

# PRESS RELEASE

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## And the Rising Stars winner is.....

Kirsty Clark was revealed last night as the winner of the Westland/GCA Rising Star of 2014.

Kirsty from Perrywood Garden Centre in Essex was voted for by delegates at the Garden Centre Association (GCA) Conference in Chester and picked up her award on stage at the Gala Dinner.

Now, Kirsty is urging other garden centre staff to sign up for the 2015 programme before the closing deadline of February 25.

The Rising Stars Programme, run by Westland Horticulture and supported by the GCA has been running since 2009. Its aim is to develop the best new talent in the garden centre industry through a year-long training course facilitated by Ian Boardman, IBBIS Director. The course helps the Rising Stars understand the importance of merchandising and Ian works with each candidate to show what they could implement at their own garden centres and how to measure results. He said "I was proud of them all and what they had achieved. Their presentations were very professional and they received great applause and many compliments from the audience. I liked the way they were all cheering each other on and had bonded as a mini team".

Keith Nicholson, Marketing Director for Westland Horticulture, said: "Encouraging new and emerging talent is essential for the future of our industry, bringing fresh ideas and inspiration. That's why Westland will continue to invest heavily in training for garden centre staff and will once again support the next Rising Stars programme."

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Iain Wylie: “We are delighted to announce that nominations are now open for the 2015 Rising Stars Programme. I’m sure garden centre owners will once again be encouraging their own employees to benefit from initiative.”

Anyone interested in applying for the 2015 programme should contact the GCA on 0118 930 8918 or visit [www.gca.org.uk](http://www.gca.org.uk)

-ends-



**Note to editors**, photograph shows (from l-r): Edward Conroy (Managing Director of Westland Horticulture), Lisa Waim (Rising Star finalist, Haskins Snowhill), Cerys Williams (Rising Star finalist, Perrywood) Kirsty Clark (Rising Star winner, Perrywood), Hannah Mason (Rising Star finalist, Chessington), Matthew Fay (Stewarts Garden-Lands, Christchurch) and John McDowell (Sales Director, Westland Horticulture).

**WESTLAND HORTICULTURE** – Westland Horticulture is one of the leading horticultural companies in the UK creating unique and innovative gardening products.

Established in 1990 in Northern Ireland, Westland Horticulture has since grown in size and strength and now has over 450 employees, delivering a comprehensive portfolio of gardening and wild bird care brands to consumers across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Over the past 20 years, Westland Horticulture has revolutionised the gardening industry with unique and creative solutions to common gardening problems. By doing this it has raised its position in the marketplace and achieved many awards for its innovative designs.

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For further information, contact Emma Rogers, PR Manager on 07899 894350 or [erogers@westlandhorticulture.com](mailto:erogers@westlandhorticulture.com)

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