

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Plant and Soil Sciences (Horticulture Emphasis)

May 2019

Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

Dissertation Title: Effect of Pest Management Strategies and High Tunnels on Economics of Small-Scale Vegetable Production in Mississippi.

M.S. Entomology and Plant Pathology (Plant Pathology Emphasis)

December 2011

Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

Thesis Title: Diversity and Ecology of Bean Pod Mottle Virus in Mississippi

M.S. Entomology and Plant Pathology (Entomology Emphasis)

August 2003

Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS

Thesis title: Influence of an Early Soybean Production System and Row Width on Populations of Bean Leaf Beetle, *Cerotoma trifurcata* (Förster) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae), and the Incidence of Bean Pod Mottle Disease in Mississippi

B.S. Biological Sciences

August 1998

University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Minor: Anthropology, Chemistry

WORK EXPERIENCE

County Coordinator/Extension Agent II

December 2011 – Present

MSU Extension Service, Hancock County

Bay St. Louis, MS

- Assessed needs for county level programs through advisory councils and stakeholder interaction.
- Developed and implemented programs related to agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, and youth development.
- Evaluated programs for effectiveness and suitability to needs of county.
- Developed and maintained budget for county Extension programs.
- Supervised county level Extension staff and volunteers.
- Participated as presenter at regional and statewide field days.

Graduate Research Assistant

August 2005 – December 2011

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Mississippi State University

Mississippi State, MS

- Conducted research on diversity and ecology of virus affecting soybean.
- Taught laboratory sessions related to diagnostic techniques for plant pathogens.
- Presented research data at regional and national professional meetings.
- Participated in surveys of various crop and ornamental plants for economically important viruses.
- Assisted with molecular characterization of viruses affecting a range of crop and non-crop plants.
- Propagated various plant species in greenhouse for use in ongoing research.

Biology Instructor

August 2004 – December 2004

East Mississippi Community College, Golden Triangle Campus
Mayhew, MS

- Developed and implemented lecture and laboratory curriculum for introductory biology course.
- Evaluated student performance through scheduled exams and laboratory projects.

Laboratory Technician

November 2002 – June 2003

Department of Veterinary Medicine, Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, MS

- Assisted with research related to parasites affecting catfish production in Mississippi.
- Maintained laboratory population of research animals.

Graduate Research Assistant

August 1999 – August 2002

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, Mississippi State University
Graduate Research Assistant
August 1999 – August 2002

- Conducted research on impact of cultural practices on insect and virus population in soybean.
- Led laboratory and field demonstrations on sampling for insect pests of agronomic crops.
- Performed outreach demonstrations as part of department recruiting activities.

Animal Keeper

June 1998 – August 1999

Kampur Park and Zoological Garden
Hattiesburg, MS

- Responsible for routine care of diverse animal species.
- Developed enrichment activities for wide range of species.
- Maintained exhibits including work with horticulture staff.
- Led formal and informal tours for general public and undergraduate students.

