

case, the mount head **642** restricts a circumference of the restriction portion **612b**. In other words, as illustrated in FIG. **29**, the circumference of the restriction portion **612b** may be inserted into the space between the mount head **642** and the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** and restricted. In contrast, when the light case **61** is moved forward in the state in which the light case **61** is mounted, the mount head **642** is moved toward the insertion portion **612a** so it is possible to separate the light assembly **60**.

[0250] The guide coupling holes **561a** may be formed in a first half and a second half of the bottom surface of the introduction/withdrawal guide **56**. As the introduction/withdrawal guides **56** are provided at the lateral sides of the cultivating space **11**, four light mounts **64** may be provided to fix four corners of the top surface of the light assembly **60**.

[0251] As described above, the light mounts **64** having the same structure are mounted on the inner upper plate **142** and the introduction/withdrawal guide **56**, respectively, so the light assemblies **60** having the same structure may be mounted regardless of mounting positions thereof. In other words, the light assemblies **60** having a single structure may be mounted at various positions.

[0252] The introduction/withdrawal guide **56** may be further provided depending on the number of the beds **50** disposed in the cultivating space **11**. Even if a plurality of introduction/withdrawal guides **56** is vertically disposed, the light mounts **64** are mounted in the respective introduction/withdrawal guides **56** such that the light assembly **60** is mounted.

[0253] The light assembly **60** may include the light case **61** formed therein with a receiving space **611** and fixedly mounted by the light mount **64**, a light emitting device (LED) module **62** inside the light case **61**, and a light cover **63** to cover the light case **61**.

[0254] Hereinafter, structure of the light assembly **60** will be described with reference to accompanying drawings.

[0255] FIG. **31** is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed the light assembly from the top. FIG. **32** is an exploded perspective view of the light assembly when viewed from the bottom.

[0256] As illustrated in the drawings, the light assembly **60** may have a size corresponding to the top surface of the cultivating space **11** or the bed **50**. Accordingly, the light assembly **60** may uniformly irradiate light to an entire area of the bed **50** disposed below.

[0257] The light assembly **60** may include the light case **61** having an open bottom surface and receiving the LED module **62** therein. The light case **61** may include a frame **613** formed in a shape of a rectangular plate shape and extending downward along the circumference of the light case **61**. A front surface **613a** of the frame **613** may be inclined. Accordingly, when the user opens the door **20**, exposure of the light assembly **60** may be minimized.

[0258] The light cover **63** may include in the top surface thereof with a plurality of case restricting holes **612**. The case restriction holes **612**, which may be coupled to the light mount **64**, may be formed at four corners of the top surface of the light cover **63**. In addition, when positions of the light mounts **64** coupled to the introduction/withdrawal guide **56** and the inner upper plate **142** are different from each other, case restriction holes **612** may be further formed at corresponding positions for the coupling of all light mounts **64**. Accordingly, as illustrated in FIG. **31**, eight case restriction

holes may be formed. In addition, when positions of the light mounts **64** are the same, four case restriction holes **612** may be formed.

[0259] The case restricting hole **612** may include the insertion portion **612a** formed in a size corresponding to the mount head **642** and the restriction portion **612b** formed to be more recessed in front of the insertion portion **612a**. In this case, the restriction portion **612b** may be formed to be greater than a thickness of the mount coupling portion **641** and to be less than a size of the mount head **642**.

[0260] Accordingly, the light case **61** may be moved in the frontward-rearward direction in a state in which the mount head **642** is inserted into the insertion portion **612a**, so the light assembly **60** may be mounted or separated.

[0261] Wire guide ribs **614** may be formed at opposite sides under the light cover **63** to guide wires connected with the LED module **62**. The wire guide rib **614** longitudinally extends in the frontward-rearward direction and a pair of wire guide ribs **614** may be disposed at each of lateral sides. The pair of the wire guide ribs **614** may be spaced apart from each other, and a plurality of wire coupling portions **615** may be formed in the space between the wire guide ribs **614**.

[0262] The wire guide ribs **614** and the wire coupling portions **615** may be disposed at opposite side portions and be prevented from interfering with the LED module **62** when the LED module **62** is mounted. In addition, the wire guide ribs **614** and the wire coupling portions **615** may be interposed between the case restriction holes **612**, and thus, be prevented from interfering with the light assembly **60** when the light assembly **60** is mounted.

[0263] The wire coupling portion **615** may press and restrict the wires guided along the wire guide ribs **614**, and be formed in a substantially ring shape to simultaneously surround a plurality of wires. The wire coupling portions **615** may be disposed in directions of facing each other at lateral sides. A plurality of wire coupling portions **614** may be formed at regular distances along the wire guide rib **614**.

[0264] The LED module **62** may be mounted on the light case **61**. The LED module **62** may be configured such that a plurality of LEDs is mounted on a substrate. The plurality of LEDs may be continuously arranged on the substrate at regular distances. The LED may be configured to have a light quantity (wavelength) similar to sunlight, and may be configured to irradiate light of a color that may promote photosynthesis of the plant.

[0265] The LED module **62** may include a plurality of LED modules. For example, the LED module **62** may be arranged in the frontward-rearward direction as illustrated in FIG. **31**, or a plurality of the LED modules **62** may be continuously arranged in a lateral direction as illustrated in FIG. **32**. In this case, the plurality of LED modules **62** may be configured to provide different outputs, or may be configured to emit light of different outputs or different wavelengths depending on positions of the cultivated plants.

[0266] For example, the plants arranged at lateral sides of the bed **50** may receive less light as compared to the plants at a center of the bed **50**. Accordingly, outputs of the LED modules **62** disposed at lateral sides may be made higher than the outputs of the LED module **62** at the center, so that the plants of the entire bed may uniformly receive light. If necessary, spacing between or arrangement of the LEDs mounted on the substrate may be adjusted to uniformly irradiate light to all of the beds **50**.

[0267] The light cover **63** may be provided on the open bottom surface of the light case **61**. The light cover **63** may be configured to be mounted on the light case **61** to cover the open bottom surface of the light case **61** and to protect the LED module **62** disposed inside. The light cover **63** may be formed of a transparent material such that light may be transmitted, and a coating or a surface treatment for diffusing light may be added to the bottom surface of the light cover **63**.

