

**Media release for the Garden Centre Association**

# **Core gardening categories spring into life**

GARDEN Centre Association (GCA) members saw sales in core gardening categories increase during February (2015) according to its Barometer of Trade (BoT) results.

Sales of outdoor plants increased 9.42% compared with the same month in 2014, sundries increased 10.27% but it was seeds and bulbs that saw the biggest rise at 14.33% up.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: “It looks as if garden centre customers spent the majority of February preparing for the new season with purchases of new plants, sundries and seeds and bulbs.

“At the moment we have no idea what the year ahead is going to hold for us but it looks as if gardeners have high hopes for good weather and are eager to get back into their gardens and get growing again. It’s great to see sales of core gardening categories on the rise consistently since the beginning of the year and I only hope this continues.”

Sales in pets and aquatics departments also did well at 10.69% up and houseplants at 7.55% up. Catering departments saw an increase of 5.99% compared with 2014.

Katie Eckley, Shop Manager at The Old Railway Line Garden Centre in Wales, said: “February was a great month for us, overall we were up more than 30% on last year and all categories are performing well.

“The weather has been kind to us so far this year and our customers are definitely getting stuck into their gardens nice and early. Sales of plants were up 38%, all categories really performed well, especially hardy shrubs which were up 70% on last year.

“Seeds and bulbs were up more than 30% and the biggest growth here was from packets of seeds. Garden sundries were also up more than 25%, compost was the most improved category in this department. It’s been a great start, fingers crossed for the rest of the season.”

The BoT results, which are the only official GCA trading figures to be released, also revealed sales of garden sundries at 8.6% up compared to 2014.

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.

Mike Burks, Managing Director of the Gardens Group, which has garden centres in Sherborne, Yeovil and Poundbury in Dorset, said: “February was a month which was very

encouraging as sales of compost, seeds, bulbs and seed potatoes were strong as were hardy plants. This strength in core gardening bodes well for the spring, subject to the weather of course.”

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 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 one:** Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive.

**Photograph caption two:** Garden centre spring seed potato displays.