

RESPONSE OF STRAWBERRY (*FRAGARIA ANANASSA*) TO THE APPLICATION OF MICROBIAL INOCULANTS AND ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

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(Received: June 21, 2020; Accepted for Publication: August 9, 2020)

ABSTRACT:

The present study was carried out during growing season of 2018-2019, in the wooden canopy of the College of Agricultural Engineering Sciences, University of Duhok, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, to investigate the influence of foliar spray of four concentrations of Urea (0, 0.5, 1 and 1.5 g.L⁻¹) and inoculation the soil with Azotobacter at two concentrations (0 and 10 m.L⁻¹) and their interaction on the vegetative growth properties and quality of strawberry plant cv. Rubym. The results indicated that Urea and Azotobacter significantly increased vegetative growth (chlorophyll, fresh weight, leaf area, leaf number and dry weight) as well as fruit quality (fruit weight, fruit length and number of fruits) (15.4g, 5.58cm and 10.67) respectively as compared with untreated plants. The interaction between the studies factors varied in their effect on the traits. The best interaction was the interaction of Urea at concentration (1g.L⁻¹) and Azotobacter at (10 m.L⁻¹) which gave the highest values (45.17 SPAD, 15.84 g and 5.38g) respectively as compared with other plants.

KEY WORD: Bio stimulants, Growth, yield Chemical composition, Strawberry

1. INTRODUCTION:

Strawberry (*Fragaria × ananassa* Duch.) is the most refreshing and delicious fruit crop which belong to the family of “Rosaceae”. It is a rich source of vitamins and minerals with delicate flavors (Sharma, 2002). It also contains a higher percentage of other components including phenolics and flavonoids (Hakkinen and Torronen, 2000). Being a non-climacteric, only it matures on plant (Cordenunsi, *et al.*, 2003). And has a wide range of climates from tropics to the near of Arctic Circle (Barney, 1999 and Ayesha, *et al.* 2011). The cultivated strawberries are native to North America and originated in Europe in early 18th century. USA is the biggest strawberries producer (FAO, 2013).

It is a perennial herbal plant, the name of which is derived from the Latin word “Fragrant” or “Fragrance”, and it spreads between latitudes 28 and 60 north of the equator. There are about 1000 varieties of strawberry, 125 varieties are distributed in the world as commercial (Al-saidi, 2000, and Al-Baiati, 2011). Some varieties are also distributed in the countries of the east coast

of the Mediterranean Sea, since the plant has the ability to adapt under different conditions and it constantly renews itself. The ideal temperature of vegetative growth is between 20 and 22°C, while the best temperature for flowers is 15-17°C (Al-saidi, 2000; Hassan, 2003).

Fruit yields of strawberry cultivars depend on soil fertility and water availability during growing season. Therefore, to obtain uniform high yield of good quality fruits it is essential to provide adequate nutrients for proper plant nourishment (Sharma, 2002). Abo Sedera *et al.*, (2009) found that using mineral N fertilizer alone or with compost at the recommended dose (2000 kg N/fed.) had better effect on the studied strawberry vegetative growth, total yield, average fruit weight and fruit firmness compared with the other combinations.

Biofertilizers are some non-symbiotic and symbiotic microbes like *Azospirillum*, *Bacillus polymyxa*, *Pseudomonas striata* and *Azotobacter*, in the soil (Saxena, 1993) that stimulate plant growth and contribute to the improvement of ecosystem. They also play an active action in biologic control of plant pathogens, (Tilk *et al.*, 2005).

Azotobacter and *Azospirillum* also release growth regulators like gibberellin, biotin and auxin.

Nitrogen is one of the major nutrients required by the plant for sufficient growth (Grapevine Nutrition Literature Review, 2006).

Moreover, nitrogen is a key part of many plant cell functions because it is important in the synthesis of amino acids, protein build, which are used to make the enzymes responsible for much of the work done in plants as well as making structural components (Keller *et al.*, 1998).

Foliar sprays of fertilizers have been one of the approaches to achieve an improvement in the yield and quality of different fruit crops including grapevines and to optimize the use of chemical fertilizers (Moustafa *et al.*, 1986., Crespan *et al.*, 2000).

Urea, when properly applied, results in crop yield increases equal to other forms of Nitrogen (Curtis *et al.*, 1991). Urea can also be applied as a foliar spray on some crops, it is highly water soluble. At normal atmospheric temperatures, approximately 1 pound of Urea can be dissolved in 1 pound of water (Curtis *et al.*, 1991).