[0268] A frame **632** may be formed around a bottom surface of the light cover **63** to provide a space **631** in which the LED module **62** is received inside the frame **632**. The frame **632** may be coupled to the light case **61** such that an inner portion of the light case **61** is air tight. A wire outlet **632a** may be formed on a rear surface of the light cover **63**. The wire outlet **632a**, which may serve as a passage for introducing or withdrawing internal wires of the light case **61**, may be configured to be open rearward and to be directed to connectors **111**, **112**, and **113** on the rear wall surface of the cultivating space **11** such that the introduced or withdrawn wires are not exposed.

[0269] A blower assembly mount **633** on which the blower assembly **80** may be mounted may be formed on opposite sides of a rear end of the light cover **63**. The blower assembly mount **633** may be recessed such that a blower bracket **816** provided at opposite sides of an upper end portion of the blower assembly **80** may be inserted.

[0270] The display assembly **70** may be provided inside the cultivating space **11**, and an operation state of the apparatus **1** for cultivating the plants may be displayed to the outside through the display assembly **70**. Hereinafter, the display assembly **70** will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0271] FIG. **33** is a view illustrating a state in which a display assembly, which is one component of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants, is mounted. FIG. **34** is an exploded perspective view of the display assembly of FIG. **33**.

[0272] As illustrated in the drawing, the display assembly **70** may include a display case **71** forming an outer appearance, a display module **74** received in an inner space **711** of the display case **71**, and a rear cover **75** that covers the open rear surface of the case **71**.

[0273] The display case **71** may be provided in front of the light assembly **60**. The display case **71** may be mounted on any one of remaining light assemblies **60** except for the light assembly **60**, which is mounted on the top surface of the cultivating space **11**, in a plurality of light assemblies **60**.

[0274] The display case **71** may be disposed at a front end portion of the light assembly **60** and may be fixedly mounted on a front end portion of a top surface of the light assembly **60**. A lateral length of the display case **71** may correspond to a lateral length of the light assembly **60** and may extend from one end of the cultivating space **11** to an opposite end of the cultivating space **11**. A vertical width of the display case **71** may be equal to or slightly greater than a thickness of the light assembly **60**. Therefore, a front surface of the light assembly **60** may be obscured or blocked by the display assembly **70**, and the light assembly **60** may not be exposed to the outside when viewed from the front.

[0275] A display opening **712** may be formed in a front surface of the display case **71**. The display opening **712** allows information output from the display module **74** to be viewed to the outside. A display sheet **73** may be provided on the front surface of the display case **71**. The display sheet

73 may be formed of a transparent or translucent material such that an output screen of the display module **74** exposed through the display opening **712** may be viewed.

[0276] A case mount **72** may be provided on lateral sides of a top surface of the display case **71**. The case mount **72** may extend rearward by a predetermined length. The case mount **72** may extend rearward and be seated on a top surface of the light case **61**. A screw hole **721** may be formed in the case mount **72** and fixed to the top surface of the light case **61** by a screw **722** fastened to the screw hole **721**.

[0277] The display module **74** may include a display **742** received inside the display case **71** to output information and a substrate **741** on which the display **742** is mounted. The display **742** may be a touch display having an input manipulatable by a user. In addition, the display **742** may be exposed to the outside through the display opening **712**. If necessary, the display case **71** may further include a button for a manipulation input.

[0278] The rear cover **75** may be provided on the open rear surface of the display case **71**. The rear cover **75** may be formed with a module mount **751** on which the display module **74** may be mounted. A support **752** protruding forward may be formed around the module mount **751**, and the support **752** may be coupled to the display case **71**.

[0279] A wire introduction/withdrawal port **753**, through which a wire connected to the display module **74** may be introduced or withdrawn, may be opened in opposite sides of an upper end portion of the module mount **751**. The wire passing through the wire introduction/withdrawal port **753** may be guided along with wires of the light assembly **60** through the light case **61**. The wire passing through the wire introduction/withdrawal port **753** may be guided rearward through a space between the bed **50** and the display assembly **70**, if necessary.

[0280] The support **752** protruding rearward may be formed on a back surface of the module mount **751**. The support **752** may protrude rearward to make contact with a front surface of the light assembly **60**. The support **752** may have an inclined rear surface, and may have a slope corresponding to a slope of the inclined front surface of the light assembly **60**. Therefore, when the display assembly **70** is mounted, the support **752** may be completely in close contact with the front surface of the light case **61** to maintain a stable mounting state.

[0281] FIG. **35** is a view illustrating a state in which a blower assembly, which is one component of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants, is mounted. As illustrated in the drawing, the evaporator **31** may be provided on a rear wall surface of the cultivating space **11**, that is, the inner rear plate **146**, and the blower assembly **80** may be provided in front of the evaporator **31**.

[0282] The blower assembly **80** may be configured to circulate air at the upper portion of the cultivating space **11** partitioned by the bed **50**. Accordingly, blower assemblies **80** may be provided in a number corresponding to a number of the beds **50**, and may be provided at the lower end of the light assembly **60** and the upper portion adjacent to the bed **50**.

[0283] Each blower assembly **80** has a structure in which air is circulated inside the cultivating space **11** such that the air heated or cooled by the heater **102** or the evaporator **31** is discharged at the upper end and air is suctioned at a position adjacent to the top surface of the bed **50**. The heater **102** and the evaporator **31** may be disposed in an interme-

diate area of the inner rear plate **146** in the vertical direction and may at least partially overlap with the blower assemblies **80** at the upper portion and the lower portion. The air heated and cooled by the heater **102** and the evaporator **31** may be circulated by the blower assembly **80** to uniformly cool or heat the entire partitioned spaces inside the cultivating space **11** using only one heater **102** and one evaporator **31**.

[0284] The blower assembly **80** may be spaced apart from the inner rear plate **146** such that the cooled or heated air may be smoothly introduced and be configured not to interfere with the evaporator **31**. In addition, the upper end portion of the blower assembly **80** may be configured to be coupled to the rear end portion of the bottom surface of the light assembly **60**.

[0285] The blower assembly **80** may cover components provided in the inner rear plate **146** in addition to the evaporator **31** in a state in which the blower assembly **80** is installed inside the cultivating space **11**, thereby preventing the components from being exposed to the outside. However, FIG. **35** illustrates that a blower cover **84** forming the front surface of the blower assembly **80** is removed for explanation of an arrangement relation between the evaporator **31** and the blower assembly **80**.

