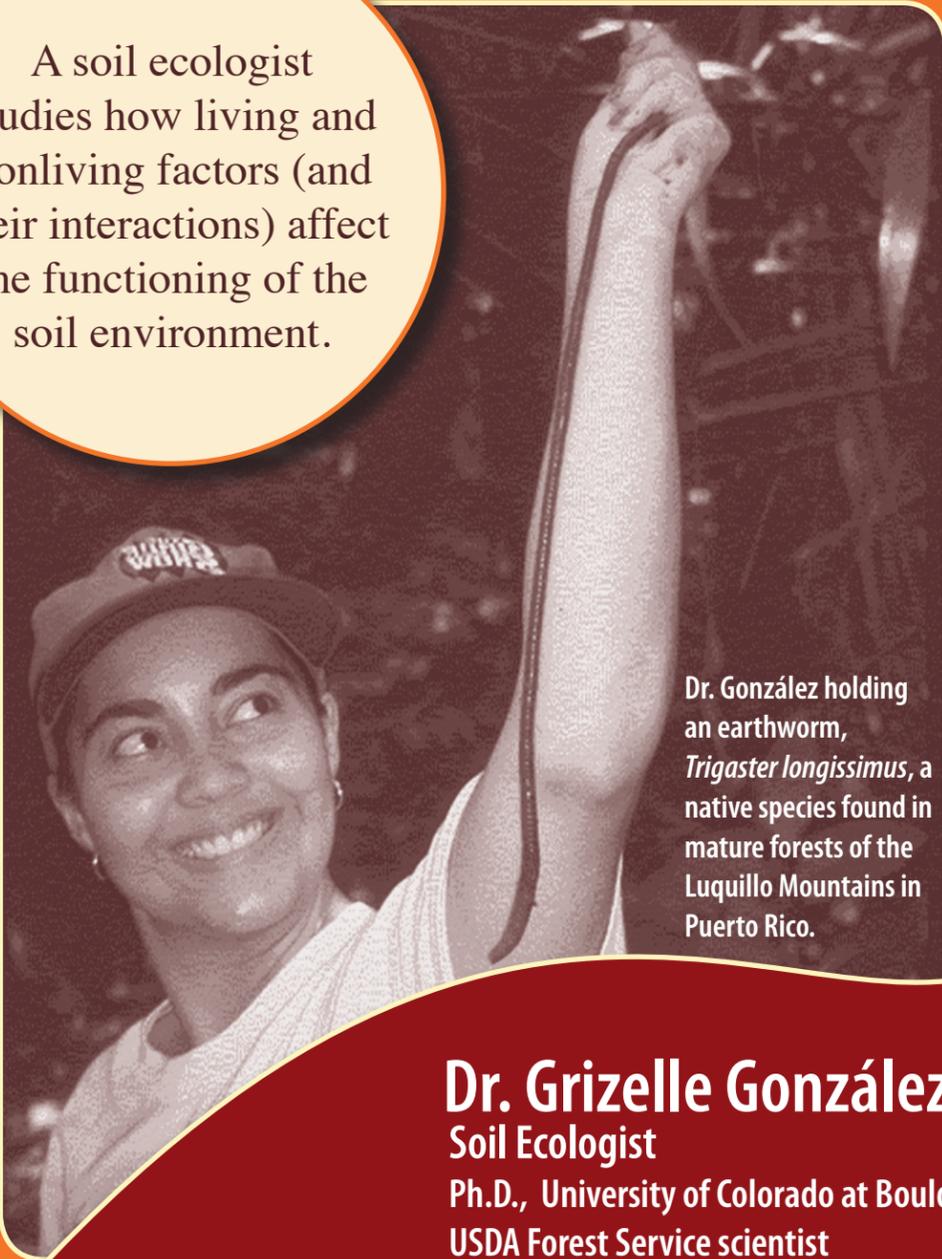




A soil ecologist studies how living and nonliving factors (and their interactions) affect the functioning of the soil environment.



Dr. González holding an earthworm, *Trigaster longissimus*, a native species found in mature forests of the Luquillo Mountains in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Grizelle González

Soil Ecologist

Ph.D., University of Colorado at Boulder
USDA Forest Service scientist

Meet the Scientist!



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>



Dr. Grizelle González

Important Scientist Characteristics

★ During my middle and high school years, I studied arts. The creativity, originality and sense of balance that you try to achieve in a work of art can definitely help develop skills needed during the many periods of trial and error and experimentation needed to do good science.

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer: How do soil fauna (animal life) affect the decay of litter debris (leaves and wood) in different ecosystems?

Technology or equipment used in research: A soil respirometer is a machine used to measure the change of gases (most commonly, carbon dioxide and oxygen) as produced or consumed by the organisms living in the soil.

Most Exciting Discovery

I discovered that soil fauna (animal life) significantly affect the breakdown of leaves and wood in both temperate and tropical ecosystems.

When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

Like many students doing a Bachelor's Degree in Biology, I thought I would continue studies in the medical field. In fact towards the end of my degree, I was accepted into medical schools. However, working at an ecophysiology laboratory researching mangrove and other forested ecosystems and digging earthworms from extremely hard-dried soils in pastures gave me a different view. Towards the end of the summer (as I also visited the hospitals I was most likely to work / practice during med school), I discovered I wanted to become a soil ecologist, not a doctor!

www.tropicalforestry.net/show_properties?user=ggonzalez