



GCA e-news

A monthly newsletter for members of the Garden Centre Association and its associates

7th March 2012

CEO Comment

This is my first GCA monthly newsletter since I joined the GCA as your new CEO in February.

In this issue you will find news on the latest developments in the range of cost-effective member benefits we offer, news from our associates, future GCA events and projects that your executive board have endorsed and a summary on what John Lewis has been doing.

During February I have travelled extensively visiting over 20 members, 4 potential members, key GCA suppliers and two trade exhibitions.

Over the next two months I will be visiting many more members, associates and GCA suppliers to further understand the challenges and opportunities that GCA members face.

It will be good to meet you at your garden centre or at a regional GCA meeting.

Please circulate this newsletter to your staff and a copy is available on the members section of the GCA website.

If you have forgotten the log in details to the members area please email : info@gca.org.uk

Phil Slinger

The 2012 Inspection Form is now available to download from the members area of the

+++ Date for your diary +++

GCA Conference 2013

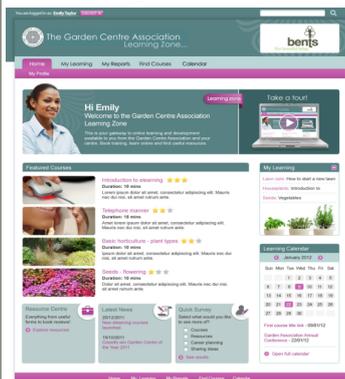
Based on member feedback, the GCA Executive has agreed to hold the annual Conference at Heythrop Park from:

Sunday 27th until Tuesday 30th January

GCA GROW! Update

We have had a tremendous response to **GCA GROW!** - the new, value for money e-learning project, We are now proceeding with the next stages in this exciting project.

As a recap: **GCA GROW!**



GCA Resource Online Workshops

Is the GCA e-learning project who's main objectives are to Increase employee's

product knowledge and their customer service skills, using the convenience and easy accessibility of the internet, whilst cutting the cost of delivery and make it easier to train more people over time.

Weekend staff, in particular, can benefit from having access for the first time to courses that will give them confidence by strengthening their product knowledge and skills.

The e-learning package will initially provide mandatory training and solid proof of compliance required by all of our staff including manual handling and food hygiene in catering departments from day one of employment which will reduce costs to members.

Full details on **GCA GROW!** can be found in the members zone on www.gca.org.uk

Congratulations

BARTON GRANGE, Preston won the GCA Destination Garden Centre of 2012 with the highest score ever in GCA inspections. It's quite overwhelming", said Guy Topping,



"I am indebted to my wonderful team who all contribute so much to making the Garden Centre what it is. We are all absolutely delighted."

For the SECOND Year running **COWELLS** Garden Centre



won the Garden Centre of the Year Award. Their plant retailing is second to none and over the years they have been consistently improving their offering said the inspectors. Martin Cowell said "We're ecstatic at winning this award for the second year running. This has given our staff an amazing boost; it's great to know that all the hard work and effort that everyone puts into the garden centre not only in the spring but all year round, has been recognised.