

NZBS GARDEN EXPERTS—3

THOSE who have never had advice from an NZBS garden expert probably imagine that it's a pretty impersonal affair—a letter written, an answer back over the air. But when we asked one of the newer radio voices on gardening, M. J. Barnett, of 3YA, about letters, from listeners, he told us that sometimes when questions have been hard to answer by mail or broadcast he has gone along to the inquirer's home and given a practical demonstration in the garden. "Fortunately," he added, "the inquirers were residents of Christchurch."

Mr. Barnett, whom we mentioned on this page when he took over the session last February, says that he is enjoying the work. He finds that most of his correspondence is from within Canterbury, though he had had letters from as far afield as South Otago and Masterton. "Many local listeners," he says, "make use of the telephone." Far from discouraging this, he rather welcomes it.

With 50 years' practical experience of horticulture behind him, Mr. Barnett says it is still necessary to read books



M. J. BARNETT

and journals which reflect modern trends. Personal observation is also very important, he finds, and apart from visits to such places as the Botanical Gardens, he gains much valuable information from inspecting private gardens and discussing gardening problems with acquaintances. Mr. Barnett, whose session is heard on Monday evenings, was awarded the M.B.E. for services to horticulture, and is the only Associate of Honour of the Royal Horticultural Society of Britain in New Zealand. He is also an Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture.

Garden experts are frequently asked to identify plants of one kind and another, and it's not always an easy thing to do so from a description sent in by an enquirer, for according to a story David Combridge, of 3ZB, once told us, the description often goes something like this: "I have a plant in my garden. It has green leaves and its flowers are pinky white in colour. What is it?" Hard or easy, there are probably not many garden problems that Mr. Combridge has not encountered since he first became a broadcaster more than 22 years ago. His training and experience qualify him more than adequately for the job,



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"WOMEN'S SESSION" organisers from Main National Stations met at Wellington a week or two ago to pool ideas, thrash out common troubles and discover how they could give a better service and better programmes to women-listeners. It was the first time YZ organisers had been able to attend one of these conferences, and because of changes over the past two years most of the eight officers who were present hadn't met one another before. Seen in the picture above are, from left: Rona Davis (2YA), with Shirley Anderson (2YZ) behind her, Beverley Pollock (4YA), Celia Morris (3YA), Cherry Raymond (1YA), Marjorie Green (1YZ), Jane Smith (4YZ) and Barbara Basham (Head Office). In commissioning scripts, producing documentaries and radio portraits, organising discussions and the like, "Women's Session" organisers become experienced in a wide variety of radio work, and besides discussing at their conference what has been done, they made progress with plans for the future and gave special attention to Wednesday National Women's programmes for next year. Differences between sessions in various centres to meet local needs and preferences were among the matters noted by the conference.

since he has been associated with horticulture all his life.

Born in England, Mr. Combridge became an apprentice to a nurseryman in Surrey soon after he left school. He also gained much practical knowledge at Kew Gardens, which was near his home, and before leaving England to take a job with a Christchurch seedsman he topped the list of competitors for the Royal Horticultural Society's Silver Medal. Besides gaining wide practical experience of New Zealand conditions in his new home, he has continued with his more academic studies. Successes in this field include a first-class pass in the Department of Agriculture's examination in Pruning, Spraying and Orchard Management, and a Diploma in Horticulture of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture. Mr. Combridge is heard from 3ZB at 10.0 p.m. on Thursdays and 9.0 a.m. on Saturdays.



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