



6th March 2026

British Garden Centres welcomes Alton Garden Centre to the family

British Garden Centres is delighted to announce that Alton Garden Centre in Wickford, Essex, has joined its family-owned group, marking the fifth centre to join the family in 2026 and bringing the company's portfolio to 78 centres across the UK.

The acquisition brings a well-established independent garden centre into the group, strengthening British Garden Centres' presence in the Southeast. Alton Garden Centre has been owned and operated by the Bunker family since 1971 and has been a cornerstone of the local community for 54 years. The largest garden centre in Essex, known for its wide plant area, outdoor living ranges and popular restaurant, is entering an exciting new chapter following Derek's retirement. The Centre will be named Alton Garden Centre.

We are excited for Andy Bunker to join our Plant Buying Team and for Jay Bunker to continue to run the BBQ department at Alton Garden Centre.

Derek Bunker of Alton Garden Centre said: "After more than five decades at the heart of Alton Garden Centre, it's been a privilege to serve our community and grow the business alongside my family and our incredible team. As I step into retirement, I'm delighted to pass Alton Garden Centre from one family to another, our friends. Their values and passion for horticulture give me complete confidence that the centre will continue to thrive for many years to come. We want to wish the Stubbs Family and team all the best in the running of the centre."

Charles Stubbs, Founder and Director of British Garden Centres, said: "Alton Garden Centre is exactly the kind of outstanding, family-rooted business that fits with the BGC ethos. With more than 50 years of success behind it, Alton fits perfectly into our vision of creating a network of quality garden centres. I'm personally thrilled to welcome the Alton team as we continue to grow."

In the months ahead, British Garden Centres will work closely with the Alton team to introduce new ranges and make targeted on-site improvements, including enhancements to the restaurant.

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WORD COUNT:

Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 75 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by the Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1990 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018, it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres, allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now, with 75 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 3,200 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

Facebook: British Garden Centres

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