

# Farwest: It's not just for plants anymore

When it comes to products and ideas, retailers can expect to find far more at this year's show

By Crystal Cady

The Farwest Show has long been regarded as one of the best nursery industry trade shows in the country — and one of the greenest.

The key is the hundreds of top-notch Oregon growers that are located within an hour of the Portland metropolitan area. It's no wonder buyers from near and far make Farwest their primary place to find the highest quality and largest selection of plants.

But plants aren't the only reason to attend Farwest. Show officials have put considerable effort into enhancing the show's offerings for retailers — from new hard goods and gift suppliers to inspirational ideas and industry experts.

Last year's show saw 50 new exhibitors who offered an array of exciting new items for garden center retailers, including cedar furniture, pottery, organic fertilizers, tools and more. Many of these exhibitors are returning in 2015, to be joined by several first-time exhibitors who will feature garden décor, furniture, accessories, gifts and indoor plant lines.

"Retailers of all sizes — mom and pop, multiple locations and large chains — are bound to find several new must-have items to excite your customers for the 2016 spring season, which is just nine months away," Show Director Allan Niemi said. "August is the perfect time to start planning for next season. Farwest will give you the products and ideas you need to stay ahead of the game and at the forefront of garden retail. If originality is your desire, Farwest is the place."

## A hot spot for retail

This year, retailers have a place devoted solely to bringing them the



latest innovations, displays, technologies and expert information from top industry leaders. The Idea Center has been retooled and reinvented as an area specifically for retailers to meet up, interact, share ideas and discover takeaways to keep their garden center on the cutting edge.

"Attendees can find inspiration from some of their peers as they show off their skills in the live merchandising and container garden competitions," Niemi said. "You'll also get invaluable information on the latest garden retail topics from top retail experts in the industry through the free mini-sessions offered throughout the show hours."

The Idea Center is also home to the

Retailers Choice Awards by The Garden Center Group. This popular program debuted at the leading industry shows last summer and is back again at Farwest.

Retailers are invited to join Sid Raisch on the jury in searching the show floor for the most innovative new garden retail products available in today's market. The hunt for the best and most innovative begins Thursday. It concludes Friday with an awards presentation to the top new products that were selected by jury participants.

## Fresh ideas from industry experts

The show floor isn't the only place retailers can find great new products and ideas, however. This year's

# 2015 Farwest Show Retail Product Exhibitors

educational offerings are stacked with industry thought leaders and experts, consisting of well-known favorites and new up-and-comers.

Speakers include the highly respected Dr. Allan Armitage, award-winning expert Ron Rosenberg, retail-destination owner Jerry Fritz of Linden Hill Gardens, young garden talent Brienne Gluvna Arthur — and that's just the beginning.

Retailers will find nearly 30 seminars, classes and workshops offered throughout all three days of the show that are designed with them in mind.

New to the show this year is a tour created just for retailers: the Retail Walking Tour. Hosted by renowned customer service and merchandising expert Anne Obarski, attendees will get the opportunity to visit four of Portland's top-notch retailers, both inside and outside the industry.

Spend the day with industry colleagues and gain insight from Anne on what works and what doesn't when it comes to store layout, displays and customer service. Tours are half-day and are being offered in the morning or afternoon. This is a can't-miss opportunity and space is limited. Sign up early to ensure your spot on the tour.

## Checking out Portland

If all this isn't enough to pack your schedule for your trip out for the Farwest Show, be sure to take advan-

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Tillman Christmas Trees LLC  
Van Bloem Gardens  
Victory Organics  
Washington Pottery Company  
WaterPulse  
Westeel ... and many more!

tage of the show's location in Portland, Oregon. Located right in the heart of nursery country, you can visit the operations of your favorite growers and get a glimpse at how things are looking for next year.

Of course after all that business, you might need some time for a little play. August is a great time to visit Portland with its beautiful summer weather and outdoor festivals. Grab some colleagues and take in all the city has to offer.

Whether it's dining, enjoying micro-

brews, wine or coffee, or partaking in the Northwest culture you'll be surrounded with unique opportunities and experiences sure to leave you feeling refreshed and ready to hit the ground running when you return home.

Visit [www.farwestshow.com](http://www.farwestshow.com) for more information on the show and to register. ☺

*Crystal Cady serves as event and member services manager with the Oregon Association of Nurseries. She can be reached at [ccady@oan.org](mailto:ccady@oan.org).*

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