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SPRINKLER RISER EXTENSION KIT

Abstract

A sprinkler riser extension kit elevates a pop-up sprinkler that has a riser and a head detachable from the riser. The kit includes a gripping head having a channel extending therethrough, and a riser extension configured to slide within the channel and having a length corresponding to the length of the channel. The lower end of the gripping head is configured for attachment to the sprinkler, e.g., by a plurality of flexible pawls spaced evenly about the lower end. The riser extension includes means for attachment between the sprinkler head and the sprinkler riser. To elevate the sprinkler, the head is detached, the riser passed through the gripping head, the riser extension attached to the riser, the head attached to the riser extension, and the gripping head attached to the top of the sprinkler.

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Background/Summary

RELATED APPLICATIONS [0001] This application is a continuation of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/135,699 filed Apr. 17, 2023, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/080,800 filed Oct. 26, 2020, which is a continuation-in-part of and claims priority to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/377,199 filed on Apr. 6, 2019, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application 62/725,970 filed Aug. 31, 2018, all of which are fully incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to irrigation systems, and more particularly to a retrofit riser kit for lawn sprinklers, especially pop-up sprinklers.

Description of Related Art

[0003] Heads for pop-up sprinklers in irrigation systems, particularly those installed in lawns and gardens, become buried over time due to soil build-up and grass growth in the immediate vicinity of the sprinkler head. This causes blockage of the pop-up action or blockage of water flow, rendering the sprinkler unable to provide desired irrigation coverage.

[0004] A conventional solution is to dig away the grass and dirt around the sprinkler head, then remove the sprinkler head from its riser (usually made of PVC), and add length to the riser by cutting and cementing a riser extension in place. After the cement cures, the sprinkler head can then be reinstalled to the riser extension at a higher elevation above the lawn.

[0005] The conventional solution, however, is labor intensive and time consuming, and also risks introducing dirt and other debris into the sprinkler line that can clog sprinkler heads and cause further problems later on. Other solutions involve installing risers internal to the sprinkler head mechanism, but these are also time consuming because they require that the sprinkler cap be removed and its internal mechanism reconstructed. Those solutions are also structurally specific to a particular make and model of sprinkler head.

[0006] What is needed is a universal riser that fits multiple makes and models of sprinkler heads, that is easy to install, and that doesn't require digging up the sprinkler or cutting and cementing irrigation lines.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The foregoing problems are overcome by a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention. In a basic embodiment, the extension kit consists of two cooperating parts: an external gripping head ("gripping head"), and an internal riser extension ("riser extension"). Both the gripping head and the internal riser extension are configured to be stacked on one another to extend the height of a sprinkler riser in as many stages as desired. That is, the lower end of each gripping head can mate to an upper end of an identical gripping head, and the lower end of the internal riser extension can be connected to an upper end of an identical internal riser extension.

[0008] The gripping head may be sized to at least partially cover the cap of a conventional sprinkler head, either in an off-the-shelf condition or in a condition of prior installation in an

irrigation system. In one embodiment the gripping head has an upper end and a lower end, and a channel extending through the upper end and lower end, wherein the lower end includes a means for attachment to a sprinkler. The riser extension is configured to slide within the channel, and has a first attachment means configured for attachment to a head of the sprinkler, and a second attachment means configured for attachment to a riser of the sprinkler from which the head of the sprinkler is detached.

[0009] The channel may run centrally through the gripping head, such that the channel is concentrically aligned with a central rotational axis of the gripping head. The channel preferably has a height substantially equal to the length of the riser extension, and allows for tight passage of the riser extension therethrough. In one embodiment, the attachment means at the lower end of the gripping head is configured with a plurality of pawls for facilitating removable attachment of the gripping head to the cap of the sprinkler head. The pawls may be evenly spaced about the perimeter of the lower end, and each pawl may include an inwardly projecting flexible finger that snap-fits to the cap when the gripping head is pressed downward over the cap. The upper end of the gripping head may also include one or more outwardly projecting tabs to provide a means for rotating the gripping head by hand. The top surface of the gripping head may include a rim surrounding the entrance to the cylindrical channel that acts as a stop to prevent passage of a sprinkler head therethrough.