Nutrition studies have been considered to be the most effective factor in improving the growth, fruit yield and their quality, owing to the role of various minerals in the physiological metabolism of plant (Havlin *et al.* 2005 and Bal, 2005).

The aim of this study is the effect of inoculation soil with microbial (*Azotobacter*) and Urea on growth and qualitative properties of strawberry cv. Rubygem

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out during growing season of 2018-2019, in the wooden canopy of the College of Agricultural Engineering Science, University of Duhok. In order to study the effect of inoculation soil with microbial (*Azotobacter*) and Urea on growth and qualitative properties of strawberry cv. Rubygem, grown in plastic bags (21.5 cm diameter), therefore, the experiment consisted of eight treatments, the treatments were arranged in a factorial experiment in a Randomized Complete Block design (RCBD) with two factors, first (with *azotobacter* and without *azotobacter*) and four concentration of urea (0, 0.5, 1 and 1.5 g.L⁻¹) the experiment consist (2*4), it means we will have 8

treatments with 3 replication. SAS program were used to analysing all data (Anonyme, 2005).

The strawberry plants that used in this investigation were obtained from the nursery of agricultural institute of Zakho/ Duhok/ Iraq. At first all transplants were pruned by removing excess and damaged leaves and remained three leaves on each plant as well as pruning roots to get the balance between roots and vegetative growth.

Experimental characters were as shown as follow.

A. *Vegetative growth parameters*, that include:

Chlorophyll content (SPAD, fresh weight Leaf area,) dry weight and leaf number.

B. *Quality parameters of fruits that include:*

Fruit diameter (cm), fruit length (cm), fruit weight (g.fruit⁻¹) and Number fruit.plant⁻¹

3: RESULTS:

Results in table (1) indicated that there was significantly affect of inoculation the soil with *azotobacter* and spraying of urea on vegetative growth characters (chlorophyll content SPAD,

fresh weight, leaf area and leaf number per plant). Treated plants with (10 mL⁻¹) *azotobacter* were significantly affected as compared with untreated plants. Plant treated with (1m.L⁻¹) urea gave highest value in all vegetative growth characters as compared with other concentration that recorded lower value especially untreated plant. The interaction between microbial urea shows significant effected among all vegetative characters, which gave high chlorophyll, fresh weight, dry weight and highest number of leaves.

Regarding the fresh and dry weight of vegetative growth of strawberry it was indicated that treated plant with concentration (1m. L⁻¹) of urea and (10m. L⁻¹) of *azotobacter* gave significantly increased in fresh and dry weight of vegetative growth that recorded (15.84 and 5.38g) respectively as compared with untreated plant that gave lower weight of fresh and dry weight (7.88 and 2.89g). Concerning the leaf area it was showed that there were significantly increased in the leaf area. (cm²) as compared to untreated plant, Furthermore plant treated with urea gave the highest value of the leaves area (52.57 cm²) as compared with control (46.49cm²). Plant treated with (1.5g.L⁻¹) of urea and (10m.L⁻¹) with *azotobacter* recorded high

value leaf area (54.53 cm²) as compared with untreated plant (46.54 cm²)

Table (1) also showed significantly increased in leaf number, where Plant treated with (10m. L⁻¹) of azotobacter gave highest value (14.58) of leaf number as compared with untreated plant (10.36). Regarding interaction between urea (1.5m. L⁻¹) and azotobacter (10m. L⁻¹) gave highest value of leaf number (19.00) as compared with untreated plans (8.67).

Results in the table (2) showed that the fruit weight, fruit length and fruit number of treated plants were significantly different increased as compared with untreated plant Regarding fruit weight of treated plant with azotobacter recorded highest weight of fruit (13.4g) as compared with untreated plant that gave lower value of weight (11.5g).The interaction between urea (1m. L⁻¹)

and azotobacter (10m.L⁻¹) gave highest value of fruit weight of treated plant (15.4g) as compared with lowest value of untreated plant (11.1g) respectively.

Concerning fruit length it were showed that treated plant with Azotobacter obtained higher length of fruit as compared with untreated plant that gave lowered length (5.31 and 4.83cm) respectively, while the fruit number per plant it were seems that plant treated with Azotobacter (10m.L⁻¹) gave highest number of fruits (8.62) per plant as compared lowest value of untreated plant (6) per plant respectively. The interaction between urea (1.5m.L⁻¹) and Azotobacter (10m.L⁻¹) recorded high number of fruit per plant (10.67) as compared with untreated plant that gave lowered number of fruit per plant (4.33).

