Women in Science

Tips for Work–Life Balance

As an early career public scientist and Extension educator, the boundaries between my personal and professional lives is blurry at best. Being available no matter the day, and treating everyone’s problem as my own, is part of the job. It’s tough, but rewarding, work that challenges even the most organized among our ranks. Here are some things I have learned along the way:

Create a schedule that works for you. It is very hard for me to get any writing or planning done during the day with so many phone calls and visitors. However, I can get a lot of work done in a few uninterrupted hours over an evening or weekend. I rely on this quiet uninterrupted time “after hours” to get projects done that require deeper thinking or more focus. I work more than 40 hours most weeks, but sometimes I sleep in or leave early on a Friday to go play and don’t feel a bit guilty!

Prioritize. In this line of work, potential projects are endless and often very compelling. I’m learning to prioritize where I spend my attention and getting good at saying no. Remember, a “yes” to one thing is a “no” to something else, so before saying yes, ask yourself what the resulting “no” will be. Most importantly, practice saying yes to play time!

Find a mentor and be a mentor. Find colleagues whom you enjoy and respect and learn from each other. Seek out opportunities to mentor future problem solvers. When someone else sees you as inspirational, it can do wonders for your self-esteem and help keep you on track. Strive to be the person you needed in your life when you were younger.

Create a life you enjoy. A dear friend once pointed out that work–life balance is easy when you like your personal life! The world is too full of adventures to spend all my time in the office or the lab. My goal is to work hard and then play hard.


doi:10.2134/csa2017.62.0524

In the next issue of CSA News...

Engineered Soils

Nobody has been designing, installing, and managing engineered urban soils longer than the turfgrass industry. Some of the first specifications for building engineered soils were published in 1973 by the USGA. In the 50 years since then, turf scientists have been studying what works and what doesn’t, and the standards for building and maintaining these soils have undergone constant revision. What can other urban soil designers learn from the turf industry about building and maintaining engineered soils?

FEATURING
Bill Kreuser, University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Roch Gaussoin, University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Doug Soldat, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Agriculture students and conservation coursework

Today’s agriculture students will be tomorrow’s leaders and decision makers. So it is important for these students to understand the potential impacts of agriculture on surrounding ecosystems. But where do students studying agriculture get their information about wildlife conservation issues? What are their perceptions of the impacts of agriculture on wildlife? Researchers conducted a study of undergraduates to find out. CSA News magazine shares the results of this study recently published in Natural Sciences Education.

FEATURING
Ryan Sharp, Kansas State University
Adam Ahlers, Kansas State University