[0286] The blower assembly **80** may longitudinally extend in a lengthwise direction and may be configured corresponding to a length of the inner rear plate **146** in the lengthwise direction. In addition, air blown by a blowing fan **82** provided at the center portion is branched into the both sides by a blower body **81** and may be discharged forward in a uniform air amount at an outlet side. Detailed structure of the blower assembly **80** will be described hereinafter.

[0287] An outlet **171** of the supply duct **17** may be opened at a position lower than a lower portion of the inner rear plate **146**, more specifically, the blower assembly **80** disposed hereinafter. The supply duct **17** may communicate with the machine compartment **12** to supply carbon dioxide into the cultivating space **11**.

[0288] The inner rear plate **146** may include a plurality of connectors **111**, **112**, and **113**. The connectors **111**, **112**, and **113** may be configured to connect wires, which extend from the light assembly **60**, the display assembly **70**, and the blower assembly **80** in the cultivating space **11**. Therefore, it is possible to easily connect electrical components inside the cultivating space **11**.

[0289] In addition, the second bottom plate **144** may further include a connector **114** to connect electric wires extending from the pump **494**, the flow meter **495**, and the water supply valve **496**. The connector **114** may be disposed inside the water supply case **49** and may be covered by the water supply case **49**.

[0290] Hereinafter, structure of the blower assembly **80** will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0291] FIG. **36** is an exploded perspective view of the blower assembly when viewed from the front. FIG. **37** is an exploded perspective view of the blower assembly when viewed from the rear. FIG. **38** is a perspective view of the blower assembly when viewed from the rear. FIG. **39** is a perspective view of a portion of FIG. **38**, taken along line XXXIX-XXXIX.

[0292] As illustrated in the drawing, the blower assembly **80** may include the blowing fan **82**, the blower body **81** on which the blowing fan **82** may be mounted, and the blower cover **84** to cover a portion of the inner rear plate **146** including the blower body **81**. The blowing fan **82** may be

formed in a shape of a box fan and may be provided at a center of the blower body **81**. The blowing fan **82** may discharge forward the air introduced from the rear portion of the blower assembly **80**.

[0293] The blower body **81** may provide a space for mounting the blowing fan **82** and may be configured to guide discharge of the air discharged by the blowing fan **82**. The blower body **81** may be, for example, injection molded with a plastic material and a fan mount **811** may be formed at a center of a rear surface of the blower body **81** to be recessed in a shape corresponding to a shape of the blowing fan **82**. An air hole **812** may be formed in the fan mount **811** so that air may be introduced into the blowing fan **82** when the blowing fan **82** rotates.

[0294] An air guide **813** may be formed on a front surface of the blower body **81** to guide air discharged from the blowing fan **82** upward. The air guides **813** may be provided on lateral sides of a center of the fan mount **811**.

[0295] The air guides **813** may extend from a lower end portion of the fan mount **811** toward opposite sides of the fan mount **811** and may have an inclined surface having a height gradually increasing in an extending direction. Therefore, air blown by the blowing fan **82** may flow along the inclined surface, and may be closer to a discharge port formed in an upper end portion of the blower body **81** toward the outside.

[0296] A rib **813a** extending upward may be further formed on a top surface of the air guide **813**. The rib **813a** may extend upward from the air guide **813** and may extend in a direction perpendicular to the upper end portion of the blower body **81**. The ribs **813a** may be connected with an inner surface of the blower body **81** to reinforce the air guide **813** while guiding the air flowing along the air guide **813** upward. Due to the structure of the air guide **813** and the rib **813a**, the air discharged from the air blowing fan **82** may be uniformly discharged from an entire area of the discharge port of the blower body **81**.

[0297] A discharge guide **815** may be formed at an upper end portion of a front surface of the blower body **81**. The discharge guide **815** may guide the air discharged by the blowing fan **82** to be discharged forward of the blower body **81**. The discharge guide **815** may form a surface protruding further forward from a lower portion toward an upper portion. In other words, the discharge guide **815** may form an inclined surface or a rounded surface, and guide the air flowing upward from below such that the air is directed forward. In this case, as the end portion of the discharge guide **815** is adjacent to the bottom surface of the light assembly **60**, the air discharged from the blower assembly **80** may flow forward from the rear end portion of the bottom surface of the light assembly **60** by the discharge guide **815**. When the light assembly **60** emits heat, the light assembly **60** may be cooled due to the air flow.

[0298] A connector hole **814** may be formed in one side portion of the blower body **81**. Connector holes **814** may be formed at positions corresponding to the connector **811** and **812** mounted on the inner rear plate **146**. Accordingly, when the blower assembly **80** is mounted, the connectors **811** and **812** may be inserted into the connector holes **814** so as not to interfere with each other. The electric wire connected to the blowing fan **82** may be connected to the electric wire through the connector hole **814**.

[0299] The blowing fan **82** may be maintained to be fixed to the fan mount **811** by a fan fixing member **821** having a

plate shape and mounted on the fan mount **811** and a screw **822** fastened to the blower body **81** through the fan fixing member **821**.

[0300] A blower bracket **816** inserted into the blower assembly mount **633** may be provided on lateral sides of the top surface of the blower body **81**. The blower bracket **816** may be formed in a vertically bent shape. One or a first end of the blower bracket **816** may be coupled to the top surface of the blower body **81** and an opposite or a second end of the blower bracket **816** may be mounted to the blower assembly mount **633** formed at a rear end of the bottom surface of the light assembly **60**. Accordingly, the light assembly **60** and the blower assembly **80** may be coupled to each other in a manner of crossing each other perpendicularly to each other. The blower assembly **80** may discharge air forward from the rear end portion of the light assembly **60**.

[0301] Recessed spaces may be formed on opposite sides of the blower body **81**. A recessed space may be formed below the air guide **813**. A first guide insulator **101** and a second guide insulator **101** may be mounted in the recessed spaces. A guide recess **521** may be formed in one side of a rear surface of the fan guide **341** and a third guide insulator **101** may be mounted in the guide recess **521**. The cold air generated in the evaporator **31** may be prevented from being directly transmitted forward through the blower assembly **80** by the first to third guide insulators **101**.

[0302] The blower cover **84** may be provided in front of the blower body **81** to cover the blower body **81** and components mounted on the blower body **81**. The blower cover **84** may form an outer appearance of a rear wall surface of the cultivating space **11** in a state in which the blower assembly **80** is mounted.

