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Export boost for exhibitors in Gardenex-organised group at spoga+gafa

Exports of British garden products are set for a substantial boost following the success of more than 20 UK companies exhibiting in the Gardenex-organised group at spoga+gafa, which returned in impressive style to Cologne, Germany, last month.

The British firms were supported before and during the show by the experienced events and research team from Gardenex and early reports confirm that worldwide enquiries have been received, export orders have been won and valuable overseas distributorships secured.

The positive outcome brought the following response from Amanda Sizer Barrett, director general of Gardenex: "The exhibition proved successful for all the companies participating in the Gardenex exhibitor group. We have already received positive feedback on the excellent business support the federation's team provided throughout, as well as requests to rebook space for 2023 from this year's exhibitors and enquiries from companies wishing to join Gardenex and take part in gafa next year."

The British gardening industry information stand hosted by Gardenex attracted unprecedented interest from overseas buyers during the show.

Dean Cox, managing director of Red Gorilla International, summed up the mood of companies taking part in the British group, saying: "We had a successful gafa as part of the Gardenex exhibitor group. Visitor attendance was higher than expected and all of our European and some of our US customers visited our booth. Our core range has always been manufactured in Europe, with sundry items coming from the Far East. However, throughout 2020/21 we have invested heavily in Euro-shoring! By the end of 2022 more than 90% of our range will be made and stocked in the UK and Europe."

Simon Reeves-Jackson, chief executive officer of Hydria Life, commented: "As a first-time exhibitor we were unsure of what to expect but with the fantastic help of Gardenex we were able to navigate all the challenges of exhibiting overseas with ease. The show was a great success and helped raise our profile and generate fantastic sales. We will definitely be back again."

Magic Henig, of Home2Garden, commented: "It was a generally successful show for us. We have seen almost all of our existing customers and made a few potential leads. The show looked busy and people were glad to be able to do face-to-face meetings once again."

It was a similar story for Concept Research. Chris Blackburn confirmed: “gafa in Cologne has always been good for us, and this year was no exception. As a proud, established UK manufacturer, it was interesting to be approached by many more prospects than in the past, expressing frustration with their current Far East suppliers. Issues with increased transport and product costs/increased lead times and decreasing quality, came up time and time again, and we were pleased to be able to offer an alternative solution.”

Edwin Allingham, of STV International, remarked: “It was great being back in Cologne after a three-year absence, and we really enjoyed the mix of social and business that is such a feature of the gafa show. It was also good for us to get back into ‘show mode’ after an extended period of relatively subdued marketing and customer interface.”

Tracy-Anne McGregor, of Tildenet Gardenware, agreed with these sentiments: “It was nice to see customers again after such a long time and the quality of the new leads was very interesting, especially with respect to Denmark and Eastern European countries. We had a large number of leads from these two emerging markets. It was a positive show, we were well placed within the British group and well looked after by Gardenex”.

Other group participants were also pleased with the show and the Gardenex group support. “Overall, we found the show extremely valuable and are now confident of exceeding pre-Brexit levels of business in Europe,” said Damian Cardozo, of Haxnicks.

Malcolm Andrews, managing director of Panacea Products Ltd, commented: “We enjoyed a very warm welcome from existing customers on our return to spoga+gafa, with many worthwhile new enquiries gained directly by our presence at the exhibition. We look forward now to seeing our European business grow once again, with a view to returning bigger in 2023.’

Scott Hudspith, export sales co-ordinator at Whitefurze Ltd, said: ‘We were really pleased with the connections we made with international buyers at spoga+gafa, with the help of Gardenex. Being at the exhibition has really galvanised the relationships with buyers, which are showing great promise for exports for the 2023 garden season.’

The final word went to Lysann Brade, of Wildlife World, who said: “spoga-gafa 2022 was a great opportunity to connect and reconnect with existing suppliers and make new connections with potential suppliers or manufacturers. We gained valuable insights into the market, the competition, supplier behaviour and needs. Working together with Gardenex was a pleasure and provided plenty of networking opportunities.”

Companies that are not yet members of Gardenex and that are interested in benefiting from the comprehensive range of business advice, market research, international sales leads and practical export support available exclusively to Gardenex members should email info@gardenex.com or visit www.gardenex.com.

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