

**Media release for the Garden Centre Association**

# **Industry's Rising Stars start their ascent**

TWENTY-EIGHT of the most aspiring young representatives of the horticultural industry are meeting this week (Wednesday, March 19, 2014) to kick off the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) 2014 Rising Stars Programme sponsored by Westland Horticulture.

The first of three masterclasses to be held throughout the year will take place at Westland Horticulture in Peterborough on Wednesday, March 19.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "The first masterclass will include a session on merchandising, opportunities for business growth and managing the seasons to make maximum sales and profits.

"There are 28 attending this initial workshop and they will also all go along to a second one in June. The participants will be given extensive coaching and mentoring.

"From the original 28, just 10 will then be selected in September and from those 10, five will be chosen as finalists to attend the GCA Conference in Chester in January.

"At our conference they will make a presentation on what they have achieved during the year. A winner will then be chosen by conference delegates before being presented with his or her prize at the GCA's annual gala dinner on Tuesday, January 27, 2015."

The GCA Rising Stars 2014 Programme has received a record number of entries from garden centre staff looking to get ahead in the world of horticultural retailing.

Iain added: "The initiative is now in its sixth year and has been hugely successful to date, welcomed by the industry and participants alike. We're very proud of everyone who has taken part in previous years and those who have signed up for the programme this year. We're really looking forward to seeing what the 2014 participants are capable of. It's exciting stuff."

The next masterclass will be held on Thursday, June 12 and the third on Thursday, September 11. The venues are yet to be confirmed.

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/Garden-Centre-Association](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-Centre-Association) or follow the organisation on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/GC\\_Association](https://www.twitter.com/GC_Association).

**ENDS**

**For further media details and photographs if required, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email [Rachel@porcupinepr.co.uk](mailto:Rachel@porcupinepr.co.uk). Alternatively, please contact Iain**

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