

Science **STORIES!**



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SO, WHAT DO YOU DO?

I study what happens to animals and plants when their populations decline. I am really interested in how small plant populations are able to stick around and not go extinct, and how they interact with other species like insects and bacteria. For example, plants have interactions with good bacteria in the soil that might help them survive in stressful situations.



HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR WAY TO THIS CAREER PATH?

Ever since I was young, I loved animals and nature. I grew up in a big city in Brazil, surrounded by beaches and forests, and some of my favorite activities were spending hours in the ocean or going on hikes looking for waterfalls. I had an amazing biology teacher in high school who got me interested in learning more. I studied biology in college and began working in labs doing research all over the world, from Brazil to Canada to the Dominican Republic to Costa Rica, meeting amazing people and having lots of fun. Learning from international scientists made me interested in how conservation happens at an international level. Based on those experiences, I decided to continue on a research path, and that's how I got to the Ph.D. program I'm in now.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE FOR YOU?

Every work day is really different as a scientist! During the summer, I typically have experiments with plants going on, which means I get to spend a lot of time in a very sweaty greenhouse or outside: potting new seedlings, watering, measuring plants, observing insects, or collecting seeds. I really enjoy the sun and humidity and heat of the greenhouse and outdoor summer work, but it is hard work.

When I'm not busy with experiments, I spend a lot of time analyzing data in a computer program named "R", writing about my findings, reading science from other people, and thinking about future experiments.

It's research like mine that helps us understand and protect interactions between different species.

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