



# IGCA E-News

[www.intgardencentre.org](http://www.intgardencentre.org) | [info@intgardencentre.org](mailto:info@intgardencentre.org)

## Greetings from our IGCA President

Dear members,

It's a real privilege to share my first message as IGCA President.

Being inaugurated at IGCA2025 was an honour, and I'm looking forward to working closely with the Board and with all of you in the year ahead as we continue to strengthen and support our global garden centre community.



IGCA exists to serve its members, and your input genuinely shapes our direction. We want to understand the opportunities and challenges you're facing, and where IGCA can add most value, whether through new topics for IGCA Insights, shared learnings, or practical supports for your business. This year, our Insights initiative got off to a strong start, with webinars on the global economy, AI in retail, and market productivity. We plan to expand this further in 2026, and your suggestions will help guide that development.

IGCA2025 in South Africa was a standout moment for our association. My sincere thanks to the organising committee for delivering such a memorable and inspiring Congress. If you weren't able to join us, you can catch some of the highlights through our social channels.

Looking ahead, I'm delighted to share that **bookings are now open for IGCA Germany 2026**. You can reserve your place at: <https://www.igca2026.com>, and we encourage early registration.

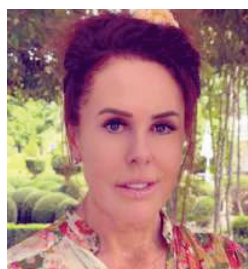
As 2025 draws to a close, I want to wish you and your teams a safe and peaceful Festive Season. Enjoy time with your loved ones, and let's enter 2026 with renewed energy, focus, and ambition for our industry and our association.

Fergal Doyle

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## Update from Australia

*by Lisa McCann*



Membership at GCA Australia continues to grow, with strong engagement and enthusiasm across our network. Despite Australia experiencing another season of unpredictable weather - from sudden heatwaves to pockets of unseasonal rain - overall trading has remained steady.

We continue to work closely with industry partners to deliver meaningful benefits to our members, including the recent networking events, professional development opportunities and collaborative projects designed to strengthen retail skills, customer engagement and the overall garden centre experience.

This past month, we received excellent feedback from members who attended the IGCA Congress in South Africa, with many commenting on the inspiration gained from the tours, the exceptional hospitality and the high standard of retail presentation.

As we look toward the year ahead, confidence within Australian garden centres remains positive.

GCA Australia wishes all IGCA members a safe and very **Merry Christmas!**

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## Feedback from Canada

*by Anne Kadwell*

Garden Centres Canada is returning to Montreal with a revised three-day experience featuring tours, speakers, and valuable peer connections. The GCC Summit is an intimate event, welcoming



garden centre owners and operators from across Canada.



This smaller format has proven especially beneficial, creating space for deeper conversations and stronger relationships. Registration details and the full schedule will be released in January 2026. Of course anyone is welcome! Details will be uploaded on to our landing site as they come to fruition. <https://www.cnla.ca/events/gcc-summit-26>

Email Anne at [anne@canadanursery.com](mailto:anne@canadanursery.com) if you have any questions.

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## News from Czech Republic

*by Michal Ferencick*

### Czech 2025 Christmas time



This autumn season has turned out to be very positive for most garden centres. Thanks to the mild and stable weather, customers continued visiting stores throughout the whole period, showing strong interest in planting, autumn decorations and preparations for winter.

The steady customer flow helped maintain good sales levels and created a smooth transition into the upcoming Christmas season.

At the beginning of the festive period, we were pleasantly surprised by a light snowfall. Although brief, it arrived at the perfect moment and brought exactly the kind of atmosphere customers expect when starting their Christmas shopping.

We hope that this promising start will support successful Christmas sales. Garden centres are well prepared. When I am looking back on this whole year, finally after several years the weather this year was during all season that perfect that can be. All the seasons came at the right time, which was visible at the sales and number of customers.

I wish you a very nice Christmas and happy New Year.

**Michal Ferenčík** - FloreniUm (Czech garden centre association), Czech Republic

## Feedback from Denmark

by Per Boisen Andersen



### Plant of the Month

The Danish Garden Society, Danish Nursery Schools and Danish Garden Centres continue their collaboration on Plant of the Month. This is done to strengthen the cooperation between the three parties and to take on the increasing competition from supermarkets.

