

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

# Clothing and food are big sellers during July

CLOTHING and food halls/farm shops were on the up during July (2015) according to the Garden Centre Association's Barometer of Trade (BoT) results.

An increase of 16.96% compared to last year (2014) was seen in clothing while sales in food halls/farm shops rose 13.97%.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "It's great to see non-traditional categories such as clothing and food halls/farm shops doing well during July. Joining the two categories in the top spot was houseplants, which saw a rise of 13.93% compared to 2014.

"Sales in outdoor plants up 9.09%, which is very positive considering the ever changing British weather we had through the month. Catering sales were up 10.38% and gifts up 11.14% so it was a good month for most categories."

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

Sally Cornelissen, Director at Burleydam Garden Centre in Wirral, which recently received the award for Best Garden Centre in the North West at the GCA's annual inspections, said: "This July has been exceptionally good. We were concerned that the poorer weather compared with 2014 would be a challenge but strong performances from hardy stock, garden sundries and furniture sales coupled with the expected increase in catering turnover has delivered pleasing results.

"There is a definite rise in consumer confidence as illustrated by increased interest in high ticket items. We hope that this confidence will ride out hints of a rise in inflation in the light of the increase in minimum wage in October."

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.

Lauren Cocks, Marketing Manager at Coletta & Tyson Nurseries and Garden Centre in East Yorkshire, said: "We are seeing strong growth within our houseplant department, we have always struggled with strong competition from supermarket prices but it seems the tables are turning and customers are turning to garden centres to add colour and texture to their homes as well as their gardens.

"Catering is so important to our garden centre, people come just to visit our café now and it has meant we are no longer a garden centre with a café. To many we are a catering outlet in our own right. This means we have to keep improving our offering and keep it interesting for new and old customers alike."

The BoT 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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**For further media details, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email [Cherry@porcupinepr.co.uk](mailto:Cherry@porcupinepr.co.uk). Alternatively, please contact Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive on 07843 633408 or email [Iain@gca.org.uk](mailto:Iain@gca.org.uk).**

**Photograph caption:** Coletta & Tyson Nurseries and Garden Centre in East Yorkshire.