

I'll be there

The Farwest Show, located in one of the most productive nursery growing areas in the country, has it all.

With all that is happening in the market, the industry needs a multi-dimensional show, built to serve the industry and your needs. We've built the show in that image and we're growing as a result.

The OAN tries to maximize the experience for both the exhibitor and the attendee. We have upgraded our technological profile with a show app that allows you to see where everyone is and make appointments on the spot. We also utilize the natural advantage of Oregon's nursery geography to create tours of innovative operations in the days before the show.

If it's education you want, you got it. We offer top-line speakers, based on trends and topics suggested by the industry to build knowledge and expertise. There are 41 seminars in all, including six that accommodate Spanish translation.

Solutions-oriented, plant-focused ideas

Oregon's expansive plant palette has always been the driving force behind Farwest. One of my personal interests is to see the new, cutting-edge plant varieties that are coming to market next year. After these plants spend years in development, biding their time to emerge on the market, you get to see them first at Farwest.

And you can buy them, too. All New Varieties Showcase selections can be found with at least one exhibitor on the floor.

We also connect growers and retailers with suppliers at the New Products Showcase. Innovation is critical for success, and Farwest brings forward and highlights new products to help industry members solve any needs they have.

Ideas and solutions can make any show worth the trip. Attendees wanted access to mini-sessions on the show floor, and I am pleased that we will have a Retailer Idea Center and a Grower Solution Center to meet those needs. These 35 quick sessions are designed to help your business.

I encourage you to drop in on those that look of interest. You may well take home a nugget that moves your business forward or solves a pressing problem.

Networking opportunities abound

It's captivating to watch the interaction between attendees and exhibitors. The old "handshake rule" applies in the nursery industry and there is nothing like a trade show to press the flesh. There are innovative booths, cool themes to attract attention, and the opportunity to walk the floor with experts.

I am also excited about two particular networking events. One is the Emergent Networking Event, which is solely focused on our young, upcoming nursery professionals. Building the future starts here and this is a very cool event. The second is Women in Horticulture, an exclusive event that increases connections with peers from across the nation.

All of the Farwest networking and social events are FREE and open to all show participants. In fact, our Farwest keynote address by Terri McEnaney, president of Bailey Nurseries, will address the value of networking, and ways to get more from it.

A fourth-generation leader, Terri will talk about "Connections: Cultivating Your Company and Your Professional Life." I could not be more pleased to have such a titan address our show and share her wealth of experience. New horticultural professionals and established industry leaders alike are sure to benefit from this free session.

The Farwest Show is really about who is there

Every year, I meet with our volunteer leaders and OAN staff after Farwest is over, to discuss what went well and what can be improved. Our longevity is remarkable, but it should never stop us from searching for new ways to add value for exhibitors and attendees.

As much as things change, though, we always know the heart and soul of the show is the same. It all comes back to you — the industry member.



Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A focus this year is highlighting the strengths, growing acumen and personality of our exhibitors. It is easy, because they are the real deal.

The "I'll Be There" social media campaign mirrors the very popular Portland Timbers campaign that shows the great diversity and passion of the fans of Portland's own Major League Soccer team. In the Timbers' ads, everyday fans were photographed holding axes and wearing soccer scarves, showing what it is that unites them. These images were featured in ads for the team, and it worked. The stadium is full and tickets are hard to come by.

We decided it was high time to do a similar campaign showing our members' love for the industry. After all, nobody cares more about the buying and selling of plants. So, we had members show up for pictures in their everyday clothing. We traded the Timbers' axes and scarves for shovels and hand tools.

The photos turned out awesome, and you can see some of them in this Farwest Edition of *Digger*. Others have been shared on the show's Facebook page and website. Personalities sure came out, and each participating company is identified in the images. These certainly showcase the strength of the businesses and community that come together for Farwest.

Every OAN member receives unlimited complimentary (FREE!) entry into Farwest. This is your show. We hope to see you at the Oregon Convention Center! ☺

