

Why your voice is essential

Your membership in the Oregon Association of Nurseries is more than a plaque on the wall or a yearly renewal notice.

It is an invitation to become part of a community whose purpose is to help every member grow — professionally, personally, and collectively. A trade association exists to create opportunities that no single business can create alone.

It is easy to think of membership as the monthly publication that arrives in your mailbox, discounted registration for events, or access to valuable resources. But the true strength of the association has never been found in its office, its board of directors, or its staff. Its greatest asset has always been its members.

Membership opens the door. Engagement is what transforms that membership into something truly valuable.

Every member matters

The nursery industry has always advanced because people chose to invest more than their annual dues. They invested their knowledge, experience, curiosity, and willingness to help others succeed.

Whether you are looking for new production ideas, better business practices, emerging research, or simply a trusted network of peers who understand the unique challenges of growing plants, the association provides the place where those conversations happen.

The generations before us built an organization that has weathered changing markets, labor challenges, pests, economic uncertainty, and countless industry shifts. They understood something that remains true today: the strongest businesses are rarely the ones that operate in isolation. They are the ones connected to a network of people willing to share ideas, solve problems together, and support one another.

Fortunately, engagement does not require serving as president or sitting on

every committee. Every member contributes in different ways.

Sometimes engagement means mentoring a young professional entering the industry. Sometimes it means participating in a research project, attending a chapter meeting, welcoming a first-time attendee at an event, or opening your nursery for a tour. It can be as simple as asking a thoughtful question during an educational session or sharing a lesson learned from your own experience.

Even a few hours each year can strengthen both your business and the industry as a whole.

Investing in relationships

One of the most valuable benefits of association membership can never be printed in a brochure. It is the relationships.

Some of the industry's best ideas have been exchanged over coffee before a meeting, during conversations on the trade show floor, while touring another nursery, or after an educational session when someone stayed behind to continue the discussion.

Those moments create something larger than networking. They build trust. They create friendships. They establish the kind of professional relationships that often lead to new customers, trusted suppliers, collaborative solutions, and lifelong mentors.

Every member brings a unique perspective. No matter how long you have been in the industry, there is always something new to learn from someone else's success — or even their mistakes.

The diversity of our membership has always been one of our greatest strengths. Large operations and small family businesses, growers, retailers, suppliers, landscapers, researchers, and educators all contribute to a community where everyone benefits from sharing knowledge.

Building the next generation

Every successful industry depends on people who are willing to invest in those who follow them.

Today's young professionals are tomorrow's nursery owners, managers, researchers, and community leaders. The



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experiences they have today — whether through a committee meeting, a professional development event, or simply being welcomed into a conversation — will shape the future of our industry.

Likewise, seasoned professionals have an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy by sharing the lessons they have learned over decades of experience. Knowledge grows in value when it is passed along.

That exchange of ideas between generations is one of the greatest strengths of an engaged association.

The real return on membership

The OAN belongs to every member. Its future is not determined by a handful of leaders, but by hundreds of members who choose to participate.

When members become engaged, everyone benefits. New ideas spread faster. Challenges become easier to solve. Businesses become stronger. Friendships deepen. The industry becomes more resilient.

That is the real return on membership. The invitation is simple.

Don't just belong to the association. Become part of its community. Attend the meeting. Volunteer when you can. Introduce yourself to someone new. Share what you've learned and be willing to learn from others.

If you're not sure where to begin, simply reach out to the OAN staff. We'd be happy to help you find opportunities that match your interests, experience, and available time. .

The more you invest in this community, the more it will invest in you — and together, we will continue building an industry that grows stronger with every generation. ©