HOLIDAY LIGHT STORAGE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

A holiday light storage system, for storing holiday light strings having a main cord and a plurality of dangling strands spaced along and extending from the main cord, using a storage device having a base, a hub extending upward from the base, and a plurality of spokes extending radially from the hub. The main cord is wrapped around the hub above the spokes, the main cord is supported by the spokes, and the dangling strands hang perpendicularly downward from the main cord. Accordingly, the holiday lights are maintained in a substantially tangle-free condition. The base preferably allows the hub to rotate to facilitate wrapping the light strings around the hub, and removal of the light strings from the hub.
HOLIDAY LIGHT STORAGE SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a holiday light storage system. More particularly, the invention relates to a storage system which allows holiday lights to be conveniently stored without tangling.

[0002] Holiday lights have been used through the ages to celebrate the holiday season, at a time when the days are short and natural light is most scarce. Once electricity became commonly available, people have decorated their homes and businesses with strings of electric lights.

[0003] Perhaps the most radical development of electric holiday lights in recent years has been the “icicle” lights, which have all but replaced the traditional linear light strings.

[0004] The icicle lights have a main cord, which is generally strung horizontally across the eaves of a building, just as traditional light strings. However, the icicle lights then have a plurality of dangling strands, which dangle from the main cord at uniform intervals. Each dangling strand has several light bulbs thereon, giving the appearance of an illuminated icicle.

[0005] Perhaps the only drawback to the use of holiday lights is the difficulty storing these light strings between holiday seasons. Even when coiled prior to storage, traditional holiday lights seem to tangle anyway. The light bulbs catch upon each other, making untangling an expected task. However, the icicle lights presents even further difficulties, considering that with the multiple dangling strands, dozens of individual strands and ends are present. Accordingly, untangling these lights presents an unusually difficult and frustrating task to the homeowner. In addition, the fragile bulbs can be easily damaged while attempting to untangle the strands.

[0006] Schemes have been devised for storing holiday decorations of all kinds between holiday seasons. While these units may be suitable for the particular purpose employed, or for general use, they would not be as suitable for the purposes of the present invention as disclosed hereafter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] It is an object of the invention to provide a holiday light storage system which allows holiday light strings to be effectively stored between holiday seasons. Accordingly, a system is provided which allows strings of lights to be wound around a central hub, to prevent tangling thereof.

[0008] It is a further object of the invention to provide a holiday light storage system which allows multiple branches, “icicle” lights to be stored without tangling. Accordingly, the system winds the main cord of these light strings around the hub such that the dangling strands are allowed to hang plumb beneath the main cord in a manner that prevents tangling from taking place.

[0009] It is a still further object of the invention to facilitate easy winding of the light strings upon the hub. Accordingly, by the preferred embodiment, the hub is mounted upon a “lazy susan” turntable, such that the hub may be rotated as the light strings are wrapped therearound, and may once again rotate when the light strings are being removed from the hub.

[0010] It is an even further object of the invention to allow a significant quantity of holiday lights to be stored using a single unit. Accordingly, at least two spokes extend radially from the hub, allowing the main cords of several light strings the spiral therearound, while the dangling strands associated therewith hand directly therebelow.

[0011] The invention is a holiday light storage system, for storing holiday light strings having a main cord and a plurality of dangling strands spaced along and extending from the main cord, using a storage device having a base, a hub extending upward from the base, and a plurality of spokes extending radially from the hub. The main cord is wrapped around the hub, supported above the spokes, and the dangling strands hang perpendicularly downward from the main cord. Accordingly, the holiday lights are maintained in a substantially tangle-free condition. The base preferably allows the hub to rotate to facilitate wrapping the light strings around the hub, and removal of the light strings from the hub.

[0012] To the accomplishment of the above and related objects the invention may be embodied in the form illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Attention is called to the fact, however, that the drawings are illustrative only. Variations are contemplated as being part of the invention, limited only by the scope of the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] In the drawings, like elements are depicted by like reference numerals. The drawings are briefly described as follows.

[0014] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic perspective view, illustrating the invention, per se.