Table (1):- Effect of inoculation of microbial and urea on vegetative growth characters of strawberry cv. Rubygem.

Bacteria	Chlorophyll (SPAD)				Bacteria	Fresh weight				Bacteria
	Urea(g.L ⁻¹)					Urea(g.L ⁻¹)				
	0	0.50	1.00	1.50		0	0.5	1	1.5	
0	42.57c	44.10b	45.13a	43.77b	43.89b	9.22d	15.26	15.84	12.68b	13.25b
10	43.73b	43.37b	45.17a	44.23a	44.13a	10.36c	7.88e	15.84	12.68b	11.69a
Urea	43.15b	43.73ab	45.15a	44.00ab		9.79c	11.57b	15.84a	12.68a	Bacteria
bacteria	Leaf area				Bacteria	Dry weight				
	0	0.5	1	1.5		0	0.5	1	1.5	
0	46.54c	49.92b	50.12b	50.61b	49.30b	3.58c	5.38a	5.34a	4.16b	4.62a
10	46.44c	46.77b	54.33a	54.53a	50.52a	3.68c	2.89d	5.38a	5.34a	4.32b
Urea	46.49b	48.35b	52.23a	52.57a		3.63c	4.14b	5.36a	4.75ab	
Bacteria	Leaf number				Bacteria					
	0	0.5	1	1.5						
0	8.67f	10.10e	11.00d	11.67c	10.36b					
10	11.67c	10.00e	17.67b	19.00a	14.58a					
Urea	10.05b	10.17b	14.33a	15.33a						

Means within a column, row and their interactions followed with the same letters are not significantly different from each other according to Duncan multiple ranges test at significant level of 5%.

Table (2):- Effect of inoculation of microbial and urea on quality characters of Strawberry cv. Rubygem.

Bacteria	Fruit weight (g)				Bacteria a	Fruit length(cm)				Bacteria a
	Urea(g.L ⁻¹)					Urea(g.L ⁻¹)				
	0	0.5	1	1.5		0	0.5	1	1.5	
0	11.1d	11.9c	10.2d	12.9b	11.5ab	4.27bc	4.72bc	5.22b	5.10b	4.83b
10	12.8b	12.8b	15.4a	12.5b	13.4a	5.12b	5.22b	5.58a	5.32b	5.31a
Urea	11.9a	12.3a	12.8a	12.7a		4.69b	4.97ab	5.40ab	5.21a	
c										
Bacteria	Fruit number.plant ⁻¹				Bacteria					
	0	0.5	1	1.5						
0	4.33e	6.50c	6.60c	6.57c	6.00b					
10	5.33c	9.07bc	10.67a	9.40b	8.62a					
Urea	4.83b	7.78a	8.63a	7.98a						

Means within a column, row and their interactions followed with the same letters are not significantly different from each other according to Duncan multiple ranges test at significant level of 5%.

DISCUSSION:

Tables (1& 2) revealed that there are significant difference in vegetative growth parameters, increasing vegetative growth components by the effect of urea and Azotobacter may be goes to the action of Azotobacter on improving soil fertility and enhanced biological processes and consequently growth characteristics would be improved (Jianguo *et al* 1998).

Production of growth regulators by the Azotobacter in the root zone which gets absorbed by the plant roots has been reported by Cordenunsi BR *et al* ,(2003). Antipchuk *et al*. (1982) who reported that inoculation of different Azotobacter strains to soil resulted in higher vitamin C in tomato.

That enhances the plant to grow well, faster and early maturity leading to high plant productivity. (Potter, 2005) which consider the main problem facing crop cultivation in the world. (Calapietra and Alexander, 2006, Sivasankari, *et al.*, 2006). (Al- Saaberi., 2005). The enhanced in vegetative growth could be attributed to the positive effect of nitrogen on the single leaf area (table 3) of the plant which was reflected in more carbohydrates production through photosynthesis processes for the physiological view.

