

Reynaldo P. Peja Jr.
Assistant Professor I | Visayas State University - Alangalang
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Birthdate: December 11, 1996

Education

- Class of 2023 **MSc in Genetics minor in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology**
University of the Philippines Los baños
DOST-SEI ASTHRDP Graduate Scholar

Thesis: “Morphological and Molecular Characterization of *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* Penzig (Crous) Isolates and their Aggressiveness to Common Dragon Fruit Species (*Selenicereus* spp.) in the Philippines”
- Class of 2017 **BS in Biology**
University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College
Cum laude, DOST-SEI R.A. 7687 Scholar

Work Experience

- **April 2024 to Present, Assistant Professor I**, Department of Environmental Science Visayas State University – Alangalang. Teaching lecture and laboratory courses in Genetics, Agricultural Biotechnology, and Microbiology.
- **July 2023 to Present, Director**, Research, Extension, Innovation and Commercialization, Visayas State University – Alangalang. I manage research and development (R&D) initiatives on campus, ensuring alignment with the university's R&D agenda. Additionally, I am also mandated to spearhead efforts to enhance faculty capacity through various development programs.
- **January 2018 to April 2024, Instructor I**, Department of Environmental Science Visayas State University – Alangalang. Taught lecture and laboratory courses in Ecology, Microbiology, General Zoology, Geographic Information Systems, Genetics and Biotechnology.
- **November 2017 – January 2019, Research Assistant**, Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College. Worked on the in-house research project entitled “Heavy Metal Analysis in Macroalgae and Seawater from Manicani Island, Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines”. Facilitated the procurement of laboratory equipment and reagents and performed sample collection, laboratory processing, and analyses of data in R.
- **August 2017 to December 2017, Part-time Instructor, 1st Semester A.Y. 2017-2018 Visayas State University** – Alangalang, Alangalang, Leyte. Taught lecture and laboratory courses GIS, General Chemistry, and General Biochemistry

Research and Extension Projects

- (Ongoing) **Study Leader**, “Forest ECHOES: Engaging Children on Environmental Sustainability.” In partnership with TinkerHouse Inc., funded by Forest Foundation Philippines.
- (Ongoing) **Project Leader**, “Project EsMaLL: Establishing the Microbial Life Profile of the Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland in the Philippines”. Funding by VSU-Internationalization Program (VSU-IP-2022-8). Collaborator: Dr. Lau Nyok Sean of the Centre for Chemical Biology, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- **Assistant Study Leader**, “Biodiversity Assessment of Selected Faunal Species in Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland”. August 2018 – September 2019. Funded by the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction. Results of this study can be accessed through this website: <http://portal.leyte-sab-a-peatland.com/TechnicalStudies.php>
- **Field Supervisor**, “Citizens’ Satisfaction Index in Leyte, Leyte”. April 2019 – September 2019. Funded by the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Citizen’s Satisfaction Index System, and Bureau of Local Government Supervision.

Publications

Peja Jr, R.P., Duka, I.M.A., Manuel, M.C.C., Manalang, A.P. and Balendres, M.A.O., 2024. Low Genetic Variation Contrasts With Variable Morphotypes in *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* From the Philippines and Their Aggressiveness to Dragon Fruit Species. *Journal of Phytopathology*, 172(5), p.e13382.

Balendres MA, Fronda M, Mati-om J, Angeles Y, Orosco F, Estigoy J, Waje A, **Peja R**, Millado JB, Barbosa CF, Fabrique R, Galvez L (2024) Banana bunchy top virus. In Compendium of Phytopathogenic Microbes in Agroecology (Volume 2), Amaresan N (Editor). Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland. in press

Corales-Ultra, O. G., **Peja, R. P.**, & Casas, E. V. (2019). Baseline study on the levels of heavy metals in seawater and macroalgae near an abandoned mine in Manicani, Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 149, 110549. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2019.110549>

Peja R.P., Alcober J.P.G., Corales O.G. (2018). Levels of Nickel in *Sargassum Polycystum* (Fucales, Sargassaceae) and *Thalassia Hemprichii* (Alismatales, Hydrocharitaceae) from Manicani Island Guiuan, Eastern Samar, Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Natural Sciences*, 22(1):1-9.

Working manuscript:

Peja R.P. Jr., Baldesco J.D., Caparas, D.A., Matutes H.E., Densing, L.A.F., Lau, N.S. Surface Soil Microbial Communities and their Relation to Physicochemical Properties, Vegetation, and the Impact of Peatland Disturbance in the Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland, Philippines. Funded by the Visayas State University Internationalization Program.

Peja R.P. Jr., Duka, IM., Balendres, M.A. (2023) *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* (title redacted; under review). Funded by the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research.

Peja R.P. Jr. Balendres, M.A. (2024). Adlay Diseases and Mycotoxin Contamination [title redacted; under review].

Peja R.P. Jr et al. (2025) Postharvest Diseases Book Chapter [title redacted; under review].

Peja R.P.Jr. (202X) Genome Analysis of Sago Palm (title redacted). Institutionally funded.

