

Plants up 14.5 per cent in October says Garden Centre Association

1 December 2014, by Matthew Appleby, [Be the first to comment](#)

Garden centre sales were up in October according to the Garden Centre Association's (GCA) Barometer of Trade (BoT) results.



Will Armitage

The results showed hard landscaping sales were 25.84 per cent up, furniture and barbeques 18.75 per cent up and outdoor plants 14.5 per cent up as compared to October, 2013. Sundries were up 11.96 per cent, houseplants 7.16 per cent, Christmas 6.07 per cent and catering 4.67 per cent.

Overall [sales](#) are about eight per cent up in the year to October 2014 compared to the year to October 2013, and were about eight per cent up overall for October compared to October 2014, helped by the third warmest autumn on record.

GCA chairman Will Armitage said: "The cooler weather certainly hasn't put gardeners off from getting out into their gardens.

"We know that October is a great month to plant all sorts of things such as spring flowering bulbs, shrubs, evergreens and fruit trees. With many garden centres getting behind campaigns like the HTA's 'Plan it, Plant it this Autumn' it seems to have helped make people aware of the opportunities to be had. This has almost certainly helped contribute to the strong outdoor plant figures seen by many of our members.

"Hard landscaping was the best performing category for a second month running with people taking the opportunity to make changes to their outdoor spaces before it gets colder.

Justin Williams, Director at Fron Goch Garden Centre in Caernarfon, said: "We had an exceptional October, with good sales in all departments. Christmas was up 44 per cent on last October and I think it's all down to getting the 'details' right. Fine tuning and learning from a mini Christmas study tour we did last year and opening our Christmas display at the right time, getting merchandising and displays right as well as the marketing.

"Catering was 11.6 per cent up last month, which I think was down to us consistently delivering high standards of food and service, combined with developing three keys areas: Breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea; filling those covers all day long if possible."

Mike Burks, managing director of The Gardens Group, said: "Despite the wet, October was a strong month for sales of core gardening especially winter bedding, bulbs, herbaceous, shrubs and trees. Fruit also did well. The half-term holiday saw a good boost to trade and this footfall really gave Christmas a good launch. Autumn as a whole has been very positive across the board including restaurant sales."

In Northern Ireland Creative Gardens Limited, which has centres in Donaghadee, Bushmills has seen mild weather lead to a rise in sales.

Philip Gass, finance and marketing director at Creative Gardens, said: "In October our like for like sales comparing 2013 with 2014 were up 4.8 per cent at our Donaghadee store and 6.6 per cent at our Bushmills store. The main growth at both centres came from the same areas including strong, early Christmas sales, outdoor plants up by 13 per cent, fruit and veg and houseplants sales up by 51 per cent and 67 per cent and some good late barbecue sales.

"The biggest financial increase came from good café and food sales, which were up by 10.8 per cent. Generally the weather has been kind to us in Northern Ireland, reasonably mild and not too much rain, which always works in our favour."