



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farwest 2019 seminars explore innovations in plant breeding

Portland, Oregon (August 6, 2019) — On the second day of the 2019 Farwest Show, three industry experts will share insights into innovative aspects of plant breeding and development. Attendees will hear about breeding programs that set a high bar with traditional and advanced techniques. The show will take place August 21–23 at the Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon,

In one seminar, “‘Good’ Isn’t Good Enough; Breeding Plants in a Crowded Market,” David Roberts, general manager of Bailey Innovations, will discuss the scrutiny plant breeders face in bringing a plant to market. He will also talk about the aspects of breeding that can help plants stand out in the crowded field of new plant introductions. His talk has been changed to an earlier time of 8:30 – 9:30 a.m., Thursday, August 22.

Roberts has been an avid horticulturist since he first started training bonsai trees in the early 2000s. He studied under Dr. Dennis Werner and Dr. Tom Ranney at North Carolina State University and was hired in 2015 to act as the general manager and head plant breeder for Bailey Innovations. David manages day-to-day operations, leads breeding direction, and coordinates breeding objectives for the research and development facility, based in Athens, Georgia.

In a second session, Dr. Steve Strauss and Dr. Ryan Contreras of Oregon State University will explore plant development through genetic engineering in their talk, “Time for CRISPR? A Look at the Options for Creating Novel Ornamentals with Gene Editing and Engineering Techniques,” from 9:45–10:45 a.m., Thursday, August 22. They will share in detail the ways gene-editing methods, including CRISPR, produce some of the traits our industry has historically sought. Such traits include sterility, variation in leaf and flower color, modifications to canopy and leaf form, and pest resistance. The goal of the session is to review the status of the technology and the obstacles ahead.

Dr. Strauss, distinguished professor at Oregon State University, uses gene editing, genetic engineering, and genome analysis to understand how trees work, and to develop new ways to improve the value and public acceptability of biotechnology for forestry and horticulture.

Dr. Contreras, associate professor in the Department of Horticulture at Oregon State University, teaches spring and fall woody landscape plant identification, plant growth and development, and plant propagation courses. He also runs the Ornamental Plant Breeding Program that develops new cultivars of woody shrubs and trees with improved disease resistance, habit, fragrance, reduced fertility and more.

Registration for both seminars is required and available online at <https://farwestshow.com/register/>

Complete details on events, daily schedules, speakers, and education for Farwest can be found at www.farwestshow.com. For further questions, contact: Zen Landis, events and education manager, at 503-582-2011 or zlandis@oan.org.



The Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN), based in Wilsonville, represents nearly 800 wholesale growers, retailers, landscapers and suppliers. Oregon's ornamental horticulture industry is one of the state's largest agricultural commodities, with annual sales of \$947 million. Oregon's nursery industry is a traded sector; nearly 80 percent of the nursery plants grown in Oregon are shipped out of state. For information, visit www.oan.org or call 503-682-5089.

The Farwest Show, the largest green industry show in the West, is produced by the OAN, a trade organization that represents and serves the interests of the ornamental horticulture industry. Any revenue realized by the OAN is reinvested into the industry through education, research, marketing support and government relations. For more information about the 2019 Farwest Show, visit www.FarwestShow.com or call 503-682-5089.

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