[0303] The blower cover **84** may be formed of a same metal material as the inner side plate **141**, and may be formed by bending a plate-shaped material. The blower cover **84** may have a rim **841** which may be bent along a circumference of the blower body **84**. The blower body **84**, in which the blowing fan **82** may be mounted, may be received in an inner space defined by the rim **841**.

[0304] A top surface of the blower cover **84** may be open. The top surface of the blower cover **84** may be positioned at a position corresponding to an upper end portion of the blower body **81**. Therefore, air discharged along the discharge guide **815** may be discharged through the top surface of the open blower cover **84**.

[0305] Opposite side surfaces of the blower cover **84** of the rim **841** may be formed to surround opposite side surfaces of the blower body **81**. The blower cover **84** may extend further downward than the blower body **81**. The blower cover **84** may extend to the top surface of the bed **50**. Accordingly, when the blower assembly **80** is mounted, the rear wall of the space corresponding to the space between the light assembly **60** and the bed **50** is formed. In addition, components mounted on the inner rear plate **146** may be covered to make a neat outer appearance.

[0306] A portion, which forms the bottom surface of the blower cover **84**, of the rim **84** may have an extending length shorter than opposite side surfaces of the rim **84**. Accordingly, the bottom surface of the blower cover **84** may be spaced apart from the inner rear plate **146** to form a space in which air is introduced downward. In other words, in a state in which the blower assembly **80** is mounted, a suction port through which air is suctioned may be formed on the bottom surface of the blower cover **84**.

[0307] An end portion of the rim **841** forming the bottom surface of the blower cover **84** may be bent downward to form a bending portion **841a**. The bending portion **841a** may extend further downward from the rear portion of the bed **50**. Accordingly, the lower end portion of the blower cover **84** may not be exposed while the structure of the inner rear plate **146** is covered, thereby making a neat outer appearance. The bending portion **841a** may be spaced apart from the rear end portion of the bed **50** and the inner rear plate **146** to form air inlets for air to be introduced into the blower cover **84**.

[0308] Hereinafter, an air flowing state inside the cultivating space **11** in a state in which the blower assembly **80** having the above-described structure is mounted will be described again with reference to the drawings.

[0309] FIG. **40** is a sectional view illustrating an air circulation state in the cabinet. FIG. **41** is an enlarged view of portion B in FIG. **40**.

[0310] As illustrated in the drawings, the internal temperature of the cultivating space **11** may be sensed by an internal temperature sensor **182**, and the set temperature of the cultivating space **11** may be maintained depending on the operation of the heater **102** or the evaporator **31**. In addition, the air in the cultivating space **11** may be circulated by driving of the air blowing fan **82** and may be heated or cooled by the heater **102** or the evaporator **31**, thereby maintaining a whole temperature of the cultivating space **11** at a uniform temperature.

[0311] When the blowing fan **82** is driven, air in the cultivating space **11** flows to the rear end portion of the bed **50** while flowing along the top surface of the bed **50**. In this process, plants growing in the bed **50** may be shaken by the flowing air, and plant growth may be promoted by this action. The air blowing fan **82** may maintain a predetermined air flow rate, and periodically vary the air flow rate according to occasions to apply appropriate stress to the plants, thereby allowing the plants to grow more rapidly or improve a growth state.

[0312] The air flowing to the rear end portion of the bed **50** may be introduced into the blower cover **84** through a space between the lower end portion of the blower cover **84** and the rear end portion of the bed **50**. In this case, the shape of the bent portion **841a** at the lower end portion of the blower cover **84** may prevent the space, in which the air in the cultivating space **11** is suctioned, from being exposed while smoothly introducing air.

[0313] The air introduced into the blower cover **84** flows upward and is directed to the blowing fan **82**. In this process, the flowing air may be cooled while passing through the evaporator **31** or may be heated by the heater **102**. The air in the cooled or heated state is forced to flow forward by the blowing fan **82**. The air flowing forward is directed upward while flowing to opposite side surfaces by the air guide **813**. In this case, the air discharged is uniformly directed to the discharge guide **815** by the inclination of the air guide **813** and rib **813a**. More specifically, a distance between the air guide **813** and the discharge guide **815** is increased at a position close to the air blowing fan **82**, so the rapidly flowing air flows a longer distance. The distance between the air guide **813** and the discharge guide **815** is shorter as the air guide **813** and the discharge guide **815** are further apart from the air blowing fan **82**, so the air flowing more slowly flows a short distance. Accordingly, the air discharged through the discharge guide **815** may be discharged at a constant flow rate in the entire area.

[0314] The air discharged through the discharge guide **815** may flow forward along a bottom surface of the light assembly **60**, that is, along the light cover **63**. In this case, the air flowing along the light cover **63** may lower the heat generated in the operation of the light assembly **60**.

[0315] The air that flowing forward along the bottom surface of the light assembly **60** may flow to the first half of the cultivating space **11**, flow downward, then flow rearward along the bed **50**, and then flow into the blower cover **84**. The entire cultivating space **11** may be uniformly heated and the cultivating space **11** may be maintained at a constant temperature, by continuously circulating the air, so an optimum condition for growing the plants inside the bed **50** may be created.

[0316] CO₂ may be indispensably required to actively maintain photosynthesis of plants disposed in the cultivating space **11**. A supply duct **17** and a return duct **150** to connect the machine compartment **12** and the inner portion of the cultivating space **11** may be further provided to continuously supply CO₂ to the cultivating space **11**.

[0317] Hereinafter, structure of the supply duct **17** and the return duct **150** will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0318] FIG. **42** is an open perspective view of a machine compartment of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants. FIG. **43** is a partial perspective view of the cabinet when viewed from the bottom.

[0319] As illustrated in the drawings, the machine compartment **12** is open toward the rear portion of the cabinet **10**, and a bottom surface of the machine compartment **12** may be formed by a machine compartment base **121**. The compressor **32** and a condenser **33** constituting a cooling cycle may be mounted on the machine compartment base **121**. Fan guide **341** may be further provided between the compressor **32** and the condenser **33** and a condenser fan **34** may be provided in the fan guide **341**.

[0320] External air is suctioned into the condenser **33** as the condenser fan **34** is driven and then flows to the compressor **32** through the condenser fan **34**. The condenser fan **34** may force the air flow inside the machine compartment **12** to allow cooling or heat exchange of the condenser **33** and the compressor **32**.

