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Influence of time of sowing and potassium on growth and yield of baby corn (*Zea mays* L.)

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Abstract

The present research entitled “Influence of time of sowing and potassium on growth, yield and quality of baby corn (*Zea mays* L.)” was conducted at Instructional farm, Jambuvadi, Department of Vegetable Science, College of Horticulture, J.A.U., Junagadh., during summer 2025. The study was conducted in Randomized Block Design with factorial concept in three replications. Total nine treatment combinations comprising three sowing time viz., 3rd week of January (S₁), 1st week of February (S₂), 3rd week of February (S₃) and three level of potassium viz., 0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ (K₁), 30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ (K₂), 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ (K₃) were performed. The experimental result revealed that the sowing of baby corn on 3rd week of February recorded minimum days to 50% silking (46.85) and harvesting span (15.00); whereas, sowing on 1st week of February recorded maximum plant height (142.64 cm), minimum days taken for first cob harvesting (49.77), minimum days taken for last cob harvesting (65.25), maximum diameter of cob (1.59 cm), cob weight per plant without husk (37.98 g), cob yield without husk kg per plot (1.52 kg), cob yield without husk tone per hectare (2.52 t). In case of potassium the application of 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ recorded maximum plant height (141.80 cm), number of cobs per plant (3.79), length of cobs (12.19 cm) and diameter of cobs (1.68 cm), cob weight per plant with husk (135.30 g), cob weight per plant without husk (41.79 g), cob yield with husk kg per plot (5.41 kg), cob yield without husk kg per plot (1.67 kg), cob yield with husk tone per hectare (9.01 t), cob yield without husk tone per hectare (2.78 t). Interaction effect of time of sowing of baby corn on 1st week of February and supplied 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ recorded maximum diameter of cobs (1.86 cm).

Keywords: Baby corn, time of sowing, potassium, growth and yield

Introduction

The term maize which has been derived from an Arawak- Cexib word, 'mahiz', is also known as Indian corn. In the United States of America, it is simply known as corn. Maize among the cereals ranks third, both in terms of area and production in the world. In India, however, it occupies the fifth position in respect of area and rank fourth in terms of production. The major maize producing countries are the USA, China, South and Central Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Maize is the most extensively distributed cereal crop. In India, the important maize growing states include Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab along with Gujarat, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Maize besides being an important staple food for human beings comprises a significant animal and poultry feed and has an enormous industrial importance and various uses.

The introduction of baby corn is considered as suitable choice for improving the income of farmers. The sweet succulent and delicious baby corn is a medium plant type and provides green ears within 45 to 60 days after sowing. Baby corn is gaining importance as vegetable and salad in and around cities of India. Being short duration in nature it facilitates to take up second crop simultaneously as intercrop and helps the farmer to get more returns from unit area in a unit time by increasing cropping intensity (Rani *et al.*, 2015) ^[14].

Baby corn may be consumed as raw or used as an ingredient in various preparations viz., chop-suey (Chinese dish), soups, deep fried baby corn with meat and rice, with other vegetables, pickles, corn pakoras *etc.* Fresh baby corn ears are also used as a decorative, crisp vegetable in salads. It has a great potential for cooking purpose and for processing as a canned product.

Baby corn is a vegetable crop that can potentially improve the economic status of farmers (Das *et al.*, 2008) ^[4]. In addition to its sweet, succulent, and delicious taste, baby corn's nutritional value is comparable to other vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage and tomato. Globally, baby corn has attracted an increasing number of peoples' preference due to the enhancement of living standards and shift in dietary habit from non-vegetarian to vegetarian. Baby corn is used in preparing a wide variety of traditional and intercontinental dishes, besides being canned. Baby corn is consumed locally as fresh vegetable, fried or cooked with meat. When baby corn is harvested good quality green fodder is also obtained. The succulent green fodder of high quality adds enormously to the total returns to the farmers, resulting in higher profit per unit area per unit time compared to grain maize. Although, baby corn has been developed as an export vegetable that can generate foreign exchange, it is serving the local people with nutritious vegetable. Despite its great nutritional importance and economic security to the farmers only limited scientific research has been reported on baby corn, resulting in insufficient knowledge and lack of standard technologies that hamper the popularization of baby corn production (Muthukumar *et al.*, 2007; Thavaprakash and Velayudham, 2008) ^[11, 19].

The profitability date of sowing is a nonmonetary input which plays significant role in production and productivity of any crop. Different dates of sowing help us to explore the possibility of having more than one crop of baby corn in a growing season (Dibyajiban *et al.*, 2019) ^[5]. The proper sowing time exerts a marked effect on growth and eventually the yield of crop due to interaction of plant with various climatic parameters (Lipika *et al.*, 2021) ^[10].