The significant effect of foliar spraying of Urea may be due to the role of nitrogen in plant cell, the synthesis of protein and enzymes which are important compounds in the synthesis of chlorophyll and cytochrome and their role in the processes of photosynthesis and respiration that

lead to increase cell division and elongation (Beniwal *et al.*, 1992; Usha and Singh 2002; Mohammed Abdul-Qader, 2007). The leaf contents of N, P and K increases as a results of Urea spraying, these may be assigned to the role of Urea in the increasing vegetative growth that led to stimulating the root and vegetative growth to realize growth requirement, then in turn increasing absorption of these elements and increasing its concentration in leaves (Gobara *et al.* 2000 and Andreas 2009) those results are the same found out by Abou Sayed-Ahmad *et al.* (2000); Andreas (2009) and Porro *et al.* (2010), who measured that nitrogen fertilizer rates had a significant effect on the concentration of N, P and K in the leaves.

The obtained results explained to the role of the Urea as a constituent of pyridines which are, in turn, constituents of chlorophyll and cytochromes (Mansour, 1998; Joo *et al.* 1999; Magada 2002 and Fawzi *et al.*, 2010).

Role of nitrogen in the physiological process and its effect on transportation of carbohydrate products and other materials from the leaves (Mohammed, 1991; Al-Emam, 1998; Mohammed and Abdul- Qader, 2007).

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شيانا رووکی سترابویری (*Fragaria ananassa*) بو نه زوتوبکتر و زبلی نورگانیکی

پوخته:

نهف هه کولینه هاتیه نهجامدان ل وهرزی گهشی 2018-2019 ل خانینی داری ل کولیژا زانستین نهاندازیاریا چاندنی زانکویا دهوک ل ههریما کوردستانا عیراقی ژ بو تاقیکرنا کارتیکنرنا رهشانا بهلگا ب چار تیراتییت یوریایی (0 و 0.5 و 1 و 1.5 غم.لتر-1) دگه ل لیدانا نه زوتوبه کتهری د ناخی دا ب تیراتیا (0 و 10 مل.لتر-1) ولینکدانا وان دگه ل ئیک ل سهر ساخله تین شینکاتی و کواتیا فیقین زووه کئی فراولی ژ جورئ روبیجیم. نهجامدا دیار بوو کو یوریا و ئیک تیراتیا نه زوتوبه کتهری زیده بونه کا بهرچاف هه بوو ل سهر شینکاتی (کلوروفیل، کیشه یا تهر، پانیا بهلگی، ژمارا بهلگا و کیشه یا هسک) ههروه سا ل سهر کواتیا فیقی (کیشه یا فیقی، دریزاهیا فیقی و ژمارا فیقی) (15.4 غم، 5.58 سم و 10.67) دیقیکدا بهراورد دگه ل رووه کین کونترولی. لیکدان دناقههرا ساخله تین خاندی دا جیاواز بوو دکارتیکرنی دا. گرنگترین لیدان نه و لیکدان بوو یا دناف بهرا یوریایا ب تیراتیا (غم.لتر-1) و نه زوتوبه کتهری بتیراتیا (10 مل.لتر-1) نهجامین بلند تر دان (SPAD, 15.84 45.17 غم و 5.38 غم) دیقیکدا بهراورد دگه ل رووه کیت دی.

استجابة نبات الشلیک (*Fragaria × ananassa*) للحقن بالازوتوبکتر والسماذ العضوی

الخلاصة:

أجريت الدراسة خلال موسم النمو (2018-2019) داخل الظلة الخشبية لكلية علوم الهندسة الزراعية في جامعة دهوك، أقليم كوردستان العراق لإختبار تأثير الرش الورقي بأربعة تراكيز من اليوريا (0 و 0.5 و 1 و 1.5 غم.لتر⁻¹) مع حقن التربة بالازوتوبکتر بتراكيز (0 و 10 مل.لتر⁻¹) والتداخل بينهما في الصفات النمو الخضري والنوعي لنبات الشلیک الصنف روبیجیم. أظهرت النتائج بأن اليوريا واحدى تراكيز الازوتوبکتر لها زيادة معنوية على النمو الخضري (الكلوروفیل، الوزن الرطب، المساحة الورقية، عدد الاوراق والوزن الجاف) وكذلك في الصفات النوعية للثمرة (وزن الثمرة وطول الثمرة وعدد الثمار) (15.4 غم، 5.58 سم و 10.67) على التوالي مقارنة مع النباتات غير المعاملة وقد تبين تأثير التداخل بين العوامل المدروسة على الصفات المسجلة. أفضل تداخل كان التداخل بين اليوريا بتركيز (غم.لتر⁻¹) والازوتوبکتر بتركيز (مل.لتر⁻¹) والذي أعطى أعلى النتائج (SPAD 45.17, 15.84 غم و 5.38 غم) على التوالي بالمقارنة مع النباتات الاخرى.