

The Farwest Show is the place to be

I hear a lot about the beginnings of the Farwest Show. It started because an emerging agricultural sector decided to reach out beyond Oregon's borders.

Growers wanted to show off their quality plants and give tours of the beautiful nursery and greenhouse operations in the fertile Willamette Valley.

Just as in the beginning, the plants are beautiful but it's the people who make the connections. Quality people grow quality plants, and both are just waiting for you to come out and see them.

August in Oregon is absolutely captivating. It's warm, but not humid. Most nurseries are within a short drive of Portland. The city has a dynamic restaurant scene, as well as some of the best beer and wine in the country.

A visit to Farwest is rich in value — both inside on the trade show floor, and outside when you go see the nursery areas surrounding Portland.

Get some knowledge

Want to get tips on merchandising and feed your competitive fire? We have Anne Obarski, CEO for Merchandise Concepts, to provide them. We also have Leslie Halleck, who will illustrate two compelling trends: the growth of women in horticulture and the rise of indoor growing and plantscaping.

Continuing on trends, Katie Dubow will give insight into what is hot in retail businesses. Sid Raisch is a very popular speaker and will be giving the industry a roadmap for e-commerce and the way customers are buying plant material. And for fun, University of Georgia horticultural giant Allan Armitage will show us the whimsy and joy in growing plants and how they tell a story.

Are you a research nut? Oregon's land grant university, Oregon State University, will tackle a couple of issues: bees and plant breeding.

Many issues matter to the industry, but almost none are as important as the labor crisis. This year's Farwest Show keynote speaker is Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum. He is a national leader and resource on immigration. He builds coalitions, authored a book, and appears regularly on the major news networks.

Ali's keynote will be "Leading the Way: A New Approach to American Immigration." It will touch on an essential topic for the survival of American agriculture. The issue is changing by the moment so come get a peek behind the curtain and interact in this one-of-a-kind opportunity.

This is a green show

The nursery industry is blessed with many trade shows around the country. OAN members have a strong presence at all of them, either showing their awesome plants to a particular region or looking for innovation.

Farwest not only gives you a gateway to elite growing operations, but the show itself is green. You can tell by walking in — you get hit by a tidal wave of oxygen and plants. I love how green the show is, because those who tour all year long can do one-stop shopping in August. There are lots of connections to be made, and lots of opportunities to buy quality green goods.

Easier for exhibitors and attendees

As your executive director, I am really blessed with a top of the line staff. Event staff at the top of their game, website and communication talent, all working to make it easier to exhibit and attend the show.

I am particularly excited about the new Farwest website (www.FarwestShow.com). We asked about your needs and we made changes. Our core objective was to help our exhibitors and give them a simplified way to have a successful booth. The updated website is mobile-friendly to help you navigate the show floor. As always, it also contains an easy-to-use and improved planning guide.

The Farwest Show hosts attendees from all over the United States, Canada and around the world. Our site makes it



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easier to obtain tickets and engage and attend our seminars.

An appetizer and a dessert

We have bracketed the Farwest Show with two outstanding events — one before, one after.

On Tuesday, August 21, the day before the show starts, we'll offer our Farwest tours. One will take visitors to go see independent garden centers — a great way to explore how to expand your brand. The second tour will focus on trees, with stops at elite operations. The third is a much-requested tour focusing on energy efficiency in greenhouse production.

To attend these tours, you must book your spot before they sell out!

On Saturday, August 25, we are offering Equipment Day, where you can see equipment in action in the field. You can see great innovation, and we'll even provide lunch.

Oregon is a special place

I'll be excited to see the 2018 Farwest Show come together. There is a lot awaiting the exhibitors and attendees. I can hardly wait!

Nursery roots run deep in Oregon. Farwest is a one-stop showcase of new varieties and products, a solution center on issues that vex the growing community, and a place to tour various operations (growers, retailers and greenhouses).

We want every person — whether they hail from down the road or across the country — to go back home with tips, leads and more knowledge. Come to beautiful Portland, Oregon! ☺