

Farwest Show displays strong growth

2016 marks the second consecutive year of higher attendance



Farwest Fanatics were out in full force at the 2016 Farwest Show. The photo booth (above), hosted by Pivot Group, was popular with attendees who wanted to show their “Far From Ordinary” spirit. The floral display showcased at Blooming Nursery’s booth (top right) was a riot of color that captured the attention of many Instagrammers. The area dedicated to large equipment (bottom right) was another popular spot on the show floor.

PHOTOS BY CURT KIPP



The Farwest Show continues to grow — just like Oregon’s high quality plants, trees and shrubs.

More than 6,300 industry professionals turned out for the 2016 edition of the national nursery and greenhouse industry expo. It was a 6 percent increase over 2015, making it the second consecutive year that attendance went up.

The show also saw 53 new exhibitors to the show, which was the most since 2012. The total number of exhibitors was over 400, representing a 4 percent increase over 2015.

“Exhibiting at Farwest is good for business, both short and long term,” OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said. “Handshake agreements are still part of how business is done, which is why it was great to see so many new connections made on the show floor, on the tours, or even at events like the Farwest Pub Crawl. We are thrilled with the number of new attendees and exhibitors.”

The show was held Thursday–Saturday,

August 25–27, 2016 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon. Founded in 1973, it remains the largest green industry trade show in the West. It is produced by the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN), which represents Oregon’s \$894-million-and-growing nursery industry.

For the second year, the show was marketed with a theme of “Far From Ordinary,” including ads that featured the “Farwest Fanatics” — industry leaders who were coiffed with green plant material.

“The marketing campaign was intentionally provocative and it is really cool to see how it has garnered such national recognition and attention,” Stone said.

Attendees responded with a strong turnout, not just in numbers, but in quality. Exhibitors were pleased with the traffic to their booths, as well as the increased number of orders placed at the show.

“I wasn’t getting lookie loos — I was getting real buyers,” **Continued on page 14** >>>

Babycakes™ Blackberry wins top judges' honors at New Varieties Showcase

There were 55 outstanding new trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and vines on display at the 2016 New Varieties Showcase at the Farwest Show in Portland.

But **Babycakes™ Blackberry** (*Rubus* × 'APF-236T') and **Lavalamp™ Sublime™ Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Kolmakilma' PPAF, CBRAF) stood out from the crowd.

The Farwest Show judging panel, made up of industry experts, selected BabyCakes™ Blackberry for Best in Show honors. Meanwhile, show attendees chose Lavalamp™ Sublime™ Hydrangea for the People's Choice Award.

The 2016 showcase featured plants with interesting shapes, colors, growth habits and other characteristics, all displayed in an attractive format. The Farwest Show is produced by the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN).

"Every year, the New Varieties Showcase offers nursery professionals a chance to see the best in new plants, and this year was no exception," OAN Director of Events Allan Niemi said. "We had one of our largest assortments of new plants, with 55 in the lineup."

Babycakes™ Blackberry is a dwarf thornless blackberry bush bred by the University of Arkansas and jointly selected by Fall Creek Farm & Nursery Inc. and the University of Arkansas. It was introduced by Fall Creek and is available from Farwest exhibitors Alpha Nursery, Bailey Nurseries Inc., Fisher Farms LLC and Monrovia.

Lavalamp™ Sublime™ Hydrangea was hybridized by Kolster BV in The Netherlands, and is available from Farwest Show exhibitor Van Belle Nursery Inc.

In addition to the Best in Show award winner, the judges chose



three other plants for honorable mention status.

Purple Pillar™ Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* 'Purple Pillar') was discovered by Marinus Adrianus Cornelis van Aart and introduced by Proven Winners® Color Choice® Flowering Shrubs. It is available from Farwest Show exhibitors Van Essen Nursery Co. and Fisher Farms.

First Editions® Sunset Magic™ Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* 'PIILAG-IX' PPAF) was hybridized by Jeff Beasley, Michael A. Dirr, Mark Griffith, Rhonda Helvick and Oren McBee in Watkinsville, Georgia, and introduced by Bailey Nurseries Inc. It is available from Farwest exhibitor Bailey Nursery.

Cherry Berries Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens* 'GaulSid5') was hybridized by Gurjit Sidhu, Sidhu & Sons Nursery, and introduced by Briggs Nursery. It is available from Farwest exhibitor Briggs Nursery.

