

GCA inspector called yet? They are coming this week...

GCA



Since March member garden centres have been assessed across all departments and awarded an overall score by an inspector. Those who have not yet had their impromptu visit will do so soon.

Iain Wylie, GCA Chief Executive, explained: "So far the inspectors are reporting back that they are pleased with what they are finding and that standards are particularly high this year, especially at the top end.

"We are urging all garden centres yet to be visited to be prepared for the inspections. Inspectors drop in unannounced and garden centres are not able to turn them away. Inspections cannot be delayed or deferred because of any ongoing development work – customers see this when they visit and so will the inspectors! The garden centres will not lose marks because of such works, provided they are carried out safely and disruption is minimised with the customer in mind.

"The results of the inspections form the basis for many GCA awards, including

Destination Garden Centre of the Year, Garden Centre of the Year, Area Winners, Highly Commended and Most Improved Garden Centre. The top 10 centres will receive a Garden Centre of Excellence Award and all centres scoring 75% or above receive the Highly Commended certificate.

"We'd like to wish everyone the best of luck. GCA garden centres have such high standards and we are really looking forward to seeing more of the ideas people have come up with this year to further improve these."

This year's inspectors are: Liz Hutson, Andy Campbell, Ian Boardman and Roger Crookes.

On arriving at a garden centre the inspector will make him/herself known and will proceed with the inspection alone, before delivering a feedback session of approximately 45 minutes.

Through sharing information and its inspection programme the GCA helps members to achieve high standards in customer service, plant quality and reliability.

Will Armitage, Chairman of the GCA, said: "Many GCA members have said that the unique annual inspections and constructive feedback sessions are one of the biggest benefits of membership. It is a fantastic motivational and management tool and really keeps staff on their toes, making sure they are always doing their absolute best.

"Garden centres receive no advance warning about when their inspection will take place and they do not have the option to turn away the inspector. It is all about making sure they are offering a consistently excellent service and improving their customer service standards,

which is what all GCA garden centres must do to remain members.”

For further information, please call 0118 930 8918. Alternatively, please visit www.gca.org.uk, log on to www.facebook.com/pages/Garden-Centre-Association or follow the organisation on Twitter at www.twitter.com/GC_Association.