

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

May Bank Holidays boost garden centre sales

SALES in traditional and non-traditional categories were up during May thanks to the Bank Holidays according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade results.

Furniture and barbecue sales were up 35.21% while more traditional outdoor plant sales were up 20.42%.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "After a very wet and cold April, May was very much an improvement weather wise and the two Bank Holiday Weekends certainly led to a boost in sales.

"For many a traditional Bank Holiday activity is to pop to the local garden centre and it looks like lots of people did this as both traditional and non-traditional categories did well during the month.

"Houseplant sales were up 5.56%, clothing sales were up 19.45%, catering was up 7.62% and food hall and farm shop sales were up 11.34%. The only sales that were down were gifts at -0.92%."

Seed and bulb sales were up 16.52%, garden sundries were up 18.11%, pets and aquatics up 2.86% and hard landscaping was up 15.97%.

Sales showed a Year to Date increase of 7.5% and May's overall increase was 17.2%.

Mike Burks, Managing Director of The Gardens Group, which has centres in Sherborne and Poundbury in Dorset and in Yeovil, Somerset, said: "It was a very strong start to May albeit comparing to two rather ordinary months in 2014 and 2015.

"The second weekend was very busy and perhaps even record breaking certainly against recent years. The mix of product such as plants, compost and pots by the trolley full felt like the old days."

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.

Julian Winfield, Chairman of the Garden Centre Association and Chief Executive of Haskins Garden Centres, said: "Like all garden centres we have been ready for some warm weather since the beginning of March and it was a relief when the sun came out.

"The good thing about great weather in May is that everything performs well and it did!"

The BoT reports allow members to compare their trading positions with other centres.

The GCA represents nearly 200 garden centres nationwide.

Andrew Pitman, Store Manager at Monkton Elm Garden & Pet Centre in Taunton, Somerset, which is a member of the Garden Centre Association, said: “We had a good first May Bank Holiday and it was helped by the fact we had great weather and some glorious sunshine. It’s always reassuring to see positive Bank Holiday sales when the weather is on our side. Traditional gardening sales were on the up.

“Even with the many other attractions we have on site such as our restaurant and our Craft and Pet centres, trade is, and always will be, measured by the weather.”

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: The summer bedding plants at Castle Gardens, Sherborne.

Photograph caption two: Julian Winfield, Chairman of the Garden Centre Association and Chief Executive of Haskins Garden Centres.

Photograph caption three: The plantaria at Monkton Elm Garden & Pet Centre in Taunton, which saw a boost in sales thanks to the May Bank Holidays.