The Plant of the Month is marketed on SOME, the magazine 'Haveglæder' and the Garden Society's member magazine 'Haven'.

Herewith information publishes for the **Plant of the Month for October:**

### Aronia

#### Appearance

Medium-sized shrub with flowering in May, decorative, edible fruits in late summer and autumn, and beautiful red-orange autumn colors.

#### Like

Good plant for both decoration and utility and beautiful in several seasons.

#### Dislikes

Does not thrive well in wet and heavy soil.

**Månedens plante - oktober 2025**



**Aroniarøn, *Sorbus x 'Burka'***

**Udseende**  
Hestetærter blad med blomstring i maj, dekorative, sprængte frugter sen sommer og efterår samt smukke rødorange høstfarver.

**Kan lide**  
God plante til både nyt og hytte og smuk på flere årstider.

**Kan ikke lide**  
Tåler mindre godt i våd og tung jord.

**Vidste du at...?**  
Aroniarøn er en krydning mellem almindelig røn, *Sorbus aucuparia* og sortfrugtet surbær, *Aronia melanocarpa*. Frugterne er mindre, bære end almindelige rønnebær, tåler varmt lys og tåler også sol. I frugt kan den spises direkte fra planten - husk man altså kommer fra naturen!

**Læs mere her**  
Gå ind på [haveglad.dk/maanedens-plante](https://haveglad.dk/maanedens-plante) eller scan QR koden og læs det uddybende planteportræt om denne månedens plante.





\*Månedens plante er udvalgt af Haveforeningen på baggrund af anbefalinger fra medlemmer af Dansk Haveforening. Portræt er udarbejdet af Agnieszka Potocka.

#### Did you know that ...?

Aronia rowan is a cross between the common rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*, and

the black-fruited sloe, *Aronia melanocarpa*. The fruits are less bitter than regular rowan berries thanks to the cross with sloe, which makes them edible straight from the plant – if you get there before the birds!

### Read more here

Go to [haveselskabet.dk/manedens-plante](https://haveselskabet.dk/manedens-plante) or scan the QR code and read the detailed plant portrait about this month's plant.

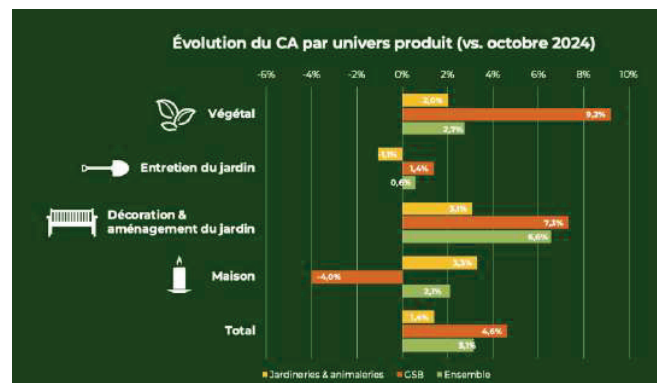
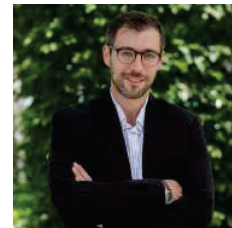
The plant of the month is selected by Haveselskabet based on nominations from members of Danish Nursery Schools. The plant is nominated by Agtrupvig Nursery School.

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## Update from France

by Thomas le Rudelier

France continues to face a period of political uncertainty, with households maintaining a high savings rate of 18–19% of disposable income. This cautious environment has contributed to a wait-and-see attitude among consumers.



Despite this backdrop, the garden market showed renewed momentum in October, with combined results from DIY stores and garden centers up +3.1% compared with 2024. This marks a welcome improvement after a challenging year shaped by weather volatility and subdued consumer confidence.

As for the Christmas season, the trading window is shorter this year, which could limit potential growth. Nevertheless, early indicators from Christmas assortments are encouraging, suggesting that shoppers are returning to seasonal purchasing with more confidence.

Overall, the French garden market demonstrates resilience, with signs of recovery emerging even in a constrained economic climate.

