



Garden centre catering sales up despite cold spell

THE GARDEN Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT) results for February (2012) have revealed that strong catering sales in garden centres helped increase overall turnover during the month.

The results, which are compiled using member garden centre sales figures and provide an up-to-date trading position statement, revealed the catering category outperformed all other areas.

Phil Slinger, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "The very cold weather at the start of February meant that garden centres relied on their catering operations to help boost overall sales.

"Analysis of sales figures revealed that catering customer numbers were up by 3%, catering spend was up by 5.5% and turnover increased by 6%."

The BoT reports produced by the GCA allow member garden centres to compare their trading positions with other GCA garden centres.

Phil continued: "Due to the cold spell, overall sales figures were down by 4.9% in comparison to last year.

"Outdoor plant sales were down by 11%, seeds and bulbs by 15% and garden sundries by 7%, which is in line with the argument that weak sales were due to the cold weather.

"Some retailers found February to be a challenging month, however there were garden centres that outperformed the market, proving that it is possible to perform well when external factors make conditions difficult."

The GCA represents nearly 200 garden centres nationwide.

Through sharing information and its inspection programme the GCA helps members to achieve high standards in customer service, plant quality and reliability.