[0015] FIG. 2 is a diagrammatic perspective view of the invention in use, wherein a string of holiday lights is being wrapped around the hub, and the dangling strands associated with the main cord thereof is hanging below.

[0016] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view, illustrating the invention being placed in a storage box.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] FIG. 1 illustrates a holiday light storage system 10, comprising a horizontal base 12 and a main hub 14 extending vertically upward therefrom. The main hub 14 has a bottom 14B at the base 12, and a top surface 14T. The main hub 14 is generally cylindrical in shape, having a central axis.

[0018] A plurality of spokes 16 extend radially outward from the main hub 14 at uniform circumferential intervals. The spokes 16 are located near the top surface 14T, preferably are all at substantially the same height above the base 12, and extend substantially parallel to the base 12.

[0019] The base 12 is generally rectangular, having four sides 12S, and preferably comprises an upper plate 20 and a lower plate 22. The upper plate 20 is mounted for rotation upon the lower plate 22 as shown by the arrows in FIG. 1.
To facilitate even rotation within the confines of the base 12, the upper plate 20 is preferably circular in shape, coaxial with the central axis of the main hub 14, and has a radius which is smaller than the minimum radial distance from the central axis to one of the sides 125.

[0020] FIG. 2 illustrates the light storage system 10 in use, being used to store a multi-branch light string 30. Commonly known as an “icicle” lights, the multi-branch light string 30 includes a main cord 32, and a plurality of dangling strands 34 which hang from the main cord 32. The dangling strands 34 each have an end 35 opposite from the main cord 32, and each have a dangling strand length, measured between the main cord 32 and the end 35. Adjacent dangling strands 34 are spaced apart along the main cord 32 at substantially uniform intervals. A plurality of light bulbs 36 are distributed along each of the dangling strands 34.

[0021] As illustrated in FIG. 2, the light string 30 is wrapped around the hub 14, wherein the main cord 32 is directly wound around the hub 14, above the radial spokes 16. Accordingly, as the main cord 32 is wound around the hub 14 and is supported by the spokes 16, the dangling strands 34 straddle the spokes 16, hanging plumb, parallel to the central axis of the main hub 14. As the light string 30 is continually wrapped around the main hub 14, it spirals outward therefrom in a substantially planar configuration, wherein the dangling strands 34 hang neatly therebelow, perpendicular to the main cord 32, in a compact but relatively untangled mass.

[0022] In order to allow the dangling strands 34 to hang neatly below the main cord 32, with each of the dangling strands 34 hanging relatively straight and plumb, the spokes 16 must be located a height above the base 12 which exceeds the strand length. Generally, the strand length of most multi-branch light strings commonly manufactured is substantially standard. Accordingly, the proper height for the spokes 16 above the base 12 can be readily determined. However, a relatively safe range of variation for different purposes would dictate that the height of the spokes 16 above the base fall within the range of eight to thirty six inches, wherein such configurations accommodate strand lengths of up to thirty six inches.

[0023] Because the base 12 allows rotation of the hub 14, storage and removal of the light strings 30 upon the hub 14 is greatly facilitated. As seen in FIG. 2, the main cord 32 can be rapidly wound around the hub 14, provided that care is taken to ensure that the dangling strands 34 are not inadvertently pulled across two of the spokes 16 instead of dangling between the spokes. A suggested practice is to hold the main cord 32 taught outwardly from the hub 14 to ensure that the dangling strands 34 fall around the spokes 16 and do not get caught thereon. Removal of the light strings 30 is also facilitated by rotation at the base 12. Accordingly, one can simply pull the main cord 32 radially away from the hub 14, causing the hub to rotate and release the light string 30.

[0024] To facilitate both rotation of the hub 14 and removal of the light storage device 10 from a storage box 40, a handle 38 is provided on the top surface 14T of the main hub 14. The handle 38 is preferably provided in the form of a collapsible strap 39, which arcs upward to accommodate a hand when needed to lift or rotate the light storage device 10, as shown in FIG. 2, and folds relatively flat against the top surface 14T when not in use, as shown in FIG. 1. Such a handle can be implemented in a number of ways. One example is to provide a flange at both ends of the strap, and provide slots in the top surface 14T which are smaller in size than the flanges. Thus, the strap can be pulled upward until the flanges meet the top surface 14T at which point the strap can be used to lift the device 10, or the strap can be pushed downward so that it extends through both slots until the strap is folded flat against the top surface 14T.