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## News from Germany

by Thomas Buchenau



### IGCA 2026 in Germany – #together for an unforgettable experience!

2026 will be an extraordinary year for our international garden centre community.

After twelve years, the IGCA family returns to Germany - and with it comes a unique opportunity to experience the spirit, quality and diversity of German garden retail at its very best

Under the motto **#together**, Germany welcomes you to a congress that blends deep professional insight with unforgettable cultural highlights, set against the vibrant backdrop of Bavaria.



From **16 to 22 August 2026**, Munich and its surroundings will become the stage for an inspiring journey through some of the most innovative and influential garden centres in the country.

Among them is **Gartencenter Seebauer** in Munich, well known for its emotional plant storytelling, lively atmosphere and customer experience concepts. In Gauting, **Kiefl** will offer a close look at how a family business with deep roots can continually reinvent itself. Further north, participants will explore the lively and creative world of **Dauchenbeck** in Stein, before travelling south toward the Alps to discover the impressive new **Kutter flagship in Kempten**, a state-of-the-art project that marks a new chapter in German garden centre architecture.

Alongside these professional insights, IGCA 2026 invites participants to experience Munich in ways rarely accessible to international guests. An exclusive evening in the **Allianz Arena** will allow visitors to feel the energy of one of Europe's most iconic stadiums, while a private Oktoberfest-style celebration at a garden centre will showcase Bavarian hospitality at its warmest. A traditional **Floßfahrt on the River Isar**, drifting through one of the region's most scenic landscapes, adds another unforgettable moment of togetherness.

For those who want an even deeper look into Germany before arriving in Bavaria, the **Pre-Tour from 13 to 15 August 2026** offers an exceptional three-day journey across some of the country's most characterful regions. Beginning in **Frankfurt am Main**, the tour leads participants to some of Southern Germany's most inspiring garden centres outside Bavaria. Guests will explore **Gartencenter Sunflower** in Frankfurt, a regional favourite known for its modern presentation style and vibrant plant areas; **Löwer** in Goldbach, where horticultural expertise and an impressive assortment reflect decades of family tradition; **Mauk** in Lauffen, a well-loved centre with a strong regional identity; and the thoughtfully curated **Florapark Wagner** in Wiesloch, where innovation meets a deep passion for plants.

Between these visits, the Pre-Tour reveals cultural highlights that show Germany's beauty beyond Bavaria. Participants can look forward to experiencing the wine-growing charm of **Rüdesheim**, the historic allure of **Heidelberg** with its world-famous castle overlooking the Neckar Valley, and the soaring splendour of **Ulm Minster**, home to the tallest church tower in the world. Each of these destinations represents a different facet of Germany's cultural identity - river landscapes shaped by tradition, romantic architecture that has inspired generations, and historic sites that continue to define the character of the country today.

Taken together, these elements make the Pre-Tour a remarkable combination of professional depth and cultural richness. It is an all-inclusive experience - hotels, meals, transportation and every programme element are included - with **€1,599 for a single room** and **€1,399 for a shared twin room**. Because the Pre-Tour is limited to **only 50 participants**, the available seats will be filled quickly. One bus. One group. Once full, registration closes - meaning that those who decide early will secure their place on this exceptional journey.



The main congress week follows the same all-inclusive principle. One booking covers every part of the experience: accommodation, all meals, transportation, evening events, cultural moments, and each of the nine garden centre visits. With the **Early Bird rate valid until 15 February 2026**, participation is

particularly attractive - **€3,299 for single occupancy** and **€2,999 for twin occupancy**. After this date, the regular rates apply: **€3,599 for single rooms** and **€3,299 for twin rooms**. Registration is available now at [www.igca2026.com/registration](http://www.igca2026.com/registration).

A dedicated highlight for the next generation will be the **Young Study Tour**, a dynamic programme designed to help young professionals broaden their knowledge, connect internationally and engage deeply with peers from around the world. For many, this format becomes a defining moment in their early careers - a time when new ideas, friendships and opportunities take root.

