

**Media release for the Garden Centre Association**

# **Gardeners prepare for the new season in December**

GARDEN centre customers across the country had their 'organisational hats' on during December (2015) and were preparing for the new season ahead by buying seeds and bulbs.

The Garden Centre Association's Barometer of Trade (BoT) report showed a 20.33% increase in seed and bulb sales in December compared to the same month in 2014.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "There's plenty to be done in the garden at this time of year in preparation for the new season so it is not surprising to see garden centre customers buying up their seeds and bulbs in readiness.

"Sales in outdoor plants were also up at 20.27% and houseplants did reasonably well at 6.59% up.

"It's also no surprise that Christmas and gift sales were up during December as people bought last minute presents for their friends and families. Compared to 2014, Christmas sales were up 10.97% and gifts were up 7.7%."

Catering was also a good performing category at 17.41% up with food hall and farm shop sales at 20.96% up.

Sales in clothing were up 12.21%, hard landscaping sales were up 7.08% and pets and aquatics was down -2.27%. Furniture and barbecues were down -0.04%.

Simon Bourne, Garden Centre Manager at Perrywood Garden Centre in Tiptree, Essex, said: "December 2015 was a fantastic month and followed the trend of previous months in being record breaking. We had our second busiest trading day of the year on Saturday, December 5, which was our best ever Saturday.

"Overall sales in the garden centre were up 15% compared to December 2014 and it was our busiest December by a long way. Outdoor plants were up 10% and indoor plants were up 46%. Christmas products were a huge success and were 23% up for the period September to December compared to the previous year. The coffee shop also had a really positive month and finished 22% up compared to the same period last year."

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

Ben Thompson, Director at Garsons Garden Centre, which has centres in Surrey and Titchfield, said: "Following our site redevelopment at Garsons Esher, which included a new restaurant, catering traded 86% up during the month of December.

“Catering at Garsons Titchfield showed growth of 14% year-on-year for the month of December. Christmas sales performed well at both stores likewise, along with giftware.”

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).

**ENDS**

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**Photograph caption one:** Seeds were a good seller throughout December, according to the GCA’s BoT results.

**Photograph caption two:** Perrywood Garden Centre saw good sales of its Christmas stock during December.

**Photograph caption three:** Garsons Garden Centre Esher’s catering trade was 86% up during the month of December.