[0321] The supply duct **17** communicating with the cultivating space **11** may extend to a position adjacent to the condenser fan **34**. In this case, the supply duct **17** may extend downward to a space, in which the compressor **32** is disposed, of a space defined by the fan guide **341**. In particular, an open lower end portion of the supply duct **17** may be formed toward the condenser fan **34**. Accordingly, a separate fan is not required for the supply of CO₂ and the air in the machine compartment **12** may flow into an inlet of the supply duct **17** when the condenser fan **34** rotates. The air in the machine compartment **12** may flow into the cultivating space **11** through the supply duct **17**.

[0322] One side of the return duct **150** spaced away from the supply duct **17** may extend downward. The discharge pipe **152** of the return duct **150** may extend to a blade area of the condenser fan **34**. The open lower end portion **152a** of the discharge pipe **152** may be formed to face downward. Therefore, air forcedly blown by the condenser fan **34** rapidly passes through an opening of the discharge pipe **152**. Therefore, negative pressure may be formed on an open bottom surface of the discharge pipe **152**, and internal air of

the cultivating space 11 may be introduced into the return duct 150 and discharged to the machine compartment 12.

[0323] The air of the machine compartment 12 may be supplied through the supply duct 17 to the cultivating space 11 by rotation of the condenser fan 34 and forcibly supplied into the cultivating space 11, so CO₂ may be supplied into the cultivating space 11. Plants in the cultivating space 11 may perform photosynthesis using the supplied CO₂.

[0324] The air in the cultivating space 11 may be discharged into the machine compartment 12 by the return duct 150. The forced air flow through the supply duct 17 and the return duct 150 enables continuous supply of CO₂ to the cultivating space 11. An amount of air flowing into the cultivating space 11 from the machine compartment 12 may be adjusted according to a kind of a plant to be cultivated and an amount of CO₂ supplied in a growing stage.

[0325] Although not illustrated, a filter may be provided in the supply duct 17 or the return duct 150. The filter may prevent dust from entering the inside of the machine compartment 12 or the inside of the cultivating space 11 when the air is introduced, if necessary. In addition, if necessary, an opening/closing mechanism, such as a damper, which is opened only in one direction, may be provided in the supply duct 17 and the return duct 150. Only if necessary, the opening/closing mechanism may be opened to adjust the supply amount of CO₂.

[0326] FIG. 44 is a perspective view of a supply duct which is a component of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants according to an embodiment. Hereinafter, structure of the supply duct 17 will be described.

[0327] The supply duct 17 may longitudinally extend in the vertical direction, and an outlet 171 for discharging air may be formed at an upper end portion of the supply duct 17 and an inlet 175 for introducing air may be formed at a lower portion of the supply duct 17. The inlet 175 and the outlet 171 may face in mutually different directions. In other words, the inlet 175 may be disposed to face the condenser fan 34, and the outlet 171 may be formed to face the rear wall surface of the cultivating space 11.

[0328] A flange 172 may be formed around the outlet 171. The flange 172 may be bent outward around the outlet 171 and may be fixed in contact with the inner rear plate 146.

[0329] The supply duct 17 may include a duct upper portion 173, and a duct lower portion 174. The duct upper portion 173, which may be bent downward from the outlet of the supply duct 17, may be formed in an elliptical shape in cross section. A diameter in the frontward-rearward direction may be formed to be significantly smaller than a diameter in the lateral direction. This structure allows the upper portion of the supply duct 17 to be disposed in a space between the outer case 130 and the inner case 140 where the upper portion of the supply duct 17 is relatively narrow. Although the diameter in the frontward-rearward direction is formed to be smaller, the outlet 171 and the inlet 175 have a same sectional area, so the air passing through the supply duct 17 smoothly flows.

[0330] The duct lower portion 174 may extend from a lower end portion of the duct upper portion 173 to the inlet 175. As the duct lower portion 174 is positioned in an inner region of the machine compartment 12, the duct lower portion 174 is relatively free from restriction on thickness. In order to allow the air blown by the condenser fan 34 to flow more smoothly into the supply duct 17 through the inlet 175, the inlet 175 may be formed in a substantially circle

shape as compared to a sectional shape of the duct upper portion 173. A duct connecting portion 176 may be further formed between the duct upper portion 173 and the duct lower portion 174 to naturally connect the duct upper portion 173 and the duct lower portion 174.

[0331] Hereinafter, an air flow path for supplying CO₂ will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0332] FIG. 45 is a plan view illustrating an arrangement of the supply duct and the return duct in the machine compartment. FIG. 46 is a view illustrating supply and discharge states of CO₂ through the supply duct and the return duct.

[0333] As illustrated in the drawing, the inlet 175 of the supply duct 17 may be positioned substantially adjacent to one side of the fan guide 341. An open surface of the inlet 175 may be formed to face blades of the blowing fan 82 and be arranged to be parallel to a front surface of the condenser fan 34 (a surface crossing a rotation axis of the condenser fan).

[0334] Therefore, when the condenser fan 34 is rotated, air forcibly blown by the condenser fan 34 may be effectively introduced into the inlet of the supply duct 17. In this case, a frontward-rearward direction width D2 of the duct lower portion 174 may be larger than a frontward-rearward direction width D1 of the duct upper portion 173. The air flowing into the duct lower portion 174 may flow upward and flow into the duct upper portion 173. The air may flow through the duct upper portion 173 to the rear portion of the blower assembly 80 through the outlet 171.

[0335] In this case, the frontward-rearward direction width of the duct upper portion 173 is relatively smaller than that of the duct lower portion 174, but cross sectional areas of the duct upper portion 173 and the duct lower portion 174 are the same, so loss of an amount of air is not caused.

[0336] The air of the machine compartment 12 flowing into the rear portion of the blower assembly 80 may include CO₂ and may be uniformly supplied into the cultivating space 11 by the blower assembly 80. The CO₂ introduced into the cultivating space 11 may be involved in photosynthesis of the cultivated plants. The CO₂ may be used for photosynthesis and the air in the cultivating space 11 having less CO₂ may be directed to the machine compartment 12 through the return duct 150.

[0337] In this case, the outlet of the return duct may be opened downward, so the air blown by the condenser fan 34 may pass over the outlet 171 of the return duct 150. Accordingly, negative pressure may be formed at the outlet of the return duct 150, and the air in the cultivating space 11 may be introduced into the machine compartment 12.

