



Scott Palmer from Van Belle Youngplants (right) visits with Brad Sweeney from Total Energy Group at the Farwest Show. Palmer donned a bathrobe to promote Van Belle's new Bubble Bath™ Hardy Hydrangea. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

# Excitement, optimism prevail at 2025 Farwest Show

BY VIC PANICHKUL

A palpable sense of excitement and optimism for the future prevailed at the 2025 Farwest Show in Portland, Oregon, as exhibitors put their best foot forward, forged new customer connections and strengthened existing relationships.

“This year’s Farwest Show had great energy and traffic on the show floor with more than 4,000 attendees and 326 exhibitors,” said OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone.

“It’s amazing that we had 60 first-time exhibitors this year,” said OAN Director of Finance and Administration Stephanie Collins.

One of the exhibitors this year was **T&L Nursery** (Redmond, Washington), which returned after a 10-year absence.

“We were so excited to be back with a booth at the show. It was wonderful



reconnecting with customers, checking out the amazing products from other vendors, and spending time with our peers in the industry,” said T&L Marketing and Communications Coordinator Anastasia Brondino. “A special shoutout to two members of our growing team, who attended two full days of seminars and are bringing back fresh ideas and insights to T&L. We’re grateful to be part of this special community and can’t wait to see what

the future holds for the show.”

James Szadek, who represented **Blooming Nursery** (Cornelius, Oregon), said the foot traffic at his booth was very good on opening day Wednesday, but he was surprised that it was equally good on the second day as well.

“It’s been a positive show for us,” said Szadek, who has been attending Farwest since 1999. “It’s been really exciting. We’ve had a lot of good interaction with existing customers and new customers. We made some great new contacts.”

For industry veteran Joshua LaPoint, owner of **Standard Nursery** (Lafayette, Oregon), it was his first time representing his own nursery instead of someone else’s.

“Coming as an owner instead of working for someone else definitely gives you a different spin on things,” he said. “It’s been awesome — definitely a positive show for us. I got to meet a bunch >>



There were 15 fantastic products showcased in the New Products Showcase at the Farwest Show. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

of new customers and vendors as well. They've got big product and different material that I don't have yet, but I want to bring to my customers."

"Farwest is an Oregon show but it's also a growers' show," LaPoint said. "So when you come here, it's all green. Everywhere you look, there's giant trees and amazing topiary. If I were a buyer, coming to Oregon for Farwest makes complete sense because all of the nurseries are geared up for tours, everyone's so close together, and I can see all of this plant material at the show."

Marissa Marshall, vice president of business development with **Growmentum** (Morgantown, West Virginia), was also impressed with how green the show was. "I was surprised to see so many plants," she said. "I've been to other shows across the country, and this seems like it's the greenest nursery industry trade show."

"This is more than 40 Farwest shows for us," said Jerry Simnitt, co-owner of **Simnitt Nursery LLC** (Canby, Oregon). "We've been coming for a long time. It's a good industry meetup. Lately it's a great meetup for our sales in the West, which is a bigger part of our portfolio. And the education seminars were great."

Another aspect that brings Simnitt back is he wants to show support for the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN).

"The association does so much good [for the industry] and this supports the association," he said. "That alone would be a good reason to keep coming back. But



Participants tour the Canapii autonomous greenhouse at GK Machine during the Automation Tour. PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

all of the conversations I have, all of the people I meet — local or far away — it's always a great event for us as a grower."

For the first time, the Oregon Association of Nurseries hosted a Climate Summit at Farwest. It was a two-day, comprehensive discussion of the role of the nursery and greenhouse industry in climate issues. Day 1 focused on science and data and Day 2 focused on policy. It included participants from Oregon Department of Agriculture and staffers from the offices of U.S. Reps. Andrea



Participants tour the Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery, one of the stops on the Wholesale Grower Tour. PHOTO BY CARLY CARPENTER

Salinas (D-Oregon 6<sup>th</sup> district) and Suzanne Bonamici (D-Oregon 1<sup>st</sup> district).

"The discussions were far-ranging and very productive," said OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone.

"The climate summit this year — which I got to be a part of — was a really terrific thing to move the ball forward on climate," said Simnitt.

For the first time in years, Farwest offered three pre-show tours on August 19, rather than the usual two.

An Automation Tour was added



**By  
the  
numbers**

- 4,000+ attendees
- 326 exhibitors
- 60 first-time exhibitors
- 46 states represented
- 15 countries represented
- 56 educational sessions
- 3 Tours (Wholesale, Retail, Automation)
- 52 years of Farwest tradition

to the Garden Center Retail Tour and Wholesale Grower Tour. The Wholesale and Automation tours were the first to sell out. With scarcity of labor and immigration enforcement concerns top of mind, interest in the Automation Tour was high.

Attendees got a broad overview of labor-saving mechanization and machines that provided more consistent products than human hands could at **GK Machine, Brentano's Tree Farm, Woodburn Nursery & Azaleas, and Bountiful Farms**. At each nursery, owners highlighted how automation allowed them to shift labor to work that was more rewarding, more satisfying, and less physically strenuous and letting the machines do the backbreaking tasks.

"People were really blown away by the Automation Tour and the Wholesale Grower Tour this year," said Events and Education Coordinator Jamie Moore. "I think the fully automated Canopii smart greenhouse at GK Machine blew a lot of

minds. People were also struck by the beautiful surroundings as much as the amazing trees, shrubs and plant material they saw at the Wholesale Grower Tour that focused on nurseries in the Boring, Oregon, area:

**Don Marjama Nursery Co., Hans Nelson & Sons Nursery Inc., J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. and John Holmlund Nursery LLC.** Plus

there was a nice social aspect to end the tour when Holmlund provided a closing cocktail time.

As the show wrapped up on Friday, one comment from Adam Queen, who represented Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, Tennessee, perhaps summed up the show best.

"As the Farwest Show comes to a close, I'm left with a thousand thoughts and ideas spinning in my head," Queen said. "This trip has been truly special. I even had the chance to spend an afternoon at Cistus Nursery connecting with local plant folk and embracing the spirit of

'zonal denial' (or maybe just a bit of social avoidance — hard to say which came first).

"The opportunity to meet industry giants and plantsmen extraordinaire while getting a glimpse into Oregon's thriving greenhouse and nursery scene has been invaluable. I hope to bring a piece of that inspiration back home and let it take root."

Organizers were pleased with how the show turned out and are anticipating what the future brings.

"We're definitely looking forward to building on the momentum of this year's show," Stone said. "We plan on making the 2026 Farwest Show even more successful and plant many, many more inspiring ideas." ©

*Vic Panichkul is publications manager at the Oregon Association of Nurseries and managing editor and art director for Digger. Contact him at 503-582-2009 or [VPanichkul@OAN.org](mailto:VPanichkul@OAN.org).*

**OUTSTANDING VALUE**

GROWN IN THE HEART OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Blue Ribbon Attention  
Expanded Ornamental Offerings  
High Quality Nursery Stock  
**YOU CAN COUNT ON US**

WillametteNurseries.com

**WILLAMETTE NURSERIES**  
Canby, Oregon

**Quality Bark at Wholesale Prices**

**Fir and Hemlock Bark • Sawdust Compost • Hog Fuel • Fines Rock, Chips, Bark Rock**

Marr Bros. Bark has been serving the area with quality products and competitive pricing for over 30 years. And we deliver anywhere in the Willamette Valley!

**When you want the best ... Marr Bros. is your only choice!**

**Call 503-838-1830 to schedule a delivery**

Conveniently located at:  
**875 S. Pacific Hwy, Monmouth, Ore.**

**Marr Bros. Bark**