

AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

Profiles in Arboriculture

By Lindsey E. Mitchell



JESSICA VOGT: EARLY-CAREER SCIENTIST AWARD, 2018

Dr. Jessica Vogt, an assistant professor of environmental science and studies at DePaul University, has compiled an impressive list of contributions to the field of urban forestry and arboriculture over the last ten years. In recognition of her efforts, she was awarded the 2018 Early-Career Scientist Award, which is given to professionals showing exceptional promise in international arboriculture research.

Dr. Vogt describes her introduction to the field of urban forestry as a “happy accident” that resulted from her desire to combine her passion for environmental

science and her interest in the human element of community sustainability. “I had been reluctant to enter a Ph.D. research program because I’d been frustrated with the ecology I’d been doing in undergrad, which always seemed to be ‘out there’ and to exclude people,” she said. “I wandered into a class titled ‘Urban Forest Management’ because it had ‘urban’ and ‘forest’ and I was curious. It ended up being the most wonderful class, taught by Dr. Burney Fischer, who would end up recruiting me to complete a Ph.D. doing urban forest research.”

Her dedication to studying the relationship between humans and the environment has led to a widespread collection of research, covering topics from the importance of maintaining urban trees, to the equity of non-profit community planting, to the disruptive effects of human interference on bat populations in the Philippines. Her lab at DePaul University, the Lab for Urban Forestry in the Anthropocene (LUFA), focuses on this same relationship. “The ‘Anthropocene’ is the new geologic epoch that scientists say we’ve entered because of the massive impacts humans have had on the planet—climate change, overpopulation, overconsumption, species extinctions, exploitation of ecosystems and human communities, and so on,” Dr. Vogt explained. “At LUFA we study how urban forests and the people who care for urban trees are managing the challenges of this new era through the lens of sustainability science.”

Human connections are important to Dr. Vogt both inside and outside of the lab, and she ensures that her students are included in her research as much as possible. “Much of the research I do is designed in part to enable student involvement,” she noted, “from research design to literature reviewing to data collection and analysis to manuscript writing.” Additionally, she credits her success to a mixture of hard work and outside support: “I’ve been so fortunate during my early career to have been surrounded by an extensive network of mentors, colleagues, coauthors, and students, and it’s only through their support, encouragement, and collaboration that I’ve been able to be as productive as I have been.”

“Dr. Vogt has accomplished a great deal early in her career, impacting not only the research and practice of arboriculture, but increasing our understanding of how arboriculture and urban forestry interfaces with other professions,” said Paul Ries, Past President of the ISA Board of Directors. “Her enthusiasm for her students, for education, and for the fields she studies is evident and admirable.”