IGCA 2026 is more than a congress. It is a celebration of what makes our industry so vibrant: innovation, expertise, culture, and the joy of coming together. Germany is preparing a week that reflects the full richness of our profession and the warmth of a community that becomes stronger when it meets face to face. It is an invitation to learn, to share and to celebrate the future of garden retail - **together**.

We look forward to welcoming you to Germany - to inspiring days, meaningful encounters and the joy of reconnecting with friends from around the world.



Germany awaits you - register now: [www.igca2026.com/registration](http://www.igca2026.com/registration)  
**#together**

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## Update from Ireland

*by Fergal Doyle*

Irish retail is closing 2025 in a challenging but resilient position.

November trading proved difficult for many

members, with patchy footfall and highly value-driven consumer behaviour.



Retailers continued to work hard on conversion, link-selling and service, with Black Friday providing a strong, though short uplift that helped recover early-month softness. Our member trade survey echoed this sentiment, noting sluggish post-budget demand and continued pressure on discretionary categories or retail

Broader market data from AIB Bank Q3 Retail Spend Outlook shows overall spend up 4.2%, driven by strong online growth (+9%) and solid performance in grocery, pharma, homeware and hardware. Garden centres again outperformed, supported by milder weather and sustained consumer interest in home and outdoor living.

Across the sector, investment in customer experience, sustainability, and digital capability continues to grow. As we move into the crucial Christmas period, retailers remain cautiously optimistic, focused on operational excellence, cost control and delivering value for Irish consumers.

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## Feedback from Italy

*by Giacomo Brusa*

### Garden Festival d'Autunno 2025:

The Garden Festival d'Autunno, promoted by AICG, took place from September 20 to October 19, 2025.

The theme was **"STOP, BREATHE, PLANT: AUTUMN"** (**"FERMATI, RESPIRA, PIANTA: AUTUNNO"**), an invitation to rediscover the season as a fertile time to cultivate new ideas.



100 out of 147 registered Italian garden centers participated. The idea of the festival was born to discover the autumn season within garden centers and the plants that can be used to decorate the garden during this season.

The Festival is divided into three thematic paths:

- Indoor Wellness ("Benessere Indoor")
- Autumn Balcony ("Balcone d'Autunno")
- Garden to Plant Now ("Giardino da Piantare Ora")

The participating AICG Garden Centers will offer themed displays, workshops, and plant selections.

Furthermore, in the month of October, AICG collaborated with the AIRC cancer Foundation. For every pink cyclamen sold, €1 will be donated to research against breast cancer, and €6500 was collected from all participating garden centers.



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## News from Japan

*by Yasuaki Hirata*

The Japan Garden Centre Association (JGCA) is working to raise industry standards and increase awareness of IGCA activities within Japan. One of our key initiatives is a two-page IGCA feature series published regularly in Green Joho, a leading Japanese horticultural industry magazine.



The articles are researched and written by one of our members, helping Japanese retailers understand global best practices as we move toward IGCA 2027 Japan. This collaboration is strengthening industry engagement and

supporting long-term growth in the Japanese garden centre sector.



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## Update from The Netherlands

by Frank van der Heide



In garden centers, the mild autumn weather was attracting gardeners to tackle typical autumn jobs.

Together with the sales of Christmas and home deco items we had a reasonable growth across all product groups.

Data from Tuinbranche Nederland up to and including November show a cumulative increase.

Garden centers go all out for Christmas. The big garden centers where Christmas is truly presented as a show, as a total concept with an experience, catering, entertainment and beautiful products, are being well visited and people are willing to travel for it and make it a day out.

The large retailers are doing very well this season. Other categories benefit from this.

Looking at the year we realize a small plus, so overall, we are doing okay.

We wish you all a merry Christmas!

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## News from Spain

by Santiago Gonzales



The association exhibited at Iberflora, the most important trade fair for the green sector in Spain, held in October.

The AECJ's objective is to support its member centers and exhibiting companies, seek new contacts, present the Expogarden congress and support the sector, which must remain united.

The AECJ chooses a corporate color annually for its congress, and this is the same color that apkica uses in all its materials throughout the year. This year's color was orange, resulting in a very striking and attractive stand. Everything revolves around a color that we even used in the welcome drinks at the stand: Aperol.

