

September 21, 2026



Central Garden & Pet Announces Garden Segment Leadership Transition

J.D. Walker, President, Garden Consumer Products, to Retire from That Role

Jason Barnes, Executive Vice President, Garden Consumer Products, to Succeed Walker

WALNUT CREEK, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Central Garden & Pet Company (NASDAQ: CENT) (NASDAQ: CENTA) ("Central"), a leading consumer goods company in the pet and garden industries, today announced a planned leadership transition for its Garden segment. J.D. Walker, President, Garden Consumer Products, will retire from that role effective September 26, 2026, at which point Jason Barnes, Executive Vice President, Garden Consumer Products, will assume responsibility for sales, marketing and service across Central's Garden segment, as well as management of the Branded Controls, Grass Seed, Live Plants, Packet Seeds and Vendor Partner businesses. After the transition, Mr. Walker will continue to support Central in a consulting capacity.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260921843516/en/>

Jason Barnes, Executive Vice President, Garden Consumer Products, to Succeed J.D. Walker, President, Garden Consumer Products, who will retire from that role effective September 26, 2026.

Mr. Barnes has served as Executive Vice President, Garden Consumer Products since October 2025 and brings more than two decades of experience in the lawn and garden

industry. He began his career with Pennington Seed in 2002 and joined Central Garden & Pet in 2006. Since joining Central, he has held a series of leadership roles of increasing responsibility across sales, business development, and general management, most recently serving as Senior Vice President and General Manager of Bell Nursery, DoMyOwn™, and Central's Vendor Partner business.

"As we planned for this transition, we were focused on identifying a leader who combines a deep understanding of our business and customers with a strong track record of execution and a commitment to Central's entrepreneurial culture," said Niko Lahanas, Chief Executive Officer of Central Garden & Pet. "Jason brings all of those qualities. He knows our garden business, has earned the trust of our customers and our teams, and has consistently demonstrated his ability to deliver results and develop talent. I have tremendous confidence in Jason's leadership and believe he is the right person to build on our momentum, accelerate growth and innovation, and lead our branded garden business into its next chapter."

Mr. Walker has been a key leader at Central since joining the company in 2011, playing an instrumental role in shaping and growing the Company's Garden segment. Under his leadership, the business delivered significant sales growth and improved profitability, while strengthening Central's portfolio of leading brands and deepening relationships with key retail partners. He also played an important role in expanding the garden portfolio through strategic acquisitions, including Arden®, Bell Nursery, Hopewell Nursery, Green Garden™ Products and DoMyOwn™. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Walker has been widely respected for his customer-focused leadership, commitment to the business, and ability to build strong, high-performing teams.

"J.D.'s contributions to Central over the past 15 years have been significant, and he leaves our Garden business in a much stronger position than when he took the helm," Lahanas added. "He has helped grow and strengthen our portfolio, built enduring relationships with our customers, developed an outstanding leadership team, and driven meaningful improvements across the business. His leadership of our Cost and Simplicity efforts has also created a stronger foundation for the next phase of growth. I'm grateful for J.D.'s leadership, partnership and commitment to Central, and I appreciate his continued support as we complete this transition."

"Leading Central's garden business has been an honor and a privilege," said Mr. Walker. "I'm proud of what this team has accomplished together, and I leave knowing it's in great hands. I'm grateful to Central, and I look forward to staying connected to this business as it continues to grow."

"I want to thank J.D. for his leadership and his contributions to Central and our garden business. I'm humbled by the opportunity to follow in his footsteps and excited to build on the strong foundation he helped create," said Mr. Barnes. "We have an exceptional team, a great portfolio of brands, and meaningful opportunities ahead. I look forward to keeping that momentum, accelerating innovation, driving growth, and continuing to deliver for our customers and consumers."

Mr. Barnes holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Tennessee and an MBA from Emory University.

About Central Garden & Pet

Central Garden & Pet Company (NASDAQ: CENT) (NASDAQ: CENTA) is a leading consumer goods company in the pet and garden industries. Guided by the belief that home is central to life, the company's purpose is to proudly nurture happy and healthy homes. For over 45 years, its innovative and trusted solutions have helped lawns grow greener, gardens bloom bigger, pets live healthier, and communities grow stronger. Central is home to a diversified portfolio of market-leading brands including Amdro®, Aqueon®, Best Bully Sticks®, Cadet®, C&S®, Farnam®, Ferry-Morse®, Kaytee®, Nylabone®, Pennington®, Sevin® and Zoëcon®. With fiscal 2025 net sales of \$3.1 billion, the company has strong manufacturing and logistics capabilities supported by a passionate, entrepreneurial growth culture that incorporates sustainability. Central is based in Walnut Creek, California, with over 6,000 employees primarily across North America. Visit www.central.com to learn more.

View source version on businesswire.com:

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260921843516/en/>

Investor & Media Contact

Friederike Edelmann

Vice President of Investor Relations & Corporate Sustainability

(925) 412 6726

fedelmann@central.com

Source: Central Garden & Pet Company