PUBLICATIONS

- Fleming, D.E., J.A. Davis, F.R. Musser, S.V. Paula-Moraes, R.C. Stephenson, C.A. Wheeler, E. Ringpis, T.S. Crum, J.K. Tran. 2021. Trapping Soybean Looper (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) in the Southeastern USA and Implications for Pheromone-Based Research and Management. *Florida Entomologist*, 104(3):186-194.
- Stephenson, R.C., C.E. Coker, G.R. Bachman, B.C. Posadas, R.L. Harkess, J.J. Adamczyk and P.R. Knight. 2019. Economic Effect of Pest Management Strategies on Small Scale Tomato Production in Mississippi. *HortTechnology*. 30 (1), 64-75.
- Stephenson, R. C., C.E. Coker, G.R. Bachman, B.C. Posadas, R.L. Harkess and J.J. Adamczyk. 2019 Effect of High Tunnels on Populations of Whiteflies, Aphids and Thrips on Tomatoes in Mississippi. *Journal of Horticulture*. 6(3):1-9.
- Coker, C. E., V. Cerven, and R.C. Stephenson. 2018. Productivity of Asian varieties of Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus* L.), Bitter Melon (*Momordica charantia* L.), and Eggplant (*Solanum melongena* L.) in Coastal Mississippi. *Journal of Applied Horticulture*. 20(2):87-91.
- SAboughanem-Sabanadzovic N., I.E. Tzanetakis, A. Lawrence, R.C. Stephenson and S. Sabanadzovic, 2015. A new ilarvirus is associated with privet necrotic ringspot disease in southern USA. *Phytopathology*. 106(1):87-93.
- Stephenson, R. C. and H.N. Pitre. 2008. Early Season Production System for Soybeans: Influence on Bean Leaf Beetle (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) and Bean Pod Mottle Disease in Mississippi. *Journal of Agricultural and Urban Entomology*. 25(1):53-62.
- Stephenson, R. C. and H.N. Pitre, H.N. 2008. Influence of Soybean Maturity Group and Row Width on Bean Leaf Beetle (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) and Bean Pod Mottle Disease in an Early Season Production System. *Journal of Agricultural and Urban Entomology*. 25(2):127-137.
- Stephenson, R.C. and H.N. Pitre. 2003. Evaluation of Insecticides for Management of a Looper Complex in Late Planted Soybean, 2001. *Arthropod Management Tests*. 28(1): F106.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Jenny B. Ryals, Patricia R. Knight, Rebecca A. Melanson, Anthony T. Bowden, Christine E. H. Coker, Scott A. Langlois, Haley N. Williams, Jeremy M. Pickens, Ronald C. Stephenson, and Guihong B. Effect of X-ray Irradiation on Populations of *Pseudomonas amygdali* pv. *loropetali* pv. nov. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science - Southern Region. Feb. 5, 2023. Oklahoma City, OK.
- Coker, C.E, R.C. Stephenson, S. Broderick, R. Melanson, W.B. Evans. Training High Tunnel Producers in Mississippi. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science. Aug. 8, 2021. Denver, CO.
- Stephenson, R.C., Coker, C.E., G. Bachman, B. Posadas, R.L. Harkess. Adoption of Pest Management Strategies by Vegetable Growers in Mississippi. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science. August 11, 2022. Virtual.
- Coker, C. E., R.C. Stephenson, G. Bachman, S. Langlois. Feeding the Need Through Community. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science. Aug. 2, 2018. Washington, DC.
- Bachman, G., S. Langlois, C.E. Coker, and R.C. Stephenson. Enabling Accessibility and Success to Address Food Insecurity. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science. Aug. 2, 2018. Washington, DC.
- Stephenson, R.C. Community Gardens as Classrooms. 11th Biennial Conference Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals. Apr. 29- May 3, 2018. Biloxi, MS.
- Stephenson, R.C. and T. Ray. Expanding Natural Resource Literacy Through Library Summer Reading Programs. 11th Biennial Conference Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals. Apr. 29- May 3, 2018. Biloxi, MS.
- Coker, C.E., R.C. Stephenson, R. Archer. American Society of Horticultural Science Annual Meeting, "Creating partnerships: Mississippi State University, Tennessee University, and University of Jeremie," Atlanta, GA. August 2016.
- Abou Ghanem-Sabanadzovic, W.F. Moore T.W. Allen, R.C. Stephenson, and S. Sabanadzovic. Soybean vein necrosis virus and other viruses in of soybeans in Mississippi. 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Phytopathological Society, Aug. 1-5, 2015. Pasadena, CA.
- Coker, C.E, R.C. Stephenson. Introducing Agriculture to Eighth Graders in Six Coastal Counties. Annual Meeting of the American Society of Horticulture Science. 2015. HORTSCIENCE 50(9), S46-S46.
- Stephenson, R.C., C.E.H. Coker, G. R. Bachman, B.C. Posadas, R.L. Harkess, J.J. Adamczyk. "Economics of Insect Pest Management in Small Scale Tomato Production.," American Society for Horticultural Science - Southern Region, Feb. 1, 2015, Atlanta, GA.
- Sabanadzovic S., R.C. Stephenson and N. Abou Ghanem-Sabanadzovic. 2014. Soybean vein necrosis virus in Mississippi. Abstracts 2014 Joint Annual Meeting of the American and Canadian Phytopathological Societies, Aug. 10-13, 2014, Minneapolis, MN.
- Abou Ghanem-Sabanadzovic N., T.W. Allen, R.C. Stephenson, A. Lawrence, W.F. Moore and S. Sabanadzovic. Importance of kudzu as a reservoir for soybean viruses: Preliminary data. 2014 Southern Soybean Disease Workers Annual Conference, Mar. 5-6, 2014, Pensacola Beach, FL.
- Stephenson R.C., C.E. Coker, G. Bachman, R.L. Harkess, B. Posadas, and J. Adamczyk. Economics of Insect Pest Management in Small Scale Tomato Production. 39th Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators Society Southern Region, Hickory, Oct. 25-29, 2014, Hickory, North Carolina.
- Stephenson, R.C. and S. Sabanadzovic. Study on Population of Bean pod mottle virus in Mississippi. 70th Annual Meeting of Southeastern Biologists. Apr. 1-4, 2009, Birmingham, AL.
- Stephenson R.C. and S. Sabanadzovic. Population of Bean pod mottle virus in Mississippi. Annual Meeting of the American Phytopathological Society, Aug. 1-5, 2009, Portland, OR.
- Sabanadzovic S., N. Abou Ghanem-Sabanadzovic, W.F. Moore, T.W. Allen, R.C. Stephenson and A. Lawrence. First virus infecting Kudzu in USA. Annual Meeting of the American Phytopathological Society, Aug. 7-11, 2010, Charlotte, NC, USA.
- Stephenson R.C. and S. Sabanadzovic. Investigations on population and hosts of Bean pod mottle virus in Mississippi. Annual Meeting of the American Phytopathological Society, Aug. 7-11, 2010, Charlotte, NC, USA.