[0010] In one embodiment, the riser extension is generally cylindrical, and may comprise a length of pipe having the first and second attachment means at opposing ends, which may be threaded attachments. Preferably, the riser extension includes male threading at its upper end configured to engage female threading of the sprinkler head. At its lower end, the riser extension may include female threading of similar configuration. Preferably, the riser extension has an outer surface configured to allow the riser extension to slide tightly but freely against interior walls of the channel when subjected to a pop-up force of the sprinkler. In another embodiment, the lower end of the riser extension may include a rim having a plurality of ridges formed on a bottom surface of the rim that act as a lock washer when the riser extension is fully attached to the sprinkler riser.

[0011] In another embodiment, a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the invention includes a gripping head and a riser extension. The gripping head is configured for removable attachment alternatively to both of a top end of a sprinkler and an upper end of an identical gripping head. The gripping head further defines a channel extending through the gripping head. The riser extension is configured to slide within the channel, and is further configured for attachment between: a head of the sprinkler, and a riser of the sprinkler from which the head of the sprinkler is detached. The width of the channel substantially equals the width of the sprinkler riser, or the width of the riser extension, or both, and the length of the channel corresponds to the length of the riser extension.

[0012] Another embodiment of the invention provides a kit for elevating a pop-up sprinkler having a riser and a head detachable from the riser, wherein the kit includes a gripping head and a riser extension. The gripping head is configured for attachment alternatively to both of a top end of the pop-up sprinkler and an upper end of an identical gripping head. The gripping head further defines a channel configured for passage of the riser of the pop-up sprinkler therethrough. The riser extension is configured to pass through the channel and is further configured to attach between the riser of the pop-up sprinkler and the head of the pop-up sprinkler.

[0013] In operation, the kit is configured so that an operator can raise a sprinkler riser through the cap of a pop-up sprinkler, remove the head of the pop-up sprinkler from its riser, pass the sprinkler riser through the channel of the gripping head, and attach the riser extension at its lower end to the top of the sprinkler. The sprinkler head can then be attached to the upper end of the riser extension, and the gripping head can then be attached to the cap, e.g. by pressing the gripping head downward until the pawls snap into place around the rim of the cap, to complete the installation and effectively extend the elevation of the sprinkler head according to the length of the riser extension.

The stackable feature of the gripping head and internal riser extension allows the operator to extend the elevation of the sprinkler head in as many stages as desired.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] Other systems, methods, features and advantages of the invention will be or will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following figures and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional systems, methods, features and advantages be included within this description, be within the scope of the invention, and be protected by the accompanying claims. Component parts shown in the drawings are not necessarily to scale, and may be exaggerated to better illustrate the important features of the invention. Dimensions disclosed or shown are exemplary only. In the drawings, like reference numerals may designate like parts throughout the different views, wherein:

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of an external gripping head of a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 is a side view of the gripping head of FIG. 1.

[0017] FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional side view of the gripping head taken along Section A-A of FIG. 2.

[0018] FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the gripping head of FIG. 1.

[0019] FIG. 5 is a side view of one embodiment of an internal riser extension of a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 6 is a bottom view of the internal riser extension of FIG. 5.

[0021] FIG. 7 is a magnified view of a portion of FIG. 6.

[0022] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional side view of the internal riser extension taken along Section B-B of FIG. 5.

[0023] FIG. 9 is a side view of one embodiment of a sprinkler riser extension kit in a condition of use as installed on a conventional pop-up sprinkler.

[0024] FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional side view of the sprinkler riser extension kit in the same condition of use in FIG. 8, taken along Section C-C.

[0025] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of an embodiment of an external gripping head of a stackable sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention.

[0026] FIG. 12 is a top view of the external gripping head of FIG. 11.

[0027] FIG. 13 is a cross sectional side view of the external gripping head of FIG. 11, taken along section lines E1-E1 in FIG. 12.

[0028] FIG. 14 is a cross sectional side view of the external gripping head of FIG. 11, taken along section lines E2-E2 in FIG. 12.

