

# Local Gardener

## Sales of houseplants grow in February



HOUSEPLANTS were the best performing traditional category at Garden Centre Association (GCA) member garden centres during February (2016).

Sales were 29.83% up compared to the same month last year (2015) according to the GCA's Barometer of Trade (BoT) report. Other good performers were furniture and barbecues up 29.22% and the best performing non-traditional category, clothing, was up 57.94%.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "After a couple of months of good performances in clothing and gifts, it's great to see the houseplants category now having its moment. When the winter weather is properly set in it is always nice to be able to bring some much needed colour into the home and one of the best ways to do this is with houseplants, particularly cyclamen and orchids. February was a particularly popular time for houseplants due to Valentine's Day.

"Other good performers during the month were outdoor plants with sales up 12.1%, garden sundries up 12.8% and hard landscaping up 10.12%."

Sales in pets and aquatics were 16.55% up, gifts up 25.34% and food hall and farm shop sales up 26.92%.

Iain added: "Sales in catering were also impressive at 17.9% up but seeds and bulbs sales were just 3.76% up, however this is expected to pick up in the following months when more people get out into their gardens."

For the month of February the overall garden centre performance and Year to Date change was 20.92%.

Jean Nixon, Managing Director at Thetford Garden Centre, said: “At Thetford Garden Centre we have always been strong and committed to retailing houseplants. They are now positioned right at the front of the garden centre and are going from strength to strength.

“We also sense that after several years of lacklustre performance in many garden centres, houseplants are starting to gain some real momentum, winning sales back from the supermarkets.”

The BoT results are the only official GCA trading figures to be released.

Ben Thompson, Director at Garsons Garden Centre, Esher, which has recently opened a new restaurant, said: “Garsons Esher catering traded 115% up year-on-year for the month of February, 2016.

“Our new restaurant facility and menu offer has proved a hit with customers, and has led to overall garden centre visitor numbers and spend increases. Our spring menu is being launched very soon, and the outdoor dining terrace will also open, providing further capacity.”

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.

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