Sowing time is an important that affect crop performance, as it ensure better use of available nutrients and moisture. Planting date was reported to affect the growth and yield of baby corn significantly (Khan *et al.*, 2002) ^[9]. By sowing at the ideal time, crop benefit from optimal environmental conditions. The most important reason for yield gap is due to sowing at inappropriate time therefore it is necessary that sowing should be done at proper time.

Potassium (K) is substantially an important nutrient for plant growth and has the capability to maximize plant growth and it influences soil-plant interactions as well (Xie *et al.*, 2011) ^[21]. As, for acting as an essential nutrient for crop production and its development it acts as a co-factor for more than 40 enzymes that are involved in metabolic pathways directly (Clarkson and Hanson, 1980) ^[3]. Its application effects on turgor potential, opening and closing of stomata, photosynthetic rate, leaf water potential, grain weight, transpiration rate, grain yield, biological yield of crops and disturbed consumption mechanism of fixation of carbon dioxide (Aslam *et al.*, 2014) ^[1].

Time of sowing and potassium nutrition significantly influence the growth, yield and quality of baby corn (*Zea mays* L.). Timely sowing ensures favorable climatic conditions, leading to better germination, vigorous vegetative growth, higher leaf area and efficient dry matter accumulation, which ultimately results in increased cob number, size and yield. Delayed sowing exposes the crop to stress conditions, reducing growth and marketable yield. Potassium plays a vital role in photosynthesis, enzyme activation and translocation of assimilates, thereby improving plant growth, cob development and green fodder yield.

Materials and Methods

This experiment was conducted during the summer season of year 2025 located at College of Horticulture, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh. This experiment was laid out in

Randomized Block Design with factorial concept and replicated thrice with the following treatments such as S₁- 3rd week of January, S₂ - 1st week of February, S₃ - 3rd week of February as factor- A and K₁- 0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹, K₂- 30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹, K₃- 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ as factor- B with three replications. The plot was thoroughly ploughed and brought to the fine tilth. Harrowing and planking were done before the execution of layout of the experimental field. The required area was marked and 27 plots were prepared according to the layout plan. About two to three seeds were sown at one place then thinning of seedlings was performed maintaining one plant per stand after germination. Fertilizers were applied at the rate of 120 kg/ha nitrogen and 60 kg/ha phosphorus to the soil. The experimental plot was irrigated during the cropping period on need based conditions.

Results and Discussion

Influence of time of sowing and potassium with their individual effect on growth and yield attributing parameters are tabulated in Table 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Growth Parameters

Sowing time

The data revealed that time of sowing has discernible effect on some of the growth parameters viz., days to 50% silking, plant height at last picking, days taken for first cob harvesting, days taken for last cob harvesting and harvesting span.

The baby corn seeds sown on S₁ (3rd week of January) observed Significantly the maximum days taken for 50% silking are (52.36), highest plant height at last picking (142.64 cm) was observed under treatment S₂ (1st week of February) and was at par with treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) (133.50 cm), maximum days taken for first cob harvesting (55.25) were observed in treatment S₁ (3rd week of January), maximum days taken for last cob harvesting (72.31) were observed in treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) and maximum harvesting span (17.38) days were observed in treatment S₁ (3rd week of January). However, the minimum days taken for 50% silking are (46.85) was observed in treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) and was at par with treatment S₂ (1st week of February) (50.53), lowest plant height (124.84 cm) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), minimum days taken for first cob harvesting (49.77) were observed in treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) and was at par with treatment S₂ (1st week of February) (53.53), minimum days taken for last cob harvesting (65.25) were observed in treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) and was at par with treatment S₂ (1st week of February) (70.19) and minimum harvesting span (15.00) days were observed in treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) and was at par with treatment S₂ (1st week of February) (16.66). These results are in conformity with the experiment reported by Ganesh *et al.* (2015) ^[6], Rahmani *et al.* (2010) ^[13], Bairagi *et al.* (2015) ^[2] and Verma *et al.* (2012) ^[20] in baby corn.

Potassium

All the growth parameters except plant height at last picking were non-significantly influenced by the different level of potassium. Highest plant height (141.80 cm) was observed in treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) which was at par with treatment K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (137.05) and lowest plant height (122.13 cm) was observed in treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹). These results are in close conformity with the experiment reported by Pallavi *et al.* (2016) ^[12] and Kalpana and Krishnarajan (2002) ^[8] in baby corn.

Interaction effect

The growth parameters were found non-significantly influenced by interaction time of sowing and potassium.