[0029] FIG. 15 is a detail view of the portion of FIG. 14 that is enclosed within the circle labeled F.

[0030] FIG. 16 is a top view of one embodiment of an internal riser extension for use with the gripping head of FIG. 11.

[0031] FIG. 17 is a side view of the embodiment of FIG. 16.

[0032] FIG. 18 is another side view of the embodiment of FIG. 16, rotated by 90 degrees with respect to the view shown in FIG. 17.

[0033] FIG. 19 shows an exploded side view of a stackable sprinkler riser extension kit, in which multiple gripping heads of the embodiment of FIG. 11 are assembled in a stacked configuration.

[0034] FIG. 20 shows a side view of the stackable sprinkler riser extension kit of FIG. 19 assembled in the stacked configuration.

[0035] FIG. 21 shows a partial cross sectional side view of the stackable sprinkler riser extension kit as assembled in the stacked configuration of FIG. 20, taken along section line H-H.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0036] The foregoing problems installing risers on existing pop-up sprinklers are overcome by a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention. In one embodiment, the extension kit consists of two cooperating parts: an external gripping head (“gripping head”), and an internal riser extension (“riser extension”).

[0037] FIG. 1 shows one embodiment according to the invention of a gripping head **10** for a sprinkler riser extension kit. Preferably, the gripping head **10** is formed as a singular component, for example, by an injection molding process using ABS or acetal plastic. In other embodiments, the gripping head **10** may be formed by machining, forging, or three-dimensional printing, from any generally rigid material among many suitable metals and plastics. Preferably, the gripping head **10** has a generally cylindrical form. In one embodiment, the gripping head **10** has an overall height of about 2.5 in. and a width or diameter of about 2.0 to 2.25 in.

[0038] The lower end of gripping head **10** is configured for removable attachment to the cap **24** of a sprinkler **22** that may be any one of a variety of commercially available pop-up sprinklers, such as those manufactured by Hunter®, Rainbird®, Toro® and others. The configuration of the lower end of gripping head **10** that provides the means for removable attachment of the gripping head to the cap of a sprinkler may vary. For example, the removable attachment means may comprise a threaded connection, a clamp, a friction-fit, a locking device such as a tab-and-slot connection, or any combination of the foregoing.

[0039] In one embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 1-4, a gripping head **10** removably attachable to a sprinkler may include a plurality of flexible claws, or pawls **12**, for facilitating removable attachment of the gripping head **10** to the cap portion **24** of any of various conventional pop-up sprinkler heads. The pawls **12** are preferably spaced evenly about the perimeter of the lower end of gripping head **10**. Each pawl **12** may be angled slightly inward. Alternatively, each pawl **12** may include a finger portion **14** that projects inwardly from an inner surface of each pawl toward the axis of the gripping head. To project inwardly means that a finger portion **14** extends in a direction toward and perpendicular to an axis of rotation **11** that is defined as an imaginary vertical line running through the center of the gripping head **10**. By way of illustration, the rotational axis **11** lies in the same plane as Section line A-A in the side view of FIG. 2, and emerges normal to the page at the origin point **11** shown in FIG. 4. Finger portion **14** preferably forms a rounded or wedge-shaped protrusion on the inner surface of each pawl. The dimensions of the pawl **12** are chosen to form a durable and resilient spring so that the pawl will flex and bend outward in response to downward pressure of the claws against the cap of a conventional pop-up sprinkler, and then snap inward when the finger portion **14** of the pawl is forced past a rim **28** of the cap **24**. In this manner, each pawl **12** attaches tightly to the cap, gripping the cap and resisting detachment by detent action of the pawls.

[0040] FIG. 2 shows a side view of the gripping head **10**. In this view, four pawls **12** are visible at the lower end of gripping head **10**, and another four pawls **12** are hidden from sight. Thus, this embodiment there are a total of eight pawls **12** angularly spaced about the lower end of the gripping head at regular intervals. In one implementation of the invention, each pawl **12** may be about 0.4 in. in length, and the spacing between any two adjacent pawls **12** may be about 0.5 in. The width of each pawl **12** may be about 0.44 in. Other numbers, arrangements, and dimensions of pawls **12** are possible within the scope of the invention.