Paper Presentations

- **Oral Paper Presentation.** Category – Wetland Biodiversity. 10th Asian Wetland Symposium, November 25-28, 2024, Crowne Plaza Manila Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines.
 - **Title:** 16s rRNA metabarcoding reveals insights relating soil bacterial communities to plant species and peat properties of the Leyte Sab-a Basin Peatland – a degraded tropical peatland in Northeastern Leyte, Philippines
- **Poster Paper Presentation.** Category – Biodiversity and Conservation. 12th Annual International Conference on Environmental Science (ACES), November 6-8, 2024, Palawan State University, Puerto Princesa Palawan, Philippines.
 - **Title:** Understanding Peat Microbial Communities and their Predicted Functional Profiles: Insights for Conserving the Degraded Peatland in Northeastern Leyte, Philippines
- **Oral Paper Presentation Competition. 3rd place winner.** Category 1 – Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, 11th ASTHRDP Graduate Scholars' Conference, DOST-SEI, Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, Philippine
 - **Title:** Morphological and Aggressiveness Variability among *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* isolates Associated with Dragon Fruits (*Selenicereus* spp.) from the Philippines
- **Poster Paper Presenter.** Category – Population Biology and Genetics. Pest Management Council of the Philippines 55th Anniversary and Annual Scientific Conference. July 4-7, 2023. The Ritz Tower Hotel at Garden Oasis, Davao City, Philippines.
 - **Title:** Philippine Isolates of *Neoscytalidium dimidiatum* causing dragon fruit stem canker exhibit genetic clonality but varied phenotypes

Trainings Attended in the last five years

- Resource Speaker, **Training on Peat Fire Management and Suppression and Peatland 101.** Topic: Overview of Peatlands and their Ecological Services. March 18, 2025. DENR Regional Office 8 Compound.
- Participant, **Co-CiPhil: Co-creating Environmental Citizen Science Capacity in the Philippines VLIR-UOS International Training Program Workshop 3. Topics: Data Equity and Data Justice and Spatiotemporal Statistics.** March 4 – March 14. 2025. Chali Beach Resort and Conference Center, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines
- Resource Person, **Seminar-Workshop on Research Ethics.** Topic: Informed Consent and Assent in Basic Education Research. September 25-27, 2024. Department of Education – Division of Leyte, Palo, Leyte.
- Participant, **Annual Scientific Conference and 91st General Membership Assembly. DOST-NRCP (National Research Council of the Philippines).** March 12, 2024. Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, Manila.
- Participant, **Co-CiPhil: Co-creating Environmental Citizen Science Capacity in the Philippines VLIR-UOS International Training Program Workshop 3. Topics: Statistical Result Communication and Generalized Linear Models.** February 26 – March 8. RDE Hall, Visayas State University, Baybay City, Leyte.
- Participant, **Co-CiPhil: Co-creating Environmental Citizen Science Capacity in the Philippines VLIR-UOS International Training Program Workshop 2. Topics: Packaging Citizen Science Research and Performing Statistical Linear Models,** November 6-17, 2023. Chali Beach Resort and Conference Center, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines
- Participant, **2023 Metagenomics Analysis Training.** October 9-13, 2023. Centre for Chemical Biology, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.
- Participant, **Metagenomics Sequencing.** September 2023. Philippine Genome Center, Diliman Quezon City, Philippines.
- Participant, **2022 ICGEB-USM CREPSUM Course Application of Advanced Genomic Tools for Conservation of Marine Biodiversity.** June 6-10, 2022. Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang Island, Malaysia.
- Participant, **International Course Program (ICP) South Workshop (2022),** May 27-28, 2022. RDE Hall, VSU, Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines

Partnerships Established

- Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the Centre for Chemical Biology (Memorandum of Understanding) on Project EsMaLL and faculty and student mobility between VSU and USM.
- TinkerHouse Incorporated for the project, “Forest ECHOES: Engaging Children on Environmental Sustainability,” funded by Forest Foundation Philippines.

Awards and Eligibilities

- **Young Investigator in Plant Pathology (YIPP fellow).** 01 April 2023. The Plant and Soil Health Research Unit, Department of Biology, College of Science, De La Salle University
- **DOST Academic Excellence Award in Science.** 27 June 2017. University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College.
- **Career Service Professional.** Civil Service Eligibility. 23 October 2016. Department of Education Regional Office VIII.

Professional Affiliations

- Associate Member, **National Research Council of the Philippines – Division V,**
- Member, **Phi Sigma Honor Society (Alpha Chi Chapter, University of the Philippines),** July 15, 2023
- Member, **Philippine Phytopathological Society,** July 5, 2023
- Member, **Philippine Society for Microbiology, Inc.,** March 18, 2023
- Member, **The International Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, Chapter 045 (University of the Philippines),** June 2019.

References

Professor Ivan Marcelo A. Duka
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Institute of Biological Sciences, UP Los Baños
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Professor Olga G. Corales – Ultra
Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
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Prof. Dr. Mark Angelo O. Balendres
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Professor Judith B. Jomadiao, PhD
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