

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

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

FURNITURE and barbecue sales at garden centres across the country were on the rise during April (2015) according to the Garden Centre Association's Barometer of Trade (BoT) results.

Sales of furniture and barbecues were up 26.73% compared to the same time last year (2014).

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."

Clothing sales remained up for a second consecutive month at 17.95%.

Christine Pimm, Deputy Shop Manager at Monkton Elm Garden & Pet Centre in Somerset, said: "We have seen good sales in our clothing department during April. The improved weather at the beginning of the month saw our customers stocking up on summer clothing and shoes a little earlier than usual.

"We have also recently streamlined our clothing stock and been more selective with the brands we sell. We have kept to a core range, which has proved to be a hit with the customers."

The BoT results are the only official GCA trading figures to be released.

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

The GCA represents nearly 200 garden centres nationwide.

For further information, please call 0118 930 8918. Alternatively, please visit [www.gca.org.uk](http://www.gca.org.uk), log on to [www.facebook.com/pages/GardenCentreAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/pages/GardenCentreAssociation) or follow the organisation on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/GC\\_Association](https://www.twitter.com/GC_Association).

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**Photograph caption:** Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive.