

Media release for the Garden Centre Association

Gardeners improved their outdoor spaces in November

GARDENERS across the country made use of the milder weather during November (2015) and worked on improving their outdoor spaces according to results from the Garden Centre Association's Barometer of Trade (BoT) report.

Sales in hard landscaping were up 7.86% but customers were also eating well with Food Hall and Farm Shop sales up 20.07% up compared to the same month last year (2014).

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "As a country we have had much milder weather than we're used to for November so it seems people made good use of it and continued to use their outdoor spaces.

"Furniture and barbecue sales were also positive through the month at 13.24% up with a Year to Date (YTD) change of 9.38%. Other good performers during the month were clothing at 15.14% with a YTD of 14.2% and catering at 8.39% up with a YTD of 9.27%."

For the month of November the overall garden centre performance was up by 3.93% with a Year to Date change of 6.22%.

Christmas sales rose steadily at 4.23% up with a YTD of 7.33%, but they are expected to be much higher in December. Sales in gifts were 0.67% up with a YTD of 3.04%.

Iain added: "As expected at this time of year, sales in houseplants were just -0.76% up but with a YTD of 7.11% there is some potential for a healthy increase in the busy December sales period. Outdoor plants were -5.85% and seeds and bulbs -2.06%."

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

Richard Pennell, Managing Director of Pennells Garden Centre in Lincoln, said: "Following recent development of the centre at Lincoln we have seen strong growth in sales of outdoor plants from our new canopy area and indoors from our new food hall. Our restaurant too has seen strong growth. Customers are looking for a wide range of experiences when they visit a modern garden centre."

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.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden and Home, said: "The end of 2015 is proving a busy time for Bents with sales in December already looking good and following what has been a strong November across the industry. Our results support the GCA figures with our clothing and Food Hall departments both significantly up on last year. Both

departments are now much bigger and offer a much wider variety of products following our recent expansion and we are happy the results reflect the work that has been put in.

“Catering is also up in line with the industry figures, demonstrating that our more long term and established areas of the business continue to perform very well.”

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: Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden and Home.