These days are used for meetings among various colleagues, and we held one dedicated to Garden Sustainability, which is one of the objectives outlined in the 2030 Sustainability Plan.



**¡VEN A NUESTRO STAND EN IBERFLORA!**

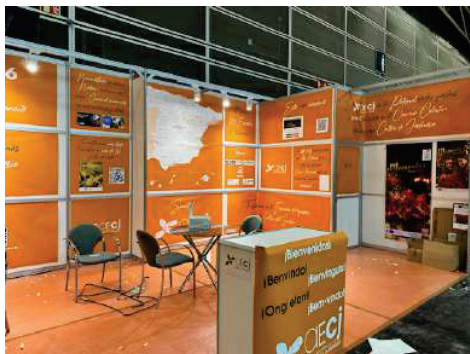
**Pasa a saludarnos, recoge la información de la Expogarden de Madrid 2026 y tómate un aperitivo muy especial**

Te esperamos el martes 14 de octubre a las 13.30h  
Nivel 3 del pabellón 4, stand F58

 **AECJ**  
ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE CENTROS DE JARDINERÍA

**EXPOGARDEN26**

 **APEROL SPRITZ**



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## Feedback from South Africa

by Gerdie Olivier

South Africa's economy remains stable, though growth slowed to 0,5% in Q3 from 0,9% in Q2. Despite this, outlooks for the coming years remain positive.

There have been three interest rate cuts this year. The repo rate is now 7%, with the prime lending rate at 10,5% - the lowest since November 2022. Inflation rose slightly to 3,6% in October, driven by housing, utilities and food costs.



Water challenges persist, including aging infrastructure and mismanagement, causing leaks, poor water quality and underperforming wastewater treatment facilities. Governance and investment gaps continue to worsen the situation.

Since August, South Africa has seen highly variable weather, from cold, wet winters in the south-west to stormier summers in the north-east. December is expected to bring hail, flooding and heavy rain. Recent storms in Gauteng, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal caused localized flooding and property damage. Experts link the increasing frequency and intensity of these events to global warming.

The weather had a noticeable impact, with many members experiencing slowdowns in sales, though they still maintained steady performance. Overall, the season was good but did not quite meet expectations.

Our *Life is a Garden* campaign continues to inspire and support gardeners of all levels. It provides practical advice, seasonal planting tips, DIY projects and guidance on sustainable and indigenous gardening. Through its website, social media platforms and print media, the campaign connects gardeners with trusted resources, encourages environmentally conscious practices and fosters a love of gardening across South Africa.

One of the standout moments of the year was IGCA2025, held in beautiful our Western Cape region. Our Cape Town-based garden centres were delighted to welcome delegates from around the world for a week bursting with inspiration,

*Connecting & having fun*

discovery and connection.

Delegates explored twelve unique garden centres, each with its own charm, layout and customer focus. The two Home Stores added extra variety and creativity, showcasing different approaches to retail and presentation.

The congress also included visits to two of South Africa's most breathtaking horticultural gems: At Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, set against the majestic Table Mountain, delegates wandered through lush indigenous flora, soaking up the sights, scents and sounds of nature at its finest.

Babylonstoren offered a hands-on experience - from guided garden tours to making colourful flower crowns, enjoying a relaxed lunch with fresh seasonal produce and leisurely exploring the charming property.

A visit to Oak Valley Estate's cut-flower division gave delegates an up-close look at local growing conditions and the behind-the-scenes operations that bring stunning cut flowers to South African homes and markets.

On Thursday, delegates enjoyed fun free time at the bustling V&A Waterfront, one of Cape Town's most lively shopping and leisure destinations.

Throughout the week, there were countless opportunities for networking and idea-sharing, as delegates exchanged insights on industry trends, tackled challenges and explored exciting opportunities in their home countries. The glorious sunny weather made garden centre tours and casual connections even more enjoyable.

The week wrapped up with a sparkling gala dinner on Friday evening, where Fergal Doyle of Arboretum was warmly inaugurated as IGCA President, marking a perfect celebratory close.



We hope every delegate left with a love for South Africa, fresh ideas, new friendships and lasting memories of laughter, learning and inspiration.

Relive the highlights and enjoy the photos on the [IGCA Facebook page](#) - celebratig the fun, beauty and creativity of IGCA2025!



