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Farwest has value now, and for future generations

I believe many of us who were lucky enough to grow up within this industry have a few special memories or events that stand out to them.

For me, and I am sure many others, the Farwest Show is almost nostalgic for that reason.

Getting to work in the Simmitt Nursery booth was a highlight for me every year. It was an absolute privilege to be able to go to Portland, work in the booth and meet my parents' friends, and then go out to dinner. My sisters and I would fight over who got to go each day. It was a big business event for our nursery. New and old buyers would place orders for the following year and potential customers would come out and tour.

How well the Farwest Show was attended had a direct correlation to how the following spring would be. But it also always amazed me how it took a trade show in Portland to get all of these friends together. People who lived even within a close proximity to us, we wouldn't see until August every year. I can still tell you where Jay Sanders' booth was. Or remember Dale Parra coming and teasing us girls with Bill Peters and John Dillon laughing about something at the end of the aisle. My dad would also take a few breaks from the booth to talk with Kristin VanHoose about some important OAN thing and I would sit there impatiently waiting because I wanted to keep walking around and getting candy.

I was talking with my husband a few years ago about the Farwest Show and how I would pass out these small vials with a cut daphne in them to people walking by the booth. To both of our shock, he had actually attended the Farwest Show as a child and remembered the daphne vials. I like to think that it must have been me and not one of my sisters that gave it to him and it was fate from that moment on, but who knows. The most important thing I got from that story was realizing that a child came to the show because of



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his interest and love for plants. He did not have a family involved in the nursery business. He simply wanted to see what this industry was all about and learn more.

This is the Farwest Show. It is a place where business happens, friends can come together, and future generations within the industry make memories. I know a lot of people feel the show has changed too much and may not feel the same value in it that it once had. I understand that completely and have had a front row to witness the changes all trade shows are facing, but especially Farwest.

I personally had to take a look at the show and decide if my wanting to exhibit and/or attend was only for nostalgic reasons, and it clearly was not. It is different than it was, but is every bit as special for my kids and an asset for our business. I have not had even one year where I haven't done some meaningful business because of the Farwest Show.

Every business needs to make their own personal decisions that are right for them, but for us, I cannot put a value on a new customer. Or seeing our friends within the industry, for that matter.

I implore you, if you have chosen not to exhibit this year, please still come by the show and say hello. I know I am not alone when I say I want to see you, I want to meet new faces, and I want to continue this tradition for my kids and future generations of nursery owners and professionals. ☺

Amanda Staehely