

Garden Products Retailing - UK - June 2011

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What is this report about?

The market for garden products has been upbeat in 2010 and 2011, helped by increasing consumer interest in grow your own and the warm, dry weather during spring 2011. This has been partly sparked by enthusiasm for knowing the provenance of the food consumers eat, but is also to an extent spurred on by consumers wishing to economise on their weekly food bills. This report examines the retailing of garden products and looks at consumer attitudes towards shopping for garden products.

What have we found out?

- Demand for garden products has been a story of two halves. Because of tough economic conditions people are spending more of their leisure time at home which in turn has inspired more interest in refreshing their gardens and has been a factor in inspiring people to grow vegetables. In turn this has boosted sales of bedding plants and small ticket items. But, the same economic squeeze has meant more caution about buying large ticket goods for the garden or undertaking major garden projects. So big ticket items like landscaping, sheds and appliances have seen sales fall.
- In 2010 consumer spending on garden products grew by 1.9% to reach £5.48bn, and in 2011 we expect further growth, particularly as the warm, dry spring weather has brought more people out into their gardens and provided a welcome boost to sales at this important time in the calendar. In 2011 sales will grow by 2.0% to £5.59bn. The outlook to 2016 looks positive and we expect 9% growth over 2011-16 to £6.11bn.
- Distribution is dominated by DIY chains (32%) and garden centre specialists (31%). The DIY sector has recently lost one of its key players, Focus, which went into administration in 2011 and the full effects of this are yet to be seen, as some of the former Focus stores have been acquired by other DIY chain operators.
- Consumers make use of the web for information gathering as well as for online shopping. Online retailing is making inroads to big ticket purchases, but is less likely to grow a significant share of the market for fresh plants as consumers are more likely to want to inspect the plants before they buy.
- The main factors influencing customer choice of where to shop for garden products are cheapest prices (53%), good selection of plants for immediate impact (43%), a wide range of gardening products (39%) and a variety of plant sizes (22%).
- Even though there are plenty of examples of high quality garden products retailers in the UK, progress is somewhat slow. We see retailers behaving cautiously, evolving the appearance of their businesses rather than committing to full revamps or make-overs.

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