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

DelPrince, J., Coker, C.E.H., Knight, P., R.C. Stephenson. 2021. The Promise of Good Things: Floral Design for the Fall and Winter Holiday Season. Mississippi State University Extension.

Coker, C.E.H., J. DelPrince, R.C. Stephenson. 2018. Snapdragons for the Farmer Florist. Mississippi State University Extension. Publication 3301. [Extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/publications/publications/p3301web_pdf](https://extension.msstate.edu/sites/default/publications/publications/p3301web_pdf).

POPULAR MEDIA

Houseplants for the Holidays. Bay St. Louis Shoofly. Bay St. Louis, MS 11/14/20.

Gardening for Fall. Bay St. Louis Shoofly. Bay St. Louis, MS 8/24/20.

Hancock 4-H Students Explore Poultry and Robotics at MSU. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 1/31/12.

Pruning Landscape Plants. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 10/31/2013.

Attracting Beneficial Insects. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 3/28/14.

Plants Need Good Food to Grow. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 3/28/15.

Organic Gardening. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 4/10/2014.

Protecting Plants from Cold Weather. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 1/5/2015.

MSU Extension Service offers 4-H Junior Master Gardener Course. Sea Coast Echo. Bay St. Louis, MS. 11/5/16.

Keeping Your Pets in Mind While Planting this Spring. Gulfport, MS. South MS Living. March 2019.

SELECTED NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Stephenson, R.C. 2020. Poinsettias and Peppers. County Gardener's Extension Express, 13(12).

Stephenson, R.C. 2020. Resurrection Fern. County Gardener's Extension Express, 13(3).

Stephenson, R.C. 2019. Selecting healthy transplants. County Gardener's Extension Express, 12(4).

Stephenson, R.C. 2019. Damping off. County Gardener's Extension Express, 12(3).

Stephenson, R.C. 2018. Good sanitation helps prevent disease. County Gardener's Extension Express, 11(9).

Stephenson, R.C. 2018. Downy mildew. County Gardener's Extension Express, 11(5).

