

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

GCA welcomes new inspectors

THE GARDEN Centre Association has today (Monday, January 23, 2017) announced its three new inspectors who will begin visiting member garden centres this spring.

Michael Cole, Gordon Emslie and Hedley Triggs will join current inspector, Roger Crookes, to complete the team for 2017.

Iain Wylie, Chief Executive of the GCA, said: “We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Michael, Gordon and Hedley, who will be joining remaining inspector, Roger Crookes. The three new members will go through a thorough induction process before the inspection window opens to ensure the consistency of marking that we all expect continues.

“We would like to say a huge ‘thank you’ to Alyson Haywood, Andy Campbell and Ian Boardman for their hard work as inspectors for the GCA. Andy and Ian had been visiting member garden centres for many years while Alyson was a relative newcomer, however they all leave with our thanks and best wishes for the future.”

Michael joined Notcutts Garden Centre in St Albans in January 1978 as a General Assistant, working in the planteria. He went on to become Centre Manager six years later.

He was appointed as a Regional Manager in 1987 and oversaw the running of five Notcutts eastern region garden centre. In 2009 he became Business Development and Retail Property Director, overseeing the development of Notcutts’ award winning garden centre at Pembury, Tunbridge Wells and establishment of a new look Notcutts at Wheatcroft, Woodford Park, Norwich and Staines garden centres.

Gordon’s early career experience was in multiple retailing. Prior to setting up a consultancy business in 2006 he was a Store Manager, responsible for a team of 650 and sales of £100M per annum, and business coach within Sainsbury’s.

As a consultant, Gordon has worked with a number of retail clients, including garden centres, focusing on the retail journey and customer service as well as development of the teams who deliver this.

Most recently Hedley has been the manager at the Blue Diamond Trelawney Garden Centre and prior to this can boast 25 years’ experience at management level within garden centres and for growers or plant suppliers. Prior to Trelawney, Hedley was a manager for Wyevale.

He also ran centres such as Sanders Garden World, Bridgemere Garden Centre and Jacks Patch Garden Centre. He was a member of the project management team for the group’s redevelopment of their Percy Thrower’s centre in Shropshire. He started his garden centre career working for Klondyke/Strikes where he held centre manager and buying roles.

Iain added: “The 2017 inspections for member garden centres will commence on Monday, March 20 and centres will be visited until Friday, June 16. The inspection visits are unannounced which enables the inspectors to gain a true picture of the centre they are visiting and then give valuable feedback”

“Michael, Gordon and Hedley, along with Roger, will visit member centres and give objective and honest feedback on what they find. They will produce detailed reports and provide ideas for improving standards. They will also make presentations at our annual conference in 2018 and regional meetings. It is a huge benefit to GCA members.”

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.

For other information, please call 01244 952170, 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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For further media details, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email Cherry@porcupinepr.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive on 07843 633408 or email Iain@gca.org.uk.

Photograph caption one: Michael Cole, who has been announced as one of the GCA’s new inspectors.

Photograph caption two: New GCA inspector, Gordon Emslie.

Photograph caption three: Hedley Triggs, one of the new GCA inspectors.

Photograph caption four: Roger Crookes, one of the GCA’s inspectors.

