

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Clothing sales were on the up at GCA member centres

GARDEN centre customers were preparing their wardrobes ahead of the change of season according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT) results for August (2014).

The results out on September 26, which are the only official GCA August trading figures to be released, show clothing sales were up 25.85% as compared to August, 2013.

Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA, explained: "The cooler, wetter weather experienced last month saw a shift in sales being made in less traditional categories such as clothing and catering, which was up 7.14%, as people were drawn indoors.

"However, seed and bulb sales were up 13.5% indicating that many gardeners are preparing for autumn planting.

"Other categories, which performed well during the month were furniture and barbeques up 6.97%, gifts 6.7% up, hard landscaping 3.65% up and food hall/farm shop up 3.55%."

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.

Alan Roper, Managing Director of the Blue Diamond Group, which has garden centres throughout the UK and the Channel Islands, said: "The group enjoyed a particularly strong August in many areas of its clothing range as we refined our offer to suit our target demographic."

Meanwhile in Lancashire clothing and catering sales were the best performers in August.

Guy Topping, Managing Director of Barton Grange Garden Centre, said: "As always in a month where the weather is cooler and wetter than the previous year, clothing and catering out-performed all other categories."

Some member garden centres mentioned the diversity of their clothing ranges had helped contribute to stronger sales in this category.

Jackie Virgo, Clothing Department Head at Evesham Garden Centre, said: "Our clothing departments offer a unique shopping experience for our customers and is especially popular during cooler weather when visitors are drawn indoors.

“The clothing on sale reflects the wide age range of customers who visit our centres. Our buyers have perfectly chosen beautiful clothing ranges from individual brands to create an up market feel, while still keeping our older customers in mind. Merchandising is clean, simple and chic which makes it a calm shopping experience.”

For further information, please call 0118 930 8918. 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: Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA.