[0041] On an upper portion of the gripping head **10**, one or more outwardly projecting tabs **16** may be formed at one or more locations about the perimeter of the gripping head to provide a means for rotating the gripping head **10** by hand. Outwardly projecting means that tabs **16** extend in a direction away from and perpendicular to the axis of rotation **11**. In a preferred embodiment, four tabs **16** are formed about the gripping head, each spaced apart angularly by 90 degrees. Each tab **16** may be about 0.5 in. high, and about 0.08 in. wide. Other numbers, arrangements, and dimensions of tabs **16** are possible within the scope of the invention.

[0042] FIG. 3 shows a cross-sectional side view of the gripping head **10** taken along Section A-A of FIG. 2. A channel **18** is shown extending centrally through the top surface **17** of gripping head **10** from an upper rim **13** of the gripping head to a lower rim **15** of the gripping head. Channel **18** is preferably cylindrical, and may be concentrically aligned with the rotational axis **11**. Channel **18** may have a height substantially equal to the length of the riser extension **20**, and an inner diameter (or other geometry) that allows for snug passage of the riser extension **20** therethrough, as a piston through a cylinder.

[0043] In one embodiment, gripping head **10** may be constructed with one or more interior voids **21** formed between an inner wall **19** of the gripping head and an outer wall **23** of the gripping head. The inner wall **19** of the gripping head defines a boundary around the vertical channel **18**. The outer wall **23** of the gripping head forms an exterior side surface all around the perimeter of the gripping head **10**. The interior voids **21** reduce the amount of material needed to form the gripping head, to thereby advantageously reduce the weight of the gripping head and also minimize manufacturing costs.

[0044] The outer wall **23** may be cylindrical, rectangular, or another multi-sided geometry, and is preferably ergonomically designed to facilitate grasping or manipulating by hand. Outer wall **23** may also be partially conical or circular, and may combine various of the foregoing or following geometrical features as a means for manual operation. For example, in the embodiment shown in the figures, the outer wall **23** comprises that part of the exterior surface of the gripping head **10** that lies between the upper rim **13** and the lower rim **15**. This part of the exterior surface includes a cylindrical portion **32** and a conical portion **34** (FIG. 1). This particular structure allows an operator to get a firm grip on gripping head **10** by grasping and pressing thumb and forefingers underneath the upper rim **13**, above the conical portion **34**, and against the tabs **16** for reliable handling, pressing, lifting, and rotating.

[0045] FIG. 4 shows a bottom view of the gripping head **10**. This view shows the point through which axis **11** passes into and out of the page. Eight interior voids **21** are shown between the inner wall **19** and outer wall **23**. A vertical divider **25** separates each adjacent pair of interior voids **21**. In this embodiment there are eight vertical dividers **25**, formed at regular angular intervals around the axis **11**. Each vertical divider **25** extends from the inner wall **19** to the outer wall **23**, from the lower end of the gripping head **10** to the top surface **17**. Preferably, the vertical dividers **25** are integrally formed along with all other parts of the gripping head by a casting or injection molding process. The vertical dividers **25** serve to maintain the structural integrity of a gripping head **10** that is formed with one or more voids **21**, while minimizing the mass and manufacturing cost of the gripping head. In other embodiments, there may be different numbers of vertical dividers **25**, spaced at regular or irregular intervals. Alternatively, the gripping head **10** may be formed with a solid interior surrounding vertical channel **18**, with no vertical dividers or voids.

[0046] FIGS. 5 to 8 show one embodiment of an internal riser extension **20** for a sprinkler riser extension kit according to the invention. Preferably, the riser extension **20** is also formed as a singular component, for example, by an injection molding process using ABS or acetal plastic. In other embodiments, the riser extension **20** may be formed by machining, forging, or three-dimensional printing, from any generally rigid material among many suitable metals and plastics. The riser extension **20** may also be machined from pipe stock.