[0338] The return duct 150 may be formed such that a duct mount 151 formed at the upper portion of the return duct 150 has a slope and a wider area. When defrost water is generated, the defrost water may be discharged to the machine compartment 12 through the duct mount 151 and the discharge pipe 152.

[0339] A bottom cover 55 may be provided on a bottom surface of the cabinet 10 to receive electrical components. Hereinafter, structure of the bottom case 19 will be described with reference to the drawings.

[0340] FIG. 47 is a perspective view illustrating an internal structure of the bottom case, which is one component of the apparatus 1 for cultivating plants. As illustrated in the drawing, the bottom case 19 may have an open top surface, and may be disposed such that the open top surface faces the

bottom surface of the cabinet **10**. The bottom case **19** may be positioned between the cabinet **10** and a ground surface on which the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants is disposed. The bottom case **19** and electronic components inside the bottom case **19** are not exposed to the outside when viewed from above the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants.

[0341] The bottom case **19** may have a frame formed along a circumference of the bottom surface in a plane shape. In addition, the bottom case **19** has an inner space **190** in which electrical components provided in the bottom case **19** are received.

[0342] A door switch **195** may be provided in the inner space **190** of the bottom case **19** to sense opening/closing of the door **20**. In addition, a communication unit **185** to communicate with an external device may be formed in the bottom case **19**. The communication unit **185** may be configured to perform various wireless communications, such as Wi-Fi, ZigBee, NFC, and Bluetooth, to transmit operating information of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants through a cell phone and/or a computer of a user, to receive a command, and to store and process user information. An external temperature sensor **194** is provided inside the bottom case **19** to sense an outdoor temperature. An external humidity sensor **184** may be further included in the bottom case **19** and an internal humidity sensor **183** may be provided in the cultivating space **11**.

[0343] A wire guide **192** may extend laterally at one side of the bottom case **19**. The wire guide **192** may have an open upper portion to receive wire **195a** connected to the door switch **195**, the external temperature sensor **194**, and the communication unit **185** and may communicate with the space in which the electronic components are received.

[0344] Hereinafter, operation of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants having the above structure according to an embodiment will be described.

[0345] FIG. **48** is a block diagram illustrating the flow of a control signal of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants according to an embodiment. FIG. **49** is a view schematically illustrating an operating state of the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants according to an embodiment.

[0346] As illustrated in the drawing, the seed package **90** may be mounted on the bed **50**, and water in the water tank **40** may be supplied to the bed **50** in a constant amount. In addition, nutrient solution contained in the seed package **90** may be supplied to plants inside the seed package **90** together with water supplied to the bed **50**.

[0347] The light assembly **60** may irradiate light toward the plant growing in the bed **50** through operation of the light assembly **60**. The light assembly **60** may be turned on and off for an appropriate time period depending on a growth condition and environment of the plant. The light assembly **60** may be turned on and off according to an actual amount of sunlight according to a season, thereby providing an environment similar to that in which the plants in the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants grow in an external natural environment.

[0348] Plants in the bed **50** may be subject to photosynthesis by the light provided by the light assembly **60**, and receive a required amount of carbon dioxide through the supply duct **17** in this process. In particular, CO₂ may be supplied to the cultivating space using the condenser fan **34** without an additional dedicated fan. The air in the cultivating space **11** may be recovered to the machine compartment

12 and may be circulated between the machine compartment **12** and the cultivating space **11**.

[0349] When the internal temperature of the cultivating space **11** is excessively low, the heater **102** may be driven. When the internal temperature of the cultivating space **11** is excessively high, the cooling cycle may be driven and the evaporator **31** cooled.

[0350] The air heated or cooled by the heater **102** or the evaporator **31** may be discharged forward through the blower assembly **80**. In this case, the air may flow forward from the rear end portion of the light assembly **60**, and the bottom surface of the light assembly **60** may be cooled during the air flow.

[0351] The air flowing forward may move downward and then flow from the front end portion of the bed **50** to the rear end portion of the bed **50**. A stem and leaf of the plant growing in the bed **50** may be shaken by the flow of air flowing from the top surface of the bed **50**, thereby significantly improving a state of the plant to be cultivated.

[0352] The air introduced into the rear end portion of the bed **50** may pass through the space in which the evaporator **31** and the heater **102** are disposed and may be discharged toward the light assembly **60** by the blowing fan **82**.

[0353] The air flowing by the driving of the air blowing fan **82** may circulate inside the cultivating space **11**. In this circulation process, the light assembly **60** may be air-cooled and growth of the plant on the bed **50** may be promoted.

[0354] The air passing through the evaporator **31** and the heater **102** may be heated or cooled during repeated air circulation, and the inner portion of the cultivating space **11** may be continuously and uniformly heated and cooled. Accordingly, the entire portion of the cultivating space **11** may be maintained to a preset or predetermined temperature.

[0355] Various embodiments may be possible in addition to the above-described embodiments. For example, the cabinet may have a vertically long structure, and a larger number of beds and light assemblies may be provided.

[0356] Hereinafter, additional embodiments will be described with reference to the drawings. In these embodiments, the same or like reference numerals are used for the same or like elements as those of the previous embodiment, and repetitive discussion has been omitted.

[0357] FIG. **50** is a view illustrating internal structure of an apparatus **1** for cultivating plants according to another embodiment. As illustrated in the drawing, the apparatus **1** for cultivating plants according to this embodiment has a long structure in the vertical direction. The cultivating space **11** is formed inside the cabinet **10** and a plurality of beds **50** and light assemblies **60** corresponding to the beds **50** may be provided.

[0358] In addition, the water tank **40** may be provided at the front most portion of the lowest portion of the cabinet **10**, a water supply assembly, such as the valve of a pump **494**, may be disposed at the rear portion, the machine compartment **12** divided by a partition may be provided at the rear portion of the water supply assembly, and the compressor **32** may be disposed inside the machine compartment **12**.

[0359] The plurality of beds **50** and the light assembly **60** may be provided inside the cultivating space **11**. Only the light assembly **60** is provided on an uppermost surface of the cultivating space **11**, and the bed **50** at the lowermost portion of the cultivating space **11** may be configured to cover the water tank **40** and the pump **494**. The light assembly **60** and the bed **50** may be disposed in a vertical direction in the

space between the uppermost portion and the lowermost portion of the cultivating space 11.