There were three runners-up in the balloting for the People's Choice Award. They were:

Cherry Berries Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens* 'GaulSid5'), described above.

First Editions® Sunset Magic™ Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* 'PIILAG-IX' PPAF), described above.

Hollywood™ Hibiscus Hot Shot™ (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* '8117-8' PPAF), which was bred by Lannes Nursery in Toulouse, France and introduced by J. Berry Nursery. It is represented by UpShoot LLC and is available from Farwest exhibitor Fessler Nursery Company.

For more information on these plants — and all 55 of the plants that were featured in this year's Farwest New Varieties Showcase — log on to www.farwestshow.com/nvs.shtml.

Little Prince wins best booth award

Little Prince of Oregon Nursery came away with top booth honors at the 2016 Farwest Show.

They were given the coveted Ted Van Veen Best in Show booth award for their clever booth that made striking use of plant material — including sedum wigs for company employees Ryan Seely and Mark Leichty that gave the term “hair farmers” a new meaning.

Sedum-strewn guitars completed the look for the Aurora, Oregon-based growers. The Best in Show award earned them a free 10×10 booth for 2017. The booth also was good enough to win Best 10×10 Booth in the Grower Division.

“At the Farwest Show, ‘Far From Ordinary’ is more than a tagline,” said Allan Niemi, Director of Events for the Oregon Association of Nurseries, which produces the show. “We had a number of exhibitors who went the extra mile this

year, and Little Prince was certainly one of them.”

In fact, the show has had so many exhibitors pushing the creativity on their booths the last two years that the show created a Far From Ordinary booth award to recognize some of them. Winning the award this year were **Dummen Group**, **Plantaflor USA Inc.** and **Skagit Gardens Inc.**

The show also gave out several Best of Division awards. Aside from Little Prince of Oregon, they were as follows:

Grower

- Best 10×20 or Larger Row Booth — **Valleybrook Gardens Ltd.**
- Best Island Booth — **Walla Walla Nursery Co.**



Service/Supply

- Best 10×10 Booth — **Bridgetown Garden Tools** (Booth #16057)
- Best 10×20 or Larger Row Booth — **Washington Pottery Company** (Booth #8025)
- Best Island Booth — **McConkey Co.** (Booth #16037) ➤

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said Tom Brewer of HC Companies Inc. and ProCal, based in Twinsburg, Ohio.

“It surpassed all of our expectations as a first-year exhibitor,” said Daniel Madland of Bridgetown Garden Tools in Portland, Oregon.

“We were getting some people from other parts of the country — some folks from the East Coast,” said Chris Harling of Eshraghi Nursery in Hillsboro, Oregon. “With the tightening of supplies, people are coming out West again.”

“The show allowed us to catch up with old contacts we hadn’t seen in a while,” said Kyle Russell of Russell’s Nursery in Aurora, Oregon, which was exhibiting for the first time in five years. “We were really busy. We had a lot of conversations. I’m pretty happy.”

This year’s show featured a free keynote presentation by globally-known green industry economist Dr. Charlie Hall of



Texas A&M University, who stated that he expects continued industry growth for at least the next two years, and only a remote chance of a recession during that time.

Other highly regarded experts also appeared, including Judy Sharpton, Lloyd Traven, Dan Hinkley, Suzanne Wainwright-Evans, Ron Rosenberg and many others. They shared new ways the

The fifth annual Farwest Pub Crawl, sponsored by Leonard Adams Insurance, was a popular social event again this year.

PHOTO BY CURT KIPP

green industry can anticipate and meet evolving customer needs and capitalize on the market opportunities of the future.

Planning and marketing efforts are already underway for the 2017 Farwest Show, which will take place next August 24–26, 2017 at the Oregon Convention Center.

“We are determined to make sure that Farwest keeps building and building on the success of the last two years,” Stone said. “The value of the show depends on who is there. By offering a ‘Far From Ordinary’ experience that stays fresh every year, we can ensure that more people attend, more exhibitors sign up, exhibitors and attendees get more out of it, and everyone wins. Oregon may make the best laurels — as well as the best shade trees, flowering trees, shrubs, perennials and much more — but we don’t believe in resting on them.” ☺



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