

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

BBQ sales continue to sizzle in June

THE CONTINUED warm weather last month (June, 2014) saw barbecues and furniture remain one of the best performing categories for the fourth month running according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT).

The results out on July 16, which are the only official GCA June trading figures to be released, showed furniture and barbecue sales were up 26.6% compared to June, 2013.

Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA, explained: "Our member garden centres had another good month, although sales in more traditional categories were down, which is usual for this time of year. However, this was made up for by good sales in other areas and the continued dry weather has boosted those barbecue and furniture sales yet again.

"As well as furniture and barbecues, the other categories that saw increases during the month were food hall/farm shop, which was up by 5.88%, gifts up by 6.14% and hard landscaping up by 7.64%.

"The year to date figure currently stands at 11.14% up."

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.

William Blake, Manager at St Peters Garden Centre in Worcestershire, said: "We've enjoyed a good year so far on barbecue sales. Strategically, for this year, we decided to only stock Weber barbecues and then price competitively, not necessarily matching, but within reach of the internet prices and it seems to be paying off.

"No longer are customers coming in, viewing the product, getting their smart phones out and going for a cheaper internet option. Plus, of course, they know us and trust us to deliver any after sales service requirements.

"In addition to this we have put a number of our team through training at Weber's Grill Academy. It has created 'experts' able to engage and teach the customers as they are selling, which is very important when customers are purchasing complex high ticket value items.

"In May we enjoyed barbecue sales 80% up versus 2013 and in June, which included a barbecue demo weekend, we saw sales up 100% against the same period last year. The demo weekend, run by our own chefs and staff delivered a number of big ticket sales but also increased our accessory sales, which of course are important to the category performance."

Newbridge Nurseries in Horsham also saw a good month of sales of both garden furniture and barbecues.

Nigel Wait, Managing Director, said: “Unfortunately no one can predict the weather and garden furniture and barbecue sales have done exceptionally well this year because of the good summer. Next year could be completely different so it’s about having the right products on the shop floor, with good back up stocks and then just praying the good weather will return.”

Sales of furniture and associated products were up at Monkton Elm Garden & Pet Centre in Somerset.

Tom Berry, Furniture Supervisor at Monkton Elm Garden & Pet Centre, said: “Furniture and associated products such as parasols, covers and gazebos have seen a 16% uplift on last year’s sales with product availability proving to be the main stumbling block to driving sales further forward.

“Interestingly barbecues and accessories, although up, only show a 5% increase, with internet competition proving to be very tough.”

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: A shopper looking at barbecues at a GCA member garden centre.