Table 1: Influence of time of sowing and potassium on growth parameter of baby corn

Treatments	Days for 50% silking	Plant height at last picking (cm)	Days taken for first cob harvesting
Factor A: Sowing time (S)			
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January	52.36	133.50	55.25
S ₂ = 1 st week of February	50.53	142.64	53.53
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February	46.85	124.84	49.77
S. Em.±	1.382	3.651	1.451
C. D. at 5%	3.93	10.39	4.13
Factor B: Potassium (K)			
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	49.20	122.13	52.09
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	50.21	137.05	53.21
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	50.35	141.80	53.26
S. Em.±	1.382	3.651	1.451
C. D. at 5%	NS	10.39	NS
Interaction (S × K)			
S. Em.±	2.394	6.324	2.513
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS	NS
C. V. %	8.31	8.20	8.23

Table 2: Influence of time of sowing and potassium on growth parameter of baby corn

Treatments	Days taken for last cob harvesting	Harvesting span (days)
Factor A: Sowing time (S)		
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January	72.31	17.38
S ₂ = 1 st week of February	70.19	16.66
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February	65.25	15.00
S. Em.±	1.877	0.483
C. D. at 5%	5.34	1.37
Factor B: Potassium (K)		
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	68.70	16.19
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	69.42	16.29
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	69.62	16.55
S. Em.±	1.877	0.483
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS
Interaction (S × K)		
S. Em.±	3.250	0.837
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS
C. V. %	8.13	8.86

Yield Parameters

Sowing time

The investigation data demonstrated that the different time of sowing had non-significant influence on impact on the yield parameters, such as number of cobs per plant, length of cob, diameter of cobs, cob weight per plant (g) with husk, cob weight per plant (g) without husk, cob yield with husk kilogram per plot, cob yield without husk kilogram per plot, cob yield with husk tone per hectare and cob yield without husk tone per hectare.

The baby corn seeds sown on S₂ (1st week of February) observed different time of sowing had significant influence on diameter of cob. Maximum diameter of cob (1.59 cm) was observed in treatment S₂ (1st week of February) and was at par with treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) (1.48 cm), the maximum cob weight per plant without husk (37.98 g) was observed under treatment S₂ (1st week of February) and was at par with treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) (35.95 g), maximum cob yield without husk kilogram per plot (1.52 kg) was observed under treatment S₂ (1st week of February) and was at par with treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) (1.43 kg), maximum cob yield without husk tone per hectare (2.52 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment S₂ (1st week of February) and was at par with treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) (2.39 t ha⁻¹) and non-significantly the maximum number of cobs per plant (3.45), length of cob (11.70 cm), cob weight per plant with husk (133.69 g), cob yield with husk kilogram per plot (5.34 kg), cob yield with husk tone per hectare (8.90 t ha⁻¹). However, minimum number of cobs per plant (3.27) cob weight per plant with husk (121.01 g)

was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February) cob weight per plant without husk (32.92 g) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), cob yield with husk kilogram per plot (4.84 kg) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), cob yield without husk kilogram per plot (1.31 kg) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), cob yield with husk tone per hectare (8.06 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), cob yield without husk tone per hectare (2.19 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment S₃ (3rd week of February), length of cob and (11.35 cm) was observed in treatment S₁ (3rd week of January) diameter of cob and (1.37 cm) was observed in treatment S₁ (3rd week of January). These results are in conformity with the findings of Kalpana and Krishnarajan (2002) [8] and Roopashree (2013) [16], Dibyajiban and Rinjumon (2019) [5], Bairagi *et al.* (2015) [2] and Singh *et al.* (2010) [17] in baby corn.

Potassium

All the growth parameters significantly influenced by the different level of potassium. Maximum number of cobs per plant (3.79) was observed in treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) which was at par with K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (3.54), maximum length of cob (12.19 cm) was observed in treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) which was at par with K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (11.90 cm), maximum diameter of cob (1.68 cm) was observed in treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), maximum cob weight per plant with husk (135.30 g) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) and was at par

with treatment K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (131.61g), maximum cob weight per plant without husk (41.79 g) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), maximum cob yield with husk kilogram per plot (5.41 kg) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) and was at par with treatment K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (5.26 kg), maximum cob yield without husk kilogram per plot (1.67 kg) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), maximum cob yield with husk tone per hectare (9.01 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) and was at par with treatment K₂ (30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (8.77 t ha⁻¹), maximum cob yield without husk tone per hectare (2.78 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment K₃ (60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹). However, minimum number of cobs per plant (2.74) was observed in treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), lowest length of cob (10.40 cm) was observed in treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum diameter of cob (1.23 cm) was observed in treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob weight per plant with husk (115.67 g) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob weight per plant without husk (29.93 g) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob yield with husk kilogram per plot (4.62 kg) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob yield

without husk kilogram per plot (1.19 kg) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob yield with husk tone per hectare (7.70 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹), minimum cob yield without husk tone per hectare (1.99 t ha⁻¹) was observed under treatment K₁ (0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹). These results are in conformity with the findings of Kalpana and Krishnarajan (2002) ^[8] and Roopashree (2013) ^[16], Reddy *et al.* (2020) ^[15], in baby corn.

