

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Weather divides north and south in May

RESULTS of the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade show that the weather was a big factor in sales during May (2017) and divided the country.

Compared to the same month last year (2016) sales in the southern part of the country were between 9% to 13% down, whereas the north fared better with sales down by between 2% and 6%.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "The weather played a big factor in our member garden centres' May sales figures, with, contrary to the norm, the north having better weather than the south. However all of our member garden centres had a tough job trying to top the figures from May 2016, which was the highlight of last spring.

"Clothing sales were up 35.18% compared to the same month in 2016. Catering sales were also up 7.4% and houseplants at 2.95%."

Outdoor plant sales were -7.5%, seeds and bulbs -16.37% and garden sundries -7.32%.

Furniture and barbecue sales were -12.47%, gifts up 1.22% and hard landscaping -14.39%. Food hall and farm shop sales were up 0.23%.

Martin Cowell, Director at Cowell's Garden Centre, said: "After a buoyant start in May, which included a bumper Bank Holiday weekend, the second week in May was a disaster. The daily average temperatures were between 12 and 14 degrees, which certainly hampered sales, however the last two weeks saw the weather improve and sales were flying again.

"We ended May -1% down on 2016, which considering the weather, and record sales the previous year, we were very pleased with. It could have been much, much worse. Our top five performing departments in May were bedding at +6%, perennials +12%, shrubs +6%, garden lighting +88% and irrigation up +24%."

Member garden centre sales showed an average overall decrease for the month of 4.64% and an average overall Year to Date increase of 6.4%.

The GCA BoT reports are compiled using actual sales figures and provide an up-to-date trading position statement. They are made available mid-month following the end of the prior month after all member garden centres have submitted their results.

The BoT reports allow members to compare their trading positions with other centres.

The GCA represents nearly 200 garden centres nationwide.

For further information, please call 01244 952170. Alternatively, please visit www.gca.org.uk, log on to www.facebook.com/pages/GardenCentreAssociation or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.

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Photograph caption one: Clothing was a best seller in May according to the GCA's BoT results.

Photograph caption two: Cowell's Garden Centre, which saw increased sales towards the end of May.