

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

GCA announces regional award meetings

THE NATION'S Garden Centre Association (GCA) members will find out who have come out top in its annual inspections this year at various regional award meetings taking place this July (2014).

Garden centres are encouraged to attend the event in their area and to bring as many of their team members along as possible.

Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA, said: "The inspector will present the findings from the area, highlighting best practice and new ideas, as well as announcing all the category winners."

The North West/North East region award meeting will be at the Royal Horticultural Society's garden Harlow Carr near Harrogate on Tuesday, July 15 and the inspector attending is Liz Hutson.

Andy Campbell will be the inspector presiding over the Wales & West region's award meeting on Thursday, July 17 at Hillier Garden Centre, Bath. The Midlands region will meet at Klondyke's Byrkley Park Garden Centre at Burton Upon Trent on Monday, July 21 with Andy Campbell.

Meanwhile, the North Thames region will meet at Van Hage Great Amwell on Tuesday, July 22 with inspector Ian Boardman presiding over the event. On Wednesday, July 23 Roger Crookes will be presenting his findings to the South Thames region at Chessington Garden Centre. Details of the Scotland and Northern Ireland events are still to be confirmed.

Will added: "Our round of annual inspections started in March and ran until June. Many GCA members have said that the unique annual inspections and constructive feedback sessions are one of the biggest benefits of membership. It is a fantastic motivational and management tool and really keeps staff on their toes, making sure they are always doing their absolute best.

"Garden centres receive no advance warning about when their inspection will take place and they do not have the option to turn away the inspector. It is all about making sure they are offering a consistently excellent service and improving their customer service standards, which is what all GCA garden centres must do to remain members."

Through sharing information and its inspection programme the GCA helps members to achieve high standards in customer service, plant quality and reliability.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "The results of the inspections form the basis for many GCA awards, including Destination Garden Centre of the Year, Garden Centre of

the Year, Area Winners, Highly Commended and Most Improved Garden Centre. The top 10 centres will receive a Garden Centre of Excellence Award and all centres scoring 75% or above receive the Highly Commended certificate.

“We’d like to wish everyone the best of luck. GCA garden centres have such high standards and we are looking forward to seeing the ideas people have come up with this year to further improve these.”

For further information, please call 0118 930 8918. Alternatively, please visit www.gca.org.uk, log on to www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-Centre-Association or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.

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For further media details and photographs if required, please call Porcupine PR on 01278 446801 or email Rachel@porcupinepr.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive on 07843 633408 or email Iain@gca.org.uk.

