

The show that rooted an industry

Trade shows are still the living room of an industry. They are part marketplace, part family reunion, part classroom, and part proving ground.

In a world dominated by screens, algorithms, and rushed digital exchanges, there remains something powerful about standing shoulder to shoulder with the people who grow, ship, innovate, and sustain the green industry. That is what the Farwest Show continues to represent.

It is immersive. It is personal. Most importantly, it is rooted in relationships.

The business cycle can swing wildly. One year, growers are sold out of inventory and scrambling to keep up with demand. Another year, uncertainty creeps in through tariffs, labor shortages, supply chain disruptions, inflation, or mounting government regulation.

But through the highs and lows, one thing remains constant: people still want to do business with people they know and trust.

That is why the Farwest Show matters.

Farwest mirrors the industry it serves: resilient, innovative, passionate, and deeply connected.

And there is simply no other show in the country with the proximity to elite nursery operations of every size quite like Oregon.

Fun, extraordinary, and deeply personal

Friendships in this industry run deep.

They happen on nursery tours, during seminars, in crowded hallways, over coffee before a keynote, or unexpectedly on the trade show floor. Sometimes the most valuable moment of the week is not the scheduled meeting, but the spontaneous conversation that sparks a new idea or solves a lingering problem.

In an era defined by rapid change, economic uncertainty, labor shortages, and regulatory pressure, there is tremendous value in looking each other in the eye and working through challenges together. Farwest creates the space for those conversations to happen.

Labor remains the defining challenge

If there is one issue dominating horticulture, it is labor.

Finding workers, retaining workers, training workers, and maximizing workforce productivity remain among the greatest challenges facing growers today. That reality has elevated automation from a future concept to an immediate necessity.

One of the most talked-about features of the 2025 Farwest experience was the nursery automation tour. Attendees saw firsthand how automation is being applied across the industry.

Automation is not about replacing people. It is about extending limited human resources and helping businesses remain competitive.

The 2026 Automation Summit will build on that momentum with honest conversations about what is working, where challenges remain, and what the future may look like.

Building the bench

The green industry urgently needs more people who love working with plants.

Now entering its second year, Career Boulevard goes far beyond a traditional job fair.

It is a networking hub, an educational resource, a mentorship space, and a launching pad for the next generation of horticulture professionals. Career Boulevard provides fertile ground for growth.

Participants can connect with educators, internship programs, scholarship resources, job boards, industry experts, and employers all in one place. Plus the NexGen social will once again provide opportunities to build lasting industry relationships.

Straight talk during uncertain times

The 2026 keynote address will feature one of the industry's most respected economic voices: Charlie Hall.

Dr. Hall's presentation, "Overcoming Decision Paralysis in the Midst of Uncertainty," could be more timely.

Businesses across the country are wrestling with inflation, labor costs, regulations, and market instability. Dr. Hall brings stringent economic data, sharp analysis, and practical strategies to help green industry companies navigate uncertainty while protecting and growing their businesses.

Tackling plastic recycling

Extended producer responsibility — better known as EPR — is no longer a future debate.



Jeff Stone

Seven states, including Oregon, have implemented plastic recycling policies that shift responsibility for packaging and recycling management onto producers.

Farwest will host a Plastic Recycling Roundtable to help understand those impacts and shape workable policy solutions.

Together with AmericanHort's Rachel Pick, industry leaders will discuss what EPR means, where regulations are headed, and how the industry can work toward practical national policy models.

The state of the industry

One of the great traditions of Farwest is the state of the industry address.

It is an opportunity to speak candidly about both the opportunities and threats facing horticulture today. The industry has weathered enormous challenges recently, and there are still storm clouds on the horizon.

But there is also enormous opportunity.

Consumer interest in plants, outdoor living, sustainability, and green spaces remains strong. Innovation continues to move the industry forward.

And then there is Oregon itself.

The Willamette Valley sits at the heart of one of the most productive nursery regions in the world. Incredible food, wine country, the coast, and stunning scenery are all within reach. All that plus world-class horticulture.

Farwest is not simply another trade show. It is the show that rooted an industry. ©