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British firms open up new export markets following international trade fairs

As the Gardenex export federation embarks on a new year of organising export events, member companies have emphasised the major impact the Federation has had on their export sales.

Two leading international garden and leisure trade fairs that appear on the Gardenex programme each year are Spoga+gafa in Cologne and the National Hardware Show in Las Vegas.

Animal deterrent manufacturer, Concept Research from Stevenage has taken part in exhibitor groups organised by Gardenex at Spoga+gafa over the past six years and as a direct result has secured 38 new customers in 15 different countries to further enhance Concept Research's growing worldwide export reputation.

Concept's sales manager, Chris Blackburn, confirms: "Most of our new clients have ordered our full range of UK-manufactured animal deterrents, with our Pest Free PLUS product making a particular impact. Pest Free is a multi-animal deterrent that deters the Marder (similar to our pine marten) that has a reputation for damaging cars across the continent. In addition to these new business wins, Spoga+gafa is also an excellent venue for us to meet with existing clients and to network with fellow exhibitors."

Another Gardenex member company, VegTrug, has extolled the value of the Cologne show. Joe Denham, the gardening company's chief executive officer said: "We used our participation at Spoga+gafa in 2018 to launch VegTrug Europe GmbH, a wholly owned subsidiary of the UK business selling into Germany and Europe. The Gardenex federation has provided us with immense support with this venture and also during the 10 years that we have exhibited at the show. As a result, we expect to drive sales to €1.5m in Germany in 2019.

"VegTrug has also been a regular exhibitor in the British group at the National Hardware Fair over the past 10 years, and in 2018 added four more major US customers to its growing customer base. The latest customers —Wayfair, Hayneedle, Urban Hardware and Planters Bliss —have joined VegTrug's large client base of leading North American home center retailers, distributors,

mail order, e-commerce and TV shopping channels. These include more than a dozen customers that are now six-figure accounts. ”

Joe added: “In addition to the direct benefits that can be gained from the carefully researched initiatives on the Gardenex export programme each year, the Federation is doing an incredible job of following-up and lobbying for greater support for British businesses in our industry. I would urge anyone in the garden industry who is interested in exporting to join the trade association. We are stronger together!”

News of positive results for British firms that have participated in Gardenex-organised events is being received on a continuous basis. Some of the recent feedback from Spoga+gafa in 2018 includes:

- A first time exhibitor that has received substantial orders from key retail chains in Australia, New Zealand, UK and from a large convenience store chain in Germany.
- Another first time exhibitor that has had contact from potential new distributors in Switzerland, Turkey, Russia, Poland and Germany.
- A regular exhibitor that has obtained orders for an additional two SKUs into all 130-plus stores of the German garden centre chain Dehner and has secured initial business with a 1,000 strong retail chain via a Danish distributor.
- An exhibitor that secured £140,000 of new business within the three months following the exhibition and is currently following up on 150 contacts made at the show.

Note for editors:

Gardenex will be announcing its full list of future export initiatives shortly, and the Spoga+gafa and the National Hardware Shows will feature again in 2019. The Federation has applied for funding for both of these shows under the Department of International Trade (DIT) Tradeshow Access Programme. Under existing rules, eligible British SMEs qualify for cash grants towards the cost of exhibiting at these fairs. Details can be obtained from Gardenex on

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