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HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

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Floral bulb specialists Winchester Growers are blossoming, having increased their storage, display and dispatch facilities thanks to Romsey based Spaceway.

A 12m by 15m mezzanine floor at the company's headquarters at Winnall Down Farm, Winchester has created extra product storage space for boxed bulbs. The floor caters for heavy duty loading and includes a handrail with a sliding loading section to enable fork lift trucks to place pallets onto the floor.

The company timed the installation to coincide with their 'quiet' period. For six months of the year the focus is on growing the bulbs - this switches to a heavy production phase when the bulbs have to be picked, packaged and dispatched to major stores such as Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's Homebase.

Spaceway stepped in to ensure the mezzanine was up and ready when the company needed it.

"This was quite an exciting project for us," says Spaceway's Malcolm Jeary. "The seasonal nature of the company dictated the pace and timing of the work. Special features such as the sliding loading section were introduced to provide easier access to the packaged goods which will play a crucial role during the busy period."

David McIntyre, Site Manager said he was delighted with Spaceway's work. "We called them in to plan the work 18 months ago and when we had the available budget called them back to carry out the work. We particularly needed a floor that was strong enough for heavy duty loading - we have a lot of tonnage up there. We found Spaceway fast, efficient and cost effective".

"Basically we had a lot of space going to waste above our heads. Storage space was at a premium. Now we have a lot more "goods in" space and space for the packing operation and I can guarantee Spaceway will be back to fit more mezzanine floors in more sheds."

Winchester Growers employs between 50 and 150 workers depending on the season and supplies a range of 1440 packed bulbs to over 400 garden centres and supermarket and chain store giants Sainsbury, Tesco, Waitrose and Morrisons. The company, which was the subject of a management buy out five years ago, has a turnover of £25m - it grows its own bulbs and packages Dutch ones too.

The bulbs, which are also sold through the Internet and mail order include no less than 60 varieties of daffodils right up to expensive £60 orchid bulbs.

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