

STORIES of New Jersey

For traveling, the blooms are placed in cardboard boxes lined with wax paper which will not absorb moisture. The stems are fastened to the bottom of the boxes with cloth tape and the petals are carefully arranged with small pieces of tissue paper between them to prevent folding and to protect them against bruises. Shipments of orchids are made from New Jersey greenhouses as far west as the Rockies and south to the Gulf of Mexico.

The retail price of an orchid ranges from 75 cents to \$12. This high price is due to the fact that it costs 80 cents to raise one flower and that the demand often exceeds the supply.

The American Orchid Society sponsors an orchid show every two years. Held in various cities throughout the country, the shows are given alternately in the spring and fall to permit exhibition of plants flowering during these seasons. Prize exhibits are reserved for the International Flower Show, which takes place each March at the Grand Central Palace in New York. At least half the flowers at this great exhibition are New Jersey grown.

The most conspicuous part of the orchid bloom is the labellum, or lip, a deeply shaded, highly decorated and beautifully fringed cone that droops from the base of the bloom. Rising behind it are two large petals with fringed edges, lighter in color, usually, and approaching only by suggestion the delicate curve of the lip. Framing the petals and the lip are three narrow, long, curling shoots, called sepals, colored like the petals but with smooth edges. The more expensive specimens are deep fuchsia, bronze, yellow or white, with contrasting lip. Pure white blooms, with yellow throats, are always popular. Delicate texture and exotic coloring are essential parts of the orchid's beauty, but the exquisite curves and the individual grace of each segment give the flower an almost unreal, gossamer fragility, like something that has dropped from space and floated to rest.