[0047] FIG. 5 shows a side view of the internal riser extension **20**. In one embodiment, the riser extension **20** includes a first attachment means **40**, for attaching to a conventional pop-up sprinkler head **27**. For example, the first attachment means **40** may include male threading at the top end of the riser extension (i.e. the right-most end as shown in FIG. 5) that is configured to threadably engage with female threading of a conventional pop-up sprinkler head, e.g. $\frac{5}{8}$ -28 threads or otherwise. On the opposite or lower end, the riser extension **20** may be configured with a second attachment means **42**, for attaching to a riser **26** of the conventional pop-up sprinkler. For example, the second attachment means **42** may include female threading similar to that of the first

attachment means. Preferably, one or both of the first and second attachment means **40**, **42** comprise a removable attachment means. Other structures for the first and second attachment means **40**, **42** are possible within the scope of the invention, for example, means such as a compression fitting, a pipe clamp, an adhesive, a weld, a spring-loaded connector, and a pipe fitting or junction. Whatever structure is used for the attachment means **40** and **42**, the outer surface or outer diameter of the riser extension **20** should be sized to allow it to slide tightly, i.e. freely yet snugly with minimal friction, within and against the internal wall of the vertical cylindrical channel **18**, when assembled as depicted herein and when subjected to a spring force or a pop-up force delivered by a conventional pop-up sprinkler. In one embodiment, the outer diameter of the riser extension **20** is about 0.6 in. The length of the riser extension **20** preferably conforms substantially to the length of the cylindrical channel **18**.

[0048] FIG. **6** shows a bottom view of the internal riser extension of FIG. **5**, and FIG. **7** shows a magnified view of a portion of FIG. **6**. These figures illustrate an optional feature according to the invention on a riser extension **20**, wherein the rim **37** of the lower end of the riser extension **20** may be configured with a plurality of sharp ridges **38** formed on the bottom surface of the rim **37**. The ridges **38** cause the bottom surface of rim **37** to bite into the mating surface of a conventional riser when the riser extension **20** is threaded into full engagement with mating threads of the conventional riser. The ridges **38** thereby act as a lock washer, fixing the mating surfaces as they are rotated into engagement, while preventing disengagement by counter-rotation that is imparted without substantial effort. In one embodiment, the ridges **38** have a height of about 0.02 in., and each ridge is separated from an adjacent ridge by about 0.015 in.

[0049] FIG. **8** shows a cross-sectional side view of the riser extension **20** taken along Section B-B of FIG. **5**. This view illustrates exemplary proportions for, and internal configuration of, the riser extension **20**. In one embodiment, the overall length of the riser extension **20** may be between about 1.5 to 2.0 in. The length of the threaded portion **40** (first attachment means) or threaded portion **42** (second attachment means) may be about 0.18 to 0.22 in.

[0050] FIG. **9** shows a side view of one embodiment of a sprinkler riser extension kit in an assembled condition **30** as installed on a conventional pop-up sprinkler **22**. Internal parts of the assembly **30** are shown in the cross-sectional side view of FIG. **10**, which is taken along Section C-C of FIG. **9**, and in which the sprinkler head **27** is shown in exploded view above the assembly for purposes of illustration. The assembly **30** may be achieved by a method according to the invention for extending a height of a sprinkler, as follows: A technician first raises the sprinkler riser **26** through the cap **24**, against a pop-up spring restoring force, to fully expose the sprinkler head **27**. The sprinkler head **27** can then be removed from the top **41** of sprinkler riser **26**. Sprinkler riser **26** may then be passed through the channel **18** of the gripping head **10**, and the riser extension **20** can then be attached at its lower end to the top **41** of the sprinkler riser **26**. The sprinkler head **27** can then be attached onto the upper end of the riser extension **20**, and the gripping head **10** can then be attached to the cap **24** as a final step. In the embodiment shown, the final step may be achieved by pressing the gripping head **10** onto the cap **24** until the pawls **12** snap into place around the rim **28** of the cap **24** as shown, to complete the installation and effectively extend the elevation of the sprinkler head **27** of sprinkler **22** according to the length of the riser extension **20**.

