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## Garden Centre Retail

# Comfy furniture & sizzling BBQ sales boost April's figures

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Furniture and barbecue sales at garden centres across the country were on the rise during April according to the Garden Centre Association's Barometer of Trade results.

Sales of furniture and barbecues were up 26.73% compared to the same time last year.

Iain Wylie, GCA chief executive, explained: "The Easter holidays at the beginning of the month had the potential to boost sales as families had the time and opportunity to spend their time browsing at garden centres.

"The weather was not as kind as we would have wished on the first two days of the Easter weekend and of course centres were closed on Easter Sunday but the fantastic weather on the Monday seemed to make up for any shortfall in earlier footfall and spending."

During the month sales of outdoor plants were up 12.09%. Sales in pet and aquatics departments rose by 7.31% and catering sales increased by 10.22%.

Lucy Nixon, director at Thetford Garden Centre in Norfolk, said: "April saw a large increase in our coffee shop sales, predominantly due to a higher average spend achieved through additions of tempting lunchtime specials." Sales in houseplants increased by 9.17% compared to 2014.

Mark Winchester, managing director of Blackbrooks Garden Centre in East Sussex, said: "I am happy to report that my April sales were positive and our footfall was up 5%. Most categories reported positive sales growth.

"The biggest category increase by far was garden furniture which was up by 56%. Landscaping, garden sundries and giftware all reported more than 20% increases. Clothing and catering were up 17%.

"Plant sales were looking strong for most of the month but fell sharply towards the end due to cold weather finishing at 5% up. Overall we fished the month a healthy 18% up on last year. Let's keep our fingers crossed for May."