

Nursery industry meets at Farwest Show

By **DESIREE BERGSTROM**
The Capital Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — The annual Farwest Show fills the Oregon Convention Center each year with more than 6,000 nursery industry professionals from all corners of the U.S. and provides space for more than 400 exhibitors to display their wares and meet with buyers.

This year's theme, "Meet Me There," gets at the essence of the event — to meet, make connections and branch out, said the show's director, Allan Niemi.

The show, Aug. 22-24, is more than just a trade show.

"Face-to-face still matters, especially in the agriculture industry," Niemi said.

Each day usually begins with the educational portion of the show, with seminars ranging from "Not All Mites Are



Farwest Show

A view of the display floor at the Farwest Show, held annually at the Oregon Convention Center.

Spider Mites: Bio Control of Broad, Russet and Cyclamen Mites" to "Irrigation Efficiency and Management in Nursery Crops" and "Driving Foot Traffic for Green Industry Retailers with Digital Marketing."

This year's keynote speaker is Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum. He will speak on the importance of immigrants to the economy within agriculture as well as other U.S. industries. Jeff Stone, ex-



Desiree Bergstrom/Capital Press
Allan Niemi is director of the 2018 Farwest Show, held in Portland.

ecutive director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries, the organization that puts on the Farwest Show, said the nursery industry has been struggling with a lack of labor in part because federal immigration policy is uncertain.

The goal of the speakers and seminars is for the thousands of attendees to come together in

one space and ask questions about big issues facing the industry and to learn how to navigate those issues, Niemi said.

Seeing things first-hand, whether it be the operations of nurseries and garden centers or how to make greenhouses more efficient, is something that the show is also aiming for, offering bus tours the day before the trade show begins.

Also featured are the New Varieties Showcase, New Products Showcase, Growing Trends Showcase, a Solution Center and the Retailers' Choice Awards.

The day after the show, attendees can also travel from the convention center to GK Machine in Donald, Ore., for equipment day and watch the equipment they saw at the show in action.

A walk around the show floor offers showcases for different products, new plants and

current trends in the industry.

The Farwest Show is the largest show of its kind in the West, Niemi said.

"The strength of the OAN is its members; the strength of the show is our exhibitors," Niemi said.

While the goal of the show is to sell products, the Farwest Show also focuses on fostering connections between professionals in the industry. Niemi said that a couple of ways the show attempts to further those connections is by offering social events in the evenings.

One night attendees can stick around for a happy hour at the convention site, and on the next night the show arranges a "pub crawl" through Portland.

"Why shouldn't you go?" is how Niemi replies when someone asks him why they should go to the event, he said, "You have to be there to see it and make the connections."

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