[0051] In alternative embodiments of the method, the gripping head **10** may be attached to the cap **24** at any time after passage of sprinkler riser **26** through channel **18**. Where the means for attaching the gripping head **10** to the sprinkler **22** includes the plurality of pawls **12**, a technician can effect the attachment step by grasping the gripping head **10** and pushing it downward onto the cap **24**, forcing pawls **12** around the top of the cap **24** until the gripping head snaps into place around rim **28**.

[0052] A configuration of a gripping head **10** that includes the plurality of pawls **12** disposed about the lower end of the gripping head provides another advantage when installing a sprinkler riser kit according to the invention onto a buried or partially buried sprinkler **22**. Prior to the installation, a

technician can place the gripping head **10** over the cap **24**, with or without snap-fitting the pawls to the cap, and rotate the gripping head. By rotating the gripping head **10** in opposite directions, the pawls **12** can be used to clear away grass, dirt, and other debris from around the cap **24**. This will prevent the debris from entering the sprinkler **22** and potentially clogging the head or interfering with internal mechanisms. The gripping head **10** may thus be configured with a means for clearing debris from a buried or partially buried sprinkler.

[0053] FIG. **11** shows a perspective view of an embodiment of an external gripping head **110** of a stackable sprinkler riser extension kit according to the present invention. The gripping head **110** is similar to the gripping head **10**, and differs from gripping head **10** only by the addition of several structural features formed in the top surface **17** around or within the vertical channel **18**. On gripping head **110**, the upper end of the vertical channel **18** is widened and a shelf **112** is provided to define a recessed area **114** above the shelf **112** for receiving a flanged sprinkler head when a pop-up sprinkler is depressurized and the sprinkler head retracts downward into the gripping head. The shelf **112** provides a secure seat for the flanged rim of the sprinkler head (not shown). In one embodiment, the depth of the shelf **112** from the top surface **17** may be about 0.25 in. By providing the recessed area **114** for receiving a sprinkler head, the gripping head **110** effectively protects the sprinkler head from accidental damage as it would otherwise be exposed to lawnmower blades or other potentially harmful impacts.

[0054] Also on gripping head **11** are formed one or more head access channels **116**. The head access channels **116** are provided adjacent to the recessed area **114**, to allow an operator to grip the underside of a recessed rim of a sprinkler head, to facilitate raising of the sprinkler head. The head access channels may have any shape, and may have the same depth as shelf **112**, or may have a slightly greater depth than the depth of the shelf **112**. In one embodiment, the shape of the head access channels may resemble a logo of the gripping head manufacturer.

[0055] Also formed into the top surface **17** are two key holes **120**. The keyholes **120** are preferably located equidistant from, and on opposite sides of the edge of the recess area **114**. The keyholes **120** are sized to engage with tines of a turning tool, fork, or turn-on key that is commonly used to rotate valves open and closed. With one or more gripping heads **110** installed atop a sprinkler cap, rotation of the keyholes **120** by the tines of a turn-on key will screw or unscrew a threaded sprinkler cap.

[0056] FIG. **12** shows a top view of the external gripping head **110**. In an exemplary embodiment, the diameter of the top surface of the gripping head **110** is about 2.25 in. This is the same diameter of the upper surface of gripping head **10**, of the upper rim **13**, and of the rim **28** of one style of commercial sprinkler cap. To further illustrate the structure of the gripping head **110**, two section lines E1-E1 and E2-E2 are defined through this view for further discussion below.

[0057] FIG. **13** shows a cross sectional side view of the external gripping head **110**, taken along section lines E1-E1 in FIG. **12**. This view illustrates several exemplary dimensional features, which are for purposes of illustration only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention to the dimensional examples given. Skilled artisans will recognize that these dimensions are nominal, may be scaled up or down, and each may be given reasonable tolerance, for example, in a range of 10% to 20%. Rounded edge **131** may define a radius of about 0.02 in. Angle **132** may be about 12 degrees. Upper rim **133** may have a height of about 0.35 in. Rounded edge **134** may define a radius of about 0.25 in. The beveled edge **135** at the lower end of channel **18** may have a height of about 0.04 in. slanted at about 20 degrees. Width **136** of inner wall **19** may be about 0.1 in. Width **137** of outer wall **23** may be about 0.1 in. Gripping head **110** also features a solid upper interior portion **138** surrounding the channel **18**, to provide greater overall component strength, resulting in less volume for the interior void **21**, in comparison to the more hollow configuration of the prior embodiment.

