

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Hard landscaping sales paved the way in September

THE CONTINUED dry weather last month (September, 2014) saw garden centre customers investing in improving their outdoor spaces according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT) results.

Hard landscaping sales were up 27.12% for the month as compared to September, 2014 according to the results, which are the only official GCA September trading figures to be released.

Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA, explained: "The mild and dry September has definitely helped to contribute to the increase in purchases of products to help improve outdoor spaces.

"Other good sellers in September were furniture and barbeques, 19.03% up, outdoor plants, 14.64% up, garden sundries, 12.48% up, houseplants, 7.25% up and catering 4.6% 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.

Matthew Bents, Managing Director of Bents Garden & Home in Cheshire, said: "Weather is one of the biggest factors that affects garden centre sales and 2014 has been a fantastic year.

"During the summer months anything garden related proved successful, from our plants and garden care products to garden furniture and outdoor living. This trend continued through to September as customers were keen to make the most of the continued warmer weather.

"We, like most other garden centres, experienced increased sales in garden furniture, accessories and outdoor lifestyle, with figures significantly up on both budget and last year's figures. It has been a great end to the summer and further demonstrates the importance of good weather!"

Meanwhile in Kent catering has been a star performer.

Gary Carvosso, Managing Director at Coolings, The Gardener's Garden Centre, said: "Year to date the catering offer is a star performer, we are budgeting for £1m t.o this year and we have seen growth of 13% for the YTD.

"The key areas for growth have been hot food, coffee and cake in that order. We pride ourselves on serving fresh food, and serving the food direct from the kitchen.

“We introduced a coffee loyalty card to our ‘Arthurs’ restaurant this year, which has lifted coffee sales and we now have two bakers full time supplying almost 100% homemade cakes. Afternoon tea has also been a very popular introduction this year.”

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, 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.

