

# Local Gardener



FOOD hall and farm shops sales out performed traditional and non-traditional categories at Garden Centre Association (GCA) member garden centres during March (2016).

Sales were up 23.33% compared to the same month last year (2015) according to the GCA's Barometer of Trade (BoT) report. The best performing traditional category was houseplants at 8.36% up.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "It's not a surprise to see the non-traditional food hall and farm shop category taking top spot in sales during the month as due to the poor, wet weather and early Easter break, many gardeners haven't had the chance to get working on their plots.

"Outdoor plant sales rose 3.31% compared to last year while sales in seeds and bulbs were down -6.65%. When our traditional categories are affected like this it's great to see sales of our non-traditional categories pick up the pace.

"Despite the rain garden centre customers made sure they were kitted out in the latest gear and stopped off at cafés and restaurants during their visits for a spot of lunch, dinner or a cuppa and cake. Catering sales were up 11.78% and clothing was up 10.7%."



Gift sales were up 0.13% and pets and aquatics were up 6.19%. Hard landscaping sales were down -0.94% and furniture and barbecue sales were up 7%.

Iain added: “As the Easter break was so early this year the month’s sales figures aren’t a like-for-like comparison on last year. Easter figures would have been much better if it was a couple of weeks later.

“Due to there being no Easter break in April it has been a more challenging month but as we move into the late spring and early summer we’ve got our fingers crossed that things, including the weather, will improve.”

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 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).