[0058] FIG. **14** is a cross sectional side view of the external gripping head **110**, taken along section lines E2-E2 in FIG. **12**. Like FIG. **11**, this view is similarly provided for illustrative, and not

limiting purposes. Height **141** of cap **13** may be about 0.15 in. Width **142** of the channel **18** may be about 0.82 in. Angle **143** may be about 160 degrees. Overall width **144** may be about 2.5 in. Gap **145** may be about 0.04 in. Widths **146**, **147**, and **148** may be about 2.16, 2.19, and 2.4 in., respectively.

[0059] FIG. **15** is a detail view of the portion of FIG. **14** that is enclosed within the circle labeled F, to illustrate one embodiment of a pawl **12** according to the invention. Like FIG. **11**, this view is similarly provided for illustrative, and not limiting purposes. Width **151** of the pawl **12** may be about 0.8 in. The radius indicated at **152** may be about 0.25 in. Pawl length **153** above the finger portion **14** may be about 0.15 in. Overall pawl length **154** may be about 0.4 in. The angle **155** defining the distal shape of the pawl **12** may be about 37 degrees. The radius of the finger portion **14** indicated at **156** may be about 0.16. The angle **157** from the distal end of the pawl **12** to the lower base **158** of the gripping head **110** may be about 86 degrees.

[0060] FIG. **16** is a top view of one embodiment of an internal riser extension **160** for use with the gripping head **110**. This view also corresponds to a top view of the internal riser extension **20** shown in FIG. **8**. FIG. **17** is a side view of internal riser extension **160**. FIG. **18** is another side view of the internal riser extension **160**, rotated by 90 degrees with respect to the view shown in FIG. **17**. A flattened area **161** may be provided at an intermediate location between the upper and lower ends of the internal riser extension **160**, to allow the internal riser extension **160** to be held firmly in place by a tool such as an end wrench when unscrewing or removing a sprinkler head from an upper end of the extension **160**, or when unscrewing or removing the extension **160** from a threaded sprinkler riser.

[0061] FIG. **19** shows an exploded side view of a stackable sprinkler riser extension kit, in which multiple gripping heads of the embodiment of FIG. **11** are assembled in a stacked configuration **200**. As in the prior embodiment of gripping head **10**, gripping head **110** may be stacked onto another gripping head of similar size and configuration by snap-fitting pawls **12** to the rim **28** of another gripping head stacked immediately below, as shown. As in the prior configuration **30**, each time a gripping head **10** or **110** is added to a sprinkler riser to raise its overall elevation, an internal riser extension **20** or **160** must be installed as described above to extend the overall length of the riser for engagement with a sprinkler head **27** at the top of the uppermost gripping head. When stacking gripping heads, it is important to maintain dimensional tolerance to ensure that the upper rim **13** of each gripping head snaps securely to the pawls **12** of the gripping head immediately above. Key dimensions to ensure stackability of the gripping heads are the diameter and height of the upper rim **13**, and the pawl-to pawl lengths **146**, **147**, **148** previously defined. In one embodiment, the pawls **12** are constructed so that the dimensions **146** and **148** are, respectively, about 5% less than and greater than the diameter of the top surface of gripping head **10**, **110**, or the upper rim **13**.

[0062] FIG. **20** shows a side view of the stackable sprinkler riser extension kit assembled in the stacked configuration **200**. The stack consists of three gripping heads **110**, where the lower gripping head is snap-fit to the cap of a sprinkler **22**, the middle gripping head is snap-fit to the upper rim of the lower gripping head, and the upper gripping head is snap-fit to the upper rim of the middle gripping head. Thus, according to the invention, gripping heads and riser extensions are configured to be stackable atop one another, to elevate the sprinkler in multiple stages.

