

Far ahead of the times

The 2015 Farwest Show stays on the cutting edge of industry trends

By Kate Crawford

As OAN President Mike Coleman recently proclaimed, “Nursery trade shows are back!” Organizers of the 2015 Farwest Show are leading the way by putting together a potent combination of commerce and opportunities for growers and buyers to connect.

This year’s show highlights the latest industry trends in the nursery and greenhouse industry, plus exciting new ways to exhibit them on the trade show floor.

To get an idea of what to expect at this year’s Farwest, here is a sneak peek at some of the show’s top features:

TREND

Double feature

Farwest is in the middle of a five-year plan to host renowned associations and groups in conjunction with the show, a practice referred to as “co-location.”

This year’s Farwest Show will co-locate with the prestigious International Trials Conference, taking place August 24–27. The aim of the conference, which debuted in 2011 at the Royal Horticultural Society Garden Wisley in England, is to develop trialing standards, explore buyer-demanded plant characteristics, and share the latest research. The conference will attract researchers, breeders and growers from around the world.

TREND

Razzle-dazzle them

To encourage creativity, Farwest show management relaxed booth display restrictions and rules. Exhibitors now have an increased display area within their booth space to showcase their services and products.

TREND

Keep it short and sweet

Instead of weeklong marathons, trade shows are becoming shorter in duration with easy-to-navigate show floors and schedules. Rather than seeking to attract massive crowds of gawkers, experienced exhibitors prefer pre-qualified buyers and influencers walking the show floor.



These 2014 Farwest Show Tour participants saw innovation in action at the Edith Green–Wendell Wyatt Federal Building in downtown Portland. The building, renovated in 2013, is shaded with plant material on the south, west and east facades. PHOTO BY CURT KIPP

Based on feedback from exhibitors and attendees, Farwest organizers decided to move up show hours from noon to 10 a.m. on Thursday and Friday, and close the show an hour earlier at 5 p.m. Saturday’s hours morphed from noon–4 p.m. to 10 a.m.–2 p.m. These changes should better serve the busy schedules of exhibitors by providing more total hours on the show floor for business, but earlier evenings for socializing, networking and traveling back home.

Farwest has also partnered with premier industry groups and associations to bring in major buyers and industry influencers.

TREND

Far more learning

An emphasis on education increases the value of attendance. Company travel budgets are tighter than decades past, and employers want to see a good return on investment for each travel dollar spent. By adding in certifications, trainings and seminars, successful trade shows are multiplying the value of attending.

Farwest continues to excel in educational opportunities. Year after year, the show’s seminar schedule is stacked

with industry favorites and international speakers. This year features a keynote delivered by Ron Rosenberg, more than 40 hours of seminars, and six hours of pesticide recertification credits.

TREND

Expanded footprint

For attendees — and especially exhibitors — who can’t spare the time to attend a full seminar, organizers have created other arenas to learn and connect on the show floor.

Farwest will offer interesting, interactive and informal learning opportunities, such as the brand-new Growers Showcase, which offers free, live mini-seminars and access to top speakers and experts. Growers will be able to get specific questions answered, and attendees will get an insider’s view into hot industry topics.

The Idea Center, also on the show floor, will feature live retail merchandizing competitions. Think “Top Chef” meets the nursery industry!

TREND

Off-site attractions

Attendees are looking for more than just a stroll on the

show floor — they want a multi-dimensional experience.

New for this year's Farwest, the Retail Walking Tour will be led by retail expert Anne Obarksi and feature Portland's top-notch retailers both inside and outside the industry. Participants will gain insight into what works (and what doesn't) when it comes to store layout, merchandising and customer service. In addition, the famous Nursery Country Tours will once again show off the most amazing nurseries in the region.

The Equipment Innovation Day was a huge success last year and promises to offer far more this year. This year the event is located at one of the most innovative production facilities in the Pacific Northwest — GK Machine. The day will feature field and production equipment in action and include a barbecue lunch.



Smartphone apps

In this digital era, offering attendees an easy-to-use, content-rich app is an absolute necessity.

The brand-new Farwest app will launch over the summer and allow participants to create personal schedules, exchange virtual business cards, search for exhibitors and, most importantly, get custom directions to the Thursday night Pub Crawl.



Make it extraordinary

Farwest offers far more value than ever. To highlight all the new and improved features, Farwest completely re-branded the show — from its logo to advertising creative and messaging. The fresh look represents the show's new feel with the tagline, "Farwest. Far From Ordinary."

What all these trade show trends have in common is the goal of bringing exhibitors and attendees together. Thousands of nursery industry peers and leaders will congregate at the biggest show in the West, with more than five acres of show floor, to forge new business relationships and find the newest services, products and plants.

All these new features will elevate and enhance the 2015 Farwest Show, ensuring a far from ordinary experience for attendees and exhibitors alike. ☺

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Get in the game.



For nursery professionals, the stakes in our state capital are high. Always have been. And with issues like immigration, minimum wages, pest issues and water supply, the upcoming election cycle will certainly be no different.

Join us at the **Duffers Classic**. Reconnect with friends and compete to be the top dog. You'll help us elect legislators from both sides of the aisle who support our nursery industry.

Thursday, June 11, 2015
Stone Creek Golf Club • Oregon City

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Oregon Nurseries' Political Action Committee