Interaction effect

The yield parameters were found non-significantly influenced by interaction of time of sowing and potassium except diameter of cob. The maximum diameters of cob (1.86 cm) were found in treatment combination S₂K₃ (1st week of February + 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) which was at par with treatment combination S₃K₃ (3rd week of February + 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (1.81 cm) and S₂K₂ (1st week of February + 30 kg K₂O ha⁻¹) (1.66) whereas, minimum diameter of cob (1.13 cm) were observed in treatment combination S₃K₁ (3rd week of February + 0 kg K₂O ha⁻¹). These results are in conformity with the finding of Jaliya *et al.*, (2008) ^[7] and Tanveer *et al.* (2020) ^[18] reported similar results in baby corn.

Table 3: Influence of time of sowing and potassium on yield parameter of baby corn

Treatments	Number of cobs plant ⁻¹	Length of cob (cm)	Cob weight per plant with husk (g)
Factor A: Sowing time (S)			
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January	3.34	11.35	127.88
S ₂ = 1 st week of February	3.45	11.70	133.69
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February	3.27	11.44	121.01
S. Em.±	0.096	0.362	3.661
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS	NS
Factor B: Potassium (K)			
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	2.74	10.40	115.67
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	3.54	11.90	131.61
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	3.79	12.19	135.30
S. Em.±	0.096	0.362	3.661
C. D. at 5%	0.27	1.03	10.42
Interaction (S × K)			
S. Em.±	0.167	0.627	6.341
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS	NS
C. V. %	8.62	9.45	8.61

Table 4: Interaction effect of time of sowing and potassium on diameter of baby corn

Treatments		Diameter of cob (cm)		
Factor A: Sowing time (S)				
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January		1.37		
S ₂ = 1 st week of February		1.59		
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February		1.48		
S. Em.±		0.043		
C. D. at 5%		0.12		
Factor B: Potassium (K)				
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹		1.23		
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹		1.53		
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹		1.68		
S. Em.±		0.043		
C. D. at 5%		0.12		
Interaction (S × K)				
		K ₁	K ₂	K ₃
S ₁		1.30	1.44	1.36
S ₂		1.26	1.66	1.86
S ₃		1.18	1.48	1.81
S. Em.±		0.074		
C. D. at 5%		0.21		
		8.64		

Table 5: Influence of time of sowing and potassium on yield parameter of baby corn

Treatments	Cob weight per plant without husk (g)	Cob yield with husk (kg plot ⁻¹)	Cob yield without husk (kg plot ⁻¹)
Factor A: Sowing time (S)			
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January	35.95	5.11	1.43
S ₂ = 1 st week of February	37.98	5.34	1.52
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February	32.92	4.84	1.31
S. Em.±	1.158	0.146	0.046
C. D. at 5%	3.30	NS	0.13
Factor B: Potassium (K)			
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	29.93	4.62	1.19
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	35.13	5.26	1.40
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	41.79	5.41	1.67
S. Em.±	1.158	0.146	0.046
C. D. at 5%	3.30	0.42	0.13
Interaction (S × K)			
S. Em.±	2.005	0.253	0.080
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS	NS
C. V. %	9.75	8.61	9.74

Table 6: Influence of time of sowing and potassium on yield parameter of baby corn

Treatments	Cob yield with husk (t ha ⁻¹)	Cob yield without husk (t ha ⁻¹)
Factor A: Sowing time (S)		
S ₁ = 3 rd week of January	8.52	2.39
S ₂ = 1 st week of February	8.90	2.52
S ₃ = 3 rd week of February	8.06	2.19
S. Em.±	0.244	0.077
C. D. at 5%	NS	0.22
Factor B: Potassium (K)		
K ₁ = 0 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	7.70	1.99
K ₂ = 30 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	8.77	2.33
K ₃ = 60 kg K ₂ O ha ⁻¹	9.01	2.78
S. Em.±	0.244	0.077
C. D. at 5%	0.69	0.22
Interaction (S × K)		
S. Em.±	0.422	0.133
C. D. at 5%	NS	NS
C. V. %	8.61	9.74

Conclusion

Based on the result obtained from present investigation it can be concluded that sowing of baby corn on 3rd week of February recorded minimum days to 50% silking and harvesting span; whereas, sowing on 1st week of February recorded better growth parameters; yield parameter viz. diameter, weight without husk of cob, yield without husk; Though, the application of 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ recorded maximum growth parameters viz. plant height, better yield parameter. However, the baby corn sown on 1st week of February and supplied 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ recorded maximum diameter of cobs. The sowing of baby corn should be done on 1st week of February and application of 60 kg K₂O ha⁻¹ for individual effect along with recommended dose of N 120 kg ha⁻¹ and P 60 kg ha⁻¹.

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