

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Catering sales kick off the New Year

GARDEN centres across the country reported good sales in catering during January (2016) according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT) report.

Catering sales kick started the year at 16.48% up with Food Hall/Farm Shop sales close behind at 16.04% up. Clothing was also a good seller at 16.09% up.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "Our member garden centres were full of customers enjoying their food whether in their food halls and farm shops, as well as restaurants throughout January, which is good to see. As well as stopping off to buy produce and for a bite to eat, shoppers also picked up plenty of houseplants as this was best performing traditional category during the month with sales up 11.09%.

"January was a very wet month so it is not surprising to see other more traditional categories not performing as well as hoped. Outdoor plant sales were at -9.19%, seeds and bulbs were -8.99% and garden sundries at -2.68%."

Furniture and barbecue sales were up 8.14% compared to the same month last year.

Iain added: "Gifts and Christmas items continued to perform well during the month as people took advantage of the January sales in order to stock up for next year or to simply just grab something at a bargain price. Gift sales were up 4.55% and Christmas sales were up 9.75%."

Sales in pets and aquatics departments were -2.87% and hard landscaping sales were at -5.5%.

For the month of January the overall garden centre performance and Year to Date change was 5.79%.

Julian Winfield, who is the Chief Executive of Haskins Garden Centre and also the GCA's new Chairman, said: "Not that many years ago garden centres were quiet after Christmas, but now thanks to our restaurants our customers keep coming in even when the weather is not good. This helps keep our customers interested in what we have to offer.

"All the non-gardening departments have done reasonably well, some discounted old ranges but also in new product such as garden furniture. Those garden centres that quickly cleared up Christmas in early January look ready for spring sales."

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

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, log on to www.facebook.com/pages/GardenCentreAssociation or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.

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Photograph caption one: Julian Winfield, Chief Executive of Haskins Garden Centre.

Photograph caption two: Catering was the best performing non-traditional category in January according to the GCA'S BoT results.