Stephenson, R.C. 2018. Legumes and nitrogen. County Gardener's Extension Express, 11(3).

Stephenson, R.C. 2017. Using edible flowers. County Gardener's Extension Express, 10(10).

Stephenson, R.C. 2017. Dormant sprays. County Gardener's Extension Express, 10(2).

Stephenson, R.C. 2016. Native bees in Mississippi. County Gardener's Extension Express, 9(3).

Stephenson, R.C. 2015. Buying quality plants. County Gardener's Extension Express, 8(11).

Stephenson, R.C. 2015. High tunnels. County Gardener's Extension Express, 8(10).

Stephenson, R.C. 2015. Sharpshooters. County Gardener's Extension Express, 8(7).

Stephenson, R.C. 2014. Vermicompost. County Gardener's Extension Express, 7(12).

Stephenson, R.C. 2014. Starting seedlings indoors. County Gardener's Extension Express, 7(2).

Stephenson, R.C. 2014. Organic control of vegetable pests. County Gardener's Extension Express, 6(4).

RADIO AND TELEVISION

WXXV. Ms. Congeniality TV. Socially Distanced Gardening. March 2020

WLOX 103.5 LP. Homegrown Show. Wednesday 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. August 2015 – Present.

SELECTED EXTENSION PROGRAMMING DEVELOPED

“Increase Plant Diversity to Manage Insect Pests”

“Beneficial Insects for Mississippi Gardens”

“Care for Coastal Plants”

“Plant Protection from Cold Weather”

“Common Insect and Disease Pests of Landscape Trees”

“Composting for the Mississippi Gardener”

“Vegetable Gardening in Containers”
“Cut Flowers for Mississippi Gardeners”
“Fall Gardening”
“Fertilization and Plant Health”
“Gardening and Health”
“Gardening Year-Round”
“GMO History, Development, and Impacts”
“Groundcovers and Shade Plants for Coastal Landscapes”
“How Gardens Grow Communities”
“Insect and Disease Pests of Sunflowers”
“Organic Gardening”
“Planting Trees in the Home Landscape”
“Preparing Raised Bed Gardens”
“Pruning Landscape Plants”
“Selection and Care of Garden Tools”
“Sustainable Gardening”
“Tomato Troubleshooting”
“Trees for Bees”
“Wildflowers for Mississippi Gardeners”

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT FUNDING

Wyatt, S. (Principal) and R.C. Stephenson (Advisor), "Enhancing Strawberry Production by Integrating Rabbit Production to Decrease Fertilizer Use, Increase Sustainability and Profit," Sponsored by Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research, Federal, \$14,909. Awarded. (2021-2022).

Musser, F. (Principal), R.C. Stephenson (Co-Principal), "Provivi Soybean Looper Trials," Sponsored by Provivi Inc., Private, \$95,000. Awarded. (2019)

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Professional Horticulturist – American Society for Horticultural Science

Certified Arborist – International Society of Arboriculture

Commercial Pesticide Applicator – MS Bureau of Plant Industry

AWARDS

Krezdorn Award for Excellence in Doctoral Research and Writing 2021 - American Society for Horticultural Science, Southern Region

Joe Street Outstanding Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources Award – MSU Extension

Extension Communication Award 2020 – American Society for Horticultural Science, Southern Region –

Snapdragons for the Farmer Florist

Achievement Award 2019 - National Association of County Agriculture Agents – Early career award presented for excellence in extension programming.

Agriculture Awareness and Appreciation Award 2018 - National Association of County Agriculture Agents – Presented for work with Pathways 2 Possibility.

SE District Agent of the Year 2012 – MSU Extension

SERVICE

MACAA Resolutions Committee 2018

American Society of Horticultural Science – Membership Committee

NACAA Sustainable Agriculture Committee – Vice-Chair

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Society of Horticultural Science

American Society for Natural Resources Extension Professionals

International Society of Arboriculture

International Society for Horticultural Science

Mississippi Association of County Agricultural Agents

National Association of County Agricultural Agents

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