[0360] In addition, a length of the cabinet 10 may be increased. In this case, when the evaporator 31 and the heater 102 are provided only at any one side, the entire inner portion of the cabinet 10 may not be cooled or heated. Accordingly, the blower assembly 80 may be provided on the rear side of the space between the bed 50 and the light assembly 60 above. The evaporator 31 and the heater 102 may be subsequently disposed in the rear portion of the blower assembly 80. The evaporator 31 and the heater 102 may be formed in each space formed by the bed 50 and the light assembly 60. Even in the situation that the length of the cabinet 10 is increased, each space of the bed 50 may be effectively maintained to a set temperature due to the above-described structure.

[0361] A plurality of heaters 102 and evaporators 31 may be provided in the respective spaces to independently adjust temperatures of the corresponding spaces. Accordingly, the spaces defined by the beds 50 may be maintained at different temperatures, thereby providing an optimal temperature environment suitable for various plants.

[0362] Embodiments disclosed herein provide an apparatus for cultivating plants, in which carbon dioxide may be efficiently supplied and circulated in a cultivation space. Embodiments disclosed herein further provide an apparatus for cultivating plants, having a simple external appearance and internal configuration because a configuration for supplying carbon dioxide is not exposed to the inside and outside.

[0363] Embodiments disclosed herein provide an apparatus for cultivating plants, that may increase productivity and reduce manufacturing costs because a configuration for supplying carbon dioxide is simple. Embodiments disclosed herein also provide an apparatus for cultivating plants, that may supply carbon dioxide into a cultivation space using a safe structure.

[0364] Embodiments disclosed herein may include a supply duct that connects a cultivation space and a machine compartment such that air in the machine compartment is supplied to the cultivation space, and a return duct that returns air in the cultivation space to the machine compartment so that air including carbon dioxide may be continuously supplied. The air duct may have an inlet open toward a discharge side of a condenser fan, so the air in the machine compartment may be forcibly supplied when the condenser fan is operated. The inlet may be open toward blades of the condenser fan.

[0365] The return duct may be disposed vertically under an evaporator disposed on a rear wall surface of the cultivation space. The return duct may have an outlet disposed at a discharge side of the condenser fan and may be open toward a bottom of the machine compartment, so air in the cultivation space may flow into the machine compartment.

[0366] An outlet of the supply duct may be disposed closer to a blower assembly than an inlet of the return duct. The outlet of the supply duct may be open on the rear wall surface in the apparatus and may be closed at a front by the blower assembly.

[0367] The outlet of the supply duct may be open toward an inlet of the blower assembly. The inlet of the air duct and the outlet of the return duct may be open so as cross each other.

[0368] The supply duct may extend to the machine compartment through a space between an inner case and an outer case. The supply duct may have a duct upper portion that passes between the inner case and the outer case and a duct lower portion that passes under the machine compartment. A frontward-rearward width of the duct upper portion may be formed smaller than a frontward-rearward width of the duct lower portion, and cross-sectional areas of the duct upper portion and the duct lower portion may be the same.

[0369] The apparatus for cultivating plants according to an embodiment may have at least the following advantages.

[0370] According to embodiments disclosed herein, a supply duct and a return duct that connect a cultivation space and a machine compartment may be provided, so carbon dioxide may be continuously supplied by circulating air between the machine compartment and the cultivation space, whereby it is possible to promote growth of plants. Further, the inlet of the supply duct may be disposed at a discharge side of a condenser fan, so that air in the machine compartment may be forcibly supplied to the cultivation space when the condenser fan is operated. That is, there is the advantage that it is possible to effectively supply carbon dioxide when the condenser fan is operated, without a separate fan or controller for supplying carbon dioxide. There is the advantage that it is possible to improve productivity and remarkably reduce manufacturing costs through this structure.

[0371] Further, the outlet of the supply duct may be disposed adjacent to the blower assembly, so it is possible to effectively supply the air flowing in the cultivation space from the machine compartment into the entire cultivation space. Accordingly, there is the advantage that efficiency of supplying carbon dioxide may be improved.

[0372] Furthermore, the outlet of the return duct may be open toward the bottom of the machine compartment, so air in the cultivation space may be effectively discharged to the machine compartment by negative pressure generated by airflow when the condenser fan is operated. Accordingly, there is the advantage that air for supplying carbon dioxide may be more efficiently circulated.

[0373] The outlet of the supply duct may be covered by the blower assembly, and the inlet of the supply duct and the outlet of the return duct may be positioned in the machine compartment, so that the external appearance may be further improved by preventing exposure of the supply duct and the return duct at any place inside and outside the apparatus for cultivating plants.

[0374] As it is possible to supply carbon dioxide using the air in the machine compartment without a separate configuration, such as a tank, there is the advantage that it is possible to secure safety and operation reliability. Also, as the supply duct and the return duct are disposed between the inner case and the outer case, there is the advantage that a loss of the cultivation space may be prevented.

[0375] It will be understood that when an element or layer is referred to as being “on” another element or layer, the element or layer can be directly on another element or layer or intervening elements or layers. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being “directly on” another element or layer, there are no intervening elements or layers present. As used herein, the term “and/or” includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items.

[0376] It will be understood that, although the terms first, second, third, etc., may be used herein to describe various

elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections, these elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element, component, region, layer or section from another region, layer or section. Thus, a first element, component, region, layer or section could be termed a second element, component, region, layer or section without departing from the teachings of the present invention.

[0377] Spatially relative terms, such as “lower”, “upper” and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe the relationship of one element or feature to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. It will be understood that the spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation, in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. For example, if the device in the figures is turned over, elements described as “lower” relative to other elements or features would then be oriented “upper” relative to the other elements or features. Thus, the exemplary term “lower” can encompass both an orientation of above and below. The device may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein interpreted accordingly.

[0378] The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. 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. It will be further understood that the terms “comprises” and/or “comprising,” when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof.

[0379] Embodiments of the disclosure are described herein with reference to cross-section illustrations that are schematic illustrations of idealized embodiments (and intermediate structures) of the disclosure. As such, variations from the shapes of the illustrations as a result, for example, of manufacturing techniques and/or tolerances, are to be expected. Thus, embodiments of the disclosure should not be construed as limited to the particular shapes of regions illustrated herein but are to include deviations in shapes that result, for example, from manufacturing.