[0025] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view, which shows the device 10 in conjunction with the storage box 40. The storage box is of a generally rectangular prism shaped configuration, such that it snugly accommodates the base, and has sufficient height to accommodate the device from the base 12 to the top surface 14T of the main hub 14. As seen in FIG. 3, the light string 30 has been wrapped around the hub 14, with the main cord 32 remaining above the spokes 16 and the dangling strands 34 hanging freely therebeneath. As illustrated, the main cord 32 droops somewhat between spokes 16. Accordingly to remain neat, four spokes 16 is preferred. However, a minimum of two spokes 16 is possible.

[0026] In conclusion, illustrated herein is a holiday light storage system which allows holiday light strings to be stored in a neat, logical, and tangle-free manner. The invention may be embodied in the form illustrated in the accompanying drawings, which provides an example of an implementation of the inventive concepts. These illustrations, however, are exemplary only. Numerous variations are possible, while adhering to the inventive concepts. Such variations are contemplated as being a part of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A holiday light storage device, for storing holiday lights having a main cord and a plurality of dangling strands which extend from the main cord at spaced intervals on said main cord, comprising:
a. a base, extending horizontally;
b. a hub, having a top surface and a bottom, the bottom attached to the base, the hub extending vertically upward from the base; and
c. a plurality of spokes, extending radially from the hub and substantially parallel to the base, the spokes extending above the base at a height sufficient to allow the dangling strands to hang therefrom, such that when the holiday lights are stored with the device the main cord is wrapped around the hub above the spokes so that the main cord is supported by the spokes while the dangling strands drape downward from the spokes.

2. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 1, wherein the spokes extend from the hub near the top surface and are all at substantially the same height above the base.

3. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 2, wherein the hub has a central axis, the base includes an upper plate and a lower plate, and the upper plate rotates with respect to the lower plate to provide axial rotation for the hub with respect to the lower plate.

4. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 3, further comprising a handle, the handle located on the top surface of the hub, for allowing the hub to be easily lifted and to facilitate rotation of the hub.
5. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 4, wherein the spokes extend above the base at a height of between eight and thirty six inches.

6. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 5, wherein the handle is collapsible flat against the top surface of the hub when not in use.

7. The holiday light storage device as recited in claim 6, wherein the lower plate is substantially rectangular in shape, having four sides, and wherein the upper plate is substantially circular in shape, coaxial with the hub, and has a radius shorter than a shortest distance from the central axis of the hub to one of the sides.

8. A holiday light storage method, for storing holiday lights having a main cord and a plurality of dangling strands which extend from the main cord at spaced intervals on said main cord, using a storage device having a hub and a plurality of spokes extending radially from the hub, comprising the steps of:

   supporting the main cord by wrapping the main cord around the hub above the spokes; and

   hanging the dangling strands below the spokes, substantially perpendicular to the main cord and substantially parallel to the hub.

9. The holiday light storage method as recited in claim 8, wherein the storage device further has a horizontal base such that the hub extends vertically from the base, and wherein the step of hanging the dangling strands further includes hanging the strands toward the base.

10. The holiday light storage method as recited in claim 9, wherein the base includes a lower plate and an upper plate, the upper plate connected to the hub and rotatable with respect to the lower plate, wherein the step of wrapping the main cord around the hub further comprises rotating the hub axially with respect to the lower plate.

11. The holiday light storage method as recited in claim 10, wherein the storage device has a handle, located on the top surface of the hub, and wherein the step of rotating the hub further comprises grasping the handle and turning the hub with respect to the lower plate using the handle.

12. The holiday light storage method as recited in claim 10, wherein the spokes include four spokes which are located at substantially the same height above the base, and wherein the step of wrapping the main cord around the hub further comprises draping the main cord from spoke to spoke.

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