

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 1094. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **SPECIAL-CHARACTER KEYS** adaptable for all typewriters solves problem of normally unavailable symbols, letters and superscript numbers when typing. Typewriter adapter is inserted in typewriter and odd-character key, fitted with plastic handle, allows typist to complete entire operation in just four seconds. About 400 characters are available.

• Science News Letter, 79:352 June 3, 1961

☛ **FIRST AID DRESSING** that does not stick to a wound is recommended for larger cuts, burns and scrapes. Crescent-shaped openings on dressing's inner surface continually open and close, draining fluid from wound to an absorbent pad. The flesh-colored, four-layered pad aids healing by keeping the wound in a semi-dry condition.

• Science News Letter, 79:352 June 3, 1961

☛ **SPACE HELMET** for future astronauts among the younger set is a walking communications center. The plastic helmet can send radio signals, broadcast messages a quarter mile, or send a code by blinking red and green lights. The battery operated control unit, complete with signal key and switches, hangs from a strap around the child's neck.

• Science News Letter, 79:352 June 3, 1961

☛ **ROLLING READER**, shown in the photograph, consists of seven cubes and a plastic tube or roller. The words and num-



bers on the cube faces challenge young children to form sentences from words turning up on each roll. With more than 500,000 sentences possible, the game also encourages quick thinking by providing a two-minute hourglass timer.

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☛ **PORTABLE TENNIS TABLE** can be folded up and rolled out of the way when not in use. The full-size regulation table

that folds to a 7½-inch width has special net brackets that fold against table so net need not be removed when table is put away.

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☛ **BED PILLOW** of urethane foam is non-allergenic and can be washed easily in the home laundry. Urethane foam is resilient so that pillow will not flatten out or become matted. Mothproof, mildewproof and odorless, the pillow comes enclosed in zippered or sewn cotton covers.

• Science News Letter, 79:352 June 3, 1961

☛ **SAFETY WARNING LIGHT** for after-dark emergency use by motorists has a plastic red and amber dome. The battery-operated light, which flashes 60 times a minute, can be seen 1,000 feet away. The light, which has a magnet in its base, is placed on the car's metal surface or on the road.

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☛ **THREE-DIMENSIONAL WALL COVERINGS** of vinyl plastic create realistic effect of walled stone or brick in rooms. The wall covering is stain-resistant, easily cleaned, and comes in interlocking sheets readily applied to walls. Designs include used brick, harlequin and Peruvian stone patterns.

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Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

► FROM TOP to bottom, the iris plant is a curious specimen. Its flowers grow inside out and its leaves never open out to full width.

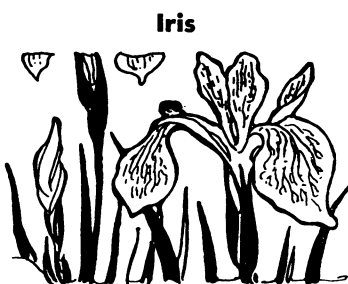
The stiff, sword-shaped leaves of the iris are turned edgewise toward the stem, and not, as in other plants, with the flat side facing upward.

Besides, the stem seems to come from the inside of the leaf, which clasps its base.

The reason is that the iris leaf is really folded in the middle, with its upper surface grown together inside, so that what seem to be the two sides of the leaf are really only two halves of the back.

In the iris flower itself, the outer parts are really the inner ones and vice versa. The three "falls," or petals that project outward and then droop down, have their bases set inside the three bases of the "standards," or upright members of the flower.

These standards are really not petals, but very changed sepals—parts which in other flowers, such as apple blossoms, are just



pointed small green structures under the petals.

Most of the iris species found in American gardens are imported hybrids. But several native species still grow wild, the most familiar being the larger blue flag, which thrives from Newfoundland to Manitoba and southward.

Whether wild or cultivated, most irises prefer moist or marshy places. One notable exception, however, is the colorful iris of Palestine which grows in arid soil baked hard as a brick by the sun.

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Most early elevators were operated by steam engines.

A modern electronic computer can add two five-digit numbers in as little as forty-millionths of a second.

In 1960 the farmer received only 39¢ of the dollar spent by the consumer for food, compared to 51¢ he received in 1947.

Three-fourths of the calcium, nearly half of the riboflavin and one-fourth of the protein in America's food supply comes from milk.

Cleft palate patients with no teeth now will be able to correct their speech defects satisfactorily using a magnetic device recently created.

Although air-breathing fish are found in North America, they are much more prevalent in the tropics where water often is deficient in oxygen.

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