[0063] FIG. **21** shows a partial cross sectional side view of the stackable sprinkler riser extension kit as assembled in the stacked configuration **200**, taken along section line H-H of FIG. **20**. This view illustrates the snap-fit engagement of pawls **12** to upper rims **13**, or to rim **28** of cap **24** of the sprinkler **22**. The lowest-placed internal riser extension **160** is shown installed inside of the lowest gripping head **110**. An additional internal riser extension **160** is provided (though not shown) and internally installed with each gripping head to extend the overall length of the sprinkler riser so that a sprinkler head **27** (FIG. **10**) may be attached to the topmost internal riser extension **160** and seated atop the top-most gripping head **160**.

[0064] Exemplary embodiments of the invention have been disclosed in an illustrative style. Accordingly, the terminology employed throughout should be read in a non-limiting manner. Although minor modifications to the teachings herein will occur to those well versed in the art, it shall be understood that what is intended to be circumscribed within the scope of the patent warranted hereon are all such embodiments that reasonably fall within the scope of the advancement to the art hereby contributed, and that that scope shall not be restricted, except in light of the appended claims and their equivalents.

Claims

1-20. (canceled)

21. A riser extension kit configured for installation on a pop-up sprinkler that is operational without such kit installed, the pop-up sprinkler having an enclosure having (i) an outlet end and an inlet end, (ii) a riser having an internal hollow channel installed within the enclosure and in fluid communication with the inlet end of the enclosure, and (iii) a cap having a topside and a bottom side, the riser configured to direct water entering the inlet end to flow through the riser and the cap and to exit a sprinkler head at the outlet end, the riser extension kit comprising: a gripping head having a means for removably attaching to the enclosure of the pop-up sprinkler, wherein the gripping head has an upper end, a lower end, an inner wall defining a channel, and an outer wall, separated from the inner wall, connecting the upper end to the lower end, wherein the outer wall extends beyond a bottom end of the channel to form an open space below the bottom end of the channel; and a riser extension having a means for removably engaging the riser, wherein the riser extension is movable through the channel of the gripping head.

22. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the removable attachment means comprises threads configured to threadably engage the enclosure.

23. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the removable attachment means comprises a friction-fit to the enclosure.

24. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the removable attachment means comprises a plurality of pawls extending from the lower end, the pawls configured to engage the enclosure.

25. The riser extension kit of claim 24, wherein each of the plurality of pawls includes a finger portion extending radially inward, wherein each finger portion is configured to grip the enclosure.

26. The riser extension kit of claim 24, wherein the plurality of pawls form the open space.

27. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the removable engagement means comprises threads formed at first end of the riser extension and a second set of threads formed at an opposite second end of the riser extension.

28. The riser extension kit of claim 27, wherein the riser extension is configured to threadably engage the riser between the inlet end of the enclosure and the sprinkler head.

29. The riser extension kit of claim 28, wherein the threads at the first end of the riser extension are internal threads and the second set of threads at the second end of the riser extension are external threads.

30. The riser extension of claim 29, wherein the first end of the riser extension further comprises a rim having a plurality of ridges, the rim formed below the internal threads.

31. The riser extension of claim 30, wherein the ridges are configured to lock the riser extension into engagement with the riser to provide resistance to rotational separation of the riser extension from the riser.

32. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the gripping head further comprises a means for rotating the gripping head by hand.

33. The riser extension kit of claim 32, wherein the rotation means comprises at least one outwardly projecting tab extending from the outer wall between the upper end and the lower end.

34. The riser extension kit of claim 21, wherein the gripping head further comprises a means for

removably engaging a second gripping head configured to provide a stacked arrangement.

35. The riser extension kit of claim 34, wherein the means for removably engaging a second gripping head comprise a rim formed around the upper end of the gripping head, wherein the rim is configured to engage with a lower end of the second gripping head.

36. The riser extension kit of claim 34, wherein the riser extension further comprises a second engagement means configured to removably engage the riser extension to a second riser extension.

37. The riser extension kit of claim 21, the gripping head further comprising means to clear debris from an area immediately surrounding the pop-up sprinkler.