As 2025 comes to a close, we extend our warmest Christmas wishes to all IGCA friends and look forward to a thriving 2026 for the green industry!

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## Highlights from Switzerland

*by Erwin Meijer-Honneger*

The growing consumer reluctance across Europe is now spilling over into Swiss garden centres. Consequently, many assortments are becoming part of a kind of “lipstick economy”: affordable feel good treats that keep spirits up – and we can’t really blame the retailers for that, given the plight of Generation Z. Even if they didn’t spend their money on cheapish plants, they still wouldn’t be able to afford a house – they’d be the same generation rent, only with a little more greenery around them. Meanwhile, garden centres are feeling the pinch from dwindling sales on genuine, ambitious gardening projects.

Because of this purchasing hesitation, businesses are turning inward, tightening stock and improving buying management, hunting for margin optimisation. In Switzerland, where the market has long been comfortable, there is still

considerable untapped potential.

At the same time, it is crucial to seize the opportunities that technological progress offers – whether it's smarter inventory systems, data-driven demand forecasting, or digital customer experiences. Yet those very initiatives demand resources that are scarce precisely because of the current climate.

That scarcity makes international exchange all the more vital. By sharing lessons, challenging each other, and keeping the dialogue open, we can turn constraints into catalysts. Thanks to IGCA for providing the platform that makes this cross-border conversation possible.

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## Feedback from UK

*by Peter Burks*

Trade in the UK GCA has remained nicely positive throughout the autumn with Christmas sales kicking in early and continuing to date. Our barometer of trade is currently showing an increase for the year of 8.51% and with a very good November just completed we are hoping this will still rise a little further before the year end.



Sales are still being driven by hospitality and food halls with gifts (+8.87%) and clothing (+18.83%) very strong in recent months.

We organised two very successful tours of Christmas displays in our centres. One in the midlands and the other in south west London. We are going to do more of these focussing on Catering and Plants in 2026.



*Christmas in Blue Diamond Sanders*

Our conference planning is almost complete with bookings well ahead of this time last year. If anyone would like to attend you are very welcome.

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## News from USA

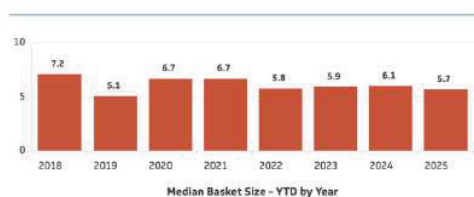
by Kellee O'Reilly



Hello! It's a pleasure to introduce myself to you all:  
Kellee O'Reilly from Your MarketMetrics, now serving as the USA representative to IGCA. We are a collective of independent garden retailers, growers and distributors from across the country who participate in financial benchmarking and sharing of best practices through connected peer groups. I look forward to connecting with you all!

**2025** has been quite a bumpy year in the garden retail business in the USA: tariff chaos reigned and stole a lot of focus from our merchants, causing headaches around pricing, availability, and profitability. Inflation is still a significant issue and consumers seem to be 'trading down' slightly and more cautious in their spending – this does seem to vary a bit by region. Most of our retailers are reporting “essentially flat” sales numbers for the second year in a row (via The Five Numbers Project, which collects and compares monthly data for garden retail). Labor costs (wages) continue to increase, cutting into profitability. Problematically, **sales per labor hour** are declining also.

**Basket Size**  
unit count divided by customer count



**Bigger picture:** for a number of years, we have been watching a concerning trend: a gradual reduction in 'basket size' – the number of items on average the consumer leaves our businesses having purchased.

We continue to try to raise retail team awareness of this problem and encourage training for tie-in sales and impulse purchases to get “just one more item” in each customer’s basket.

To succeed in garden retail, you must always remain optimistic about the possibility of the “next Spring” and look ahead to new growth – and this year is

no different. We are closing out our winter / Christmas selling season and planning ahead for a busy Spring 2026!

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# Upcoming IGCA Congress

2026: Munich, Germany



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**Remember to follow us on Social Media to stay updated on current news and events!**

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 <https://www.instagram.com/intgardencentre/>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-garden-centre-association/>