[0380] Unless otherwise defined, all terms (including technical and scientific terms) used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. It will be further understood that terms, such as those defined in commonly used dictionaries, should be interpreted as having a meaning that is consistent with their meaning in the context of the relevant art and will not be interpreted in an idealized or overly formal sense unless expressly so defined herein.

[0381] Any reference in this specification to “one embodiment,” “an embodiment,” “example embodiment,” etc., means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment. The appearances of such phrases in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment. Further, when a particular feature, structure, or characteristic is described in connection with any embodiment, it is submitted that it is within the

purview of one skilled in the art to effect such feature, structure, or characteristic in connection with other ones of the embodiments.

[0382] Although embodiments have been described with reference to a number of illustrative embodiments thereof, it should be understood that numerous other modifications and embodiments can be devised by those skilled in the art that will fall within the spirit and scope of the principles of this disclosure. More particularly, various variations and modifications are possible in the component parts and/or arrangements of the subject combination arrangement within the scope of the disclosure, the drawings and the appended claims. In addition to variations and modifications in the component parts and/or arrangements, alternative uses will also be apparent to those skilled in the art.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for cultivating plants, comprising:
 - a cabinet having a cultivation space;
 - a plurality of beds disposed in the cultivation space and on which plants are cultivated;
 - a plurality of light assemblies disposed above the plurality of beds, respectively, and that radiates light toward top surfaces of the plurality of beds;
 - a heat exchanger disposed at a rear surface of the cultivation space and that controls a temperature of the cultivation space; and
 - at least one blower assembly disposed adjacent to and in front of the heat exchanger and between at least one bed of the plurality of beds and at least one light assembly of the plurality of light assemblies.
2. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 1, wherein air discharged from the at least one blower assembly flows along a lower surface of the at least one light assembly and then along an upper surface of the at least one bed before being recirculated by the at least one blower assembly.
3. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 1, wherein the at least one blower assembly suctions air into the at least one blower assembly at a lower portion of the at least one blower assembly and discharges air at an upper portion of the at least one blower assembly.
4. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 1, wherein the at least one blower assembly comprises:
 - a blowing fan;
 - a blower body, on which the blowing fan is mounted; and
 - a blower cover.
5. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 4, wherein the at least one blower assembly further comprises:
 - air guide formed on a front surface of the blower body and extending upward to guide air discharged from the blowing fan upward.
6. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 4, wherein the blower body includes a discharge guide, formed at an upper end thereof, and wherein air is discharged from the at least one blower assembly toward the at least one light assembly between the discharge guide and the blower cover.
7. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 4, wherein the blower cover includes a bent portion, and wherein air is suctioned into the at least one blower assembly between the bent portion and a rear end of the at least one bed.

8. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 4, wherein the at least one blower assembly further comprises:

a fan mount by which the blowing fan is mounted in the at least one blower assembly, the fan mount including a recess formed at a center of a rear surface of the blower body in a shape corresponding to the blowing fan, wherein an air hole is formed in the fan mount through which air is introduced to the blowing fan when the blowing fan rotates, and wherein the at least one blower assembly further comprises:

air guide formed on a front surface of the blower body at lateral sides of a center of the fan mount and extending upward to guide air discharged from the blowing fan upward.

9. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 1, wherein the heat exchanger is disposed in a rear wall of the cabinet.

10. An apparatus for cultivating plants, comprising:

a cabinet having a cultivation space;

at least one bed disposed in the cultivation space and on which plants are cultivated;

at least one light assembly disposed above the at least one bed and that radiates light toward a top surface of the at least one bed;

a heat exchanger disposed at a rear surface of the cultivation space and that controls a temperature of the cultivation space; and

at least one blower assembly disposed adjacent to and in front of the heat exchanger and between the at least one bed and the at least one light assembly.

11. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 10, wherein air discharged from the at least one blower assembly flows along a lower surface of the at least one light assembly and then along an upper surface of the at least one bed before being recirculated by the at least one blower assembly.

12. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 10, wherein the at least one blower assembly suctions air into the at least one blower assembly at a lower portion of the at least one blower assembly and discharges air at an upper portion of the at least one blower assembly.

13. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 10, wherein the at least one blower assembly comprises:

a blowing fan;

a blower body, on which the blowing fan is mounted; and

a blower cover.

14. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 13, wherein the blower body includes a discharge guide, formed at an upper end thereof, and wherein air is discharged from the at least one blower assembly toward the at least one light assembly between the discharge guide and the blower cover.

15. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 13, wherein the blower cover includes a bent portion, and wherein air is suctioned into the at least one blower assembly between the bent portion and a rear end of the at least one bed.

16. An apparatus for cultivating plants, comprising:

a cabinet having a cultivation space;

at least one bed disposed in the cultivation space and on which plants are cultivated;

at least one light assembly disposed above the at least one bed and that radiates light toward a top surface of the at least one bed;

a heat exchanger disposed at a rear surface of the cultivation space and that controls a temperature of the cultivation space; and

at least one blower assembly disposed in front of the heat exchanger and between the at least one bed and the at least one light assembly, wherein air discharged from the at least one blower assembly flows to a lower surface of the at least one light assembly and then to an upper surface of the at least one bed before being recirculated by the at least one blower assembly.

17. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 16, wherein the air discharged from the at least one blower assembly flows along the lower surface of the at least one light assembly and then along the upper surface of the at least one bed before being recirculated by the at least one blower assembly.

18. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 16, wherein the at least one blower assembly suctions air into the at least one blower assembly at a lower portion of the at least one blower assembly and discharges air at an upper portion of the at least one blower assembly.

19. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 16, wherein the at least one blower assembly comprises:

a blowing fan;

a blower body, on which the blowing fan is mounted; and

a blower cover, wherein the blower body includes a discharge guide, formed at an upper end thereof, and wherein air is discharged from the at least one blower assembly toward the at least one light assembly between the discharge guide and the blower cover.

20. The apparatus for cultivating plants according to claim 16, wherein the at least one blower assembly comprises:

a blowing fan;

a blower body, on which the blowing fan is mounted; and

a blower cover, wherein the blower cover includes a bent portion, and wherein air is suctioned into the at least one blower assembly between the bent portion and a rear end of the at least one bed.

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