



Women in Turf

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Traditionally, women have not entered the golf turfgrass management profession, likely due to many years of golf being inaccessible to women and to historic gender stereotypes and their demands. However, in recent years, as gender roles are becoming a thing of the past and the industry has turned its attention to women, women have been considering turfgrass management as a viable career option, and the impact has been significant.

The 2025 Canadian Golf Course Management Conference, a collaborative effort between the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) and the Ontario Golf Superintendents Association (OGSA), marked a significant moment for the women in attendance. This year's conference introduced its first Women in Turf Breakfast networking event — a devoted space for women in the industry to connect, share experiences, and celebrate their growing presence in the field. Morgan Creighton, the Women in Turfgrass Management (WITM) founder, proudly hosted the event and led the group in discussion. Creighton's mentor program unites students enrolled in turfgrass post-secondary programs and mentors who have established successful careers in the turfgrass industry. "As we know, progress and innovation come from fresh perspectives, diverse voices, and collaboration. Today is just that," emphasized Creighton during her opening speech.

Attendees at the breakfast also had the opportunity to hear from two speakers: Patricia Anne Miller, a PhD candidate in Environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto and Green Solutions Specialist—Golf Segment, Envu; and Laura Anderson,

a Dalhousie University graduate with a Bachelor of Science focused on Plant Science and Territory Sales Manager—Golf and Lawn Care, Envu.

Both speakers have built impressive careers and are passionate about fostering diversity. Through their compelling addresses, not only did they educate on two key topics: the benefits of niche disease diagnostic service, and understanding product registrations in Canada, they also encouraged aspiring female turf professionals to take chances in their careers, emphasizing the value of community in achieving success.

During her presentation "Turf Under the Microscope: Using Your Superpower to Stand Out", Patricia Anne Miller shared her experience of being a woman entering the industry, using her microbiology background to define her role in the turf world. She shared her findings in a Harvard Business Review that women will apply to jobs if they qualify for nearly 100% of the required skills, while men will apply if they are eligible for 60% of the skills necessary. This stat was reflected in her own experience. She started her position as a greens solution specialist with little confidence that she was the right person for a turfgrass related job in the golf industry, despite her boss's insistence that she had a valuable skill set.

Overtime, her superpower became clear to her. By putting turf under the microscope, she created a putting green program to treat co-occurring diseases. Patricia presents across Canada to explain these findings and provide this niche disease diagnostic service. Her expertise has not only gained her recognition in the industry but also allows her to advocate for taking bold steps in your career and set yourself apart. "Ask yourself, 'I have this skill set, so how can I benefit my industry?' Ignore the external voices that we were raised with,

you don't need to know 100% of the job to apply, and try to contribute in your own personal way," encouraged Miller.

Laura Anderson also shared her career journey, touching on the importance of women sticking together in the industry. "Having another woman by your side to help navigate your way through the industry is really important," says Anderson. Women in the turfgrass industry often face similar challenges, whether proving their expertise, earning leadership roles, or overcoming biases. By standing together, they can advocate for equal opportunities and recognition for their contributions.

The most transformative career moments often come from taking risks when an unexpected opportunity arises. By working as an agronomy researcher for the Alberta Wheat Commission, Laura Anderson was given the chance to conduct field research in New Zealand. "The power of saying 'yes' to those opportunities led me to the role that I am in now," Laura expressed. When women say "yes" to opportunities, they advance their careers and inspire and uplift others. Visibility in leadership roles, event participation, and industry discussions helps reshape perceptions and encourage more women to step forward.

As the turfgrass sector continues to evolve, so does the role of women within it. Events like the Women in Turf Breakfast and the work done by WITM motivate change, encourage a safe space for open dialogue, and foster a sense of community among women in the profession. For many, the event was a powerful reminder that the future of turfgrass management is undoubtedly more inclusive. "Seeing so many talented, dedicated women in one room, all passionate about the industry was inspiring," said Nicole Shaw, one of the event's participants. "It gives me hope for the future of our industry." ■