

Joining the climate conversation

The nursery and greenhouse industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of horticulture, agriculture, and environmental sustainability.

As the Earth's climate continues to affect global ecosystems, discussions surrounding our industry's adaptation and mitigation strategies have become increasingly important.

This is why we are hosting a Nursery and Greenhouse Industry Climate Summit at the 2025 Farwest Show. Taking place August 20–21, it will serve as a forum where experts, growers, and stakeholders can come together to assess the challenges and opportunities posed by climate-related realities. We can also talk about impacts and opportunities from any ensuing regulation.

The industry's role in climate action

Our green industry has a significant impact on climate, as well as substantial potential to make positive contributions. Nurseries and greenhouses produce millions of plants annually. Many of these play crucial roles in carbon sequestration, biodiversity, and food security. Additionally, the way plants are cultivated in controlled environments on the farm can directly influence resource usage, such as energy, water, and fertilizers.

We're creating this summit because Oregon's nursery industry is renowned for its leadership and consensus building. We have a chance to bring together disparate views on research and policy, while setting the standard for our industry's role on climate.

Adding up our impact scientifically

Plants provide tangible ecosystem benefits. They reduce the urban heat island effect, absorb CO₂ and improve air quality.

Although our industry is an intensive energy user, we are leaders in efficiency and have embraced renewable energy. A dozen years ago, the OAN launched the Climate Friendly Nurseries Program. It

was way ahead of its time, and today, it remains a valuable tool and guide for measuring our carbon footprint.

Water conservation and management are also vital to our industry. That's why Oregon's nursery industry has become an unqualified leader in stretching this critical and scarce resource.

But we shouldn't quit there.

Our next achievement should be to quantify the lifetime carbon sequestration benefit of trees and plants, or as I like to call it, "doing the math." That is where day one of the Climate Summit will shine. We will bring together the brightest research and scientific minds to find a common method to prove our impact — mathematically. Forestry is way ahead of our sector on this front, and we need real science to figure out our true ecological impact.

Economic and environmental impact

While the discussions at the Climate Summit will be crucial for the nursery and greenhouse industry itself, their ripple effects will be far-reaching. The global demand for sustainable agriculture practices is growing. As the nursery and greenhouse industry evolves to meet these needs, it not only boosts our own economic viability but also plays a key role in broader environmental efforts.

Among the most natural and powerful solutions to climate change are plants and trees, which play a crucial role in carbon sequestration.

Research highlights how plants not only contribute to this process but are also essential to the long-term health of the planet.

Policy advocacy and industry collaboration

Climate action is a global issue that requires coordinated action across industries, governments, and communities. The summit will be a platform for nurseries and greenhouse operators to advocate supportive policies that encourage sustainable practices.

Whether it's through tax incentives for green technologies, or grants for research into climate-resilient crops, the summit



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encourages collaboration and alignment between industry stakeholders and policy-makers to drive meaningful change.

That is where day two of the summit comes in. We will hear from environmental and agricultural voices, as well as U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-District 1), who is a leading voice in Washington, D.C. on the issue of climate.

To give a preview, I hope we examine:

1. Carbon sequestration through plant production.
2. Sequestration through the lifecycle in the built environment.

We need to talk about what will incentivize industry: mitigation on agricultural practices, buying and selling carbon credits on the open market, outright regulatory relief on carbon and environmental restrictions, and the need for technical assistance for all sizes of operations to tap into.

Our role, and our road to get there

A climate policy that rewards growers in the nursery and greenhouse industry must be multifaceted, incentivizing a range of sustainable practices that reduce carbon emissions, conserve resources, and foster resilience to climate change. By offering tax incentives, carbon credits, subsidies for renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure, and funding for research and development, such policies can make it easier for growers to adopt and expand their climate-friendly practices.

Given these incentives, the nursery and greenhouse industry can play a leading role in addressing climate change while also ensuring the long-term sustainability of the sector. ☺