



# **Response of Biofertilizers on Growth and Yield Parameters of Brinjal (*Solanum melongena* L.) cv. Azad B-3**

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## **Authors' contributions**

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## **Article Information**

DOI: 10.9734/IJECC/2022/v12i121462

## **Open Peer Review History:**

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/93850>

**Original Research Article**

**Received: 12/09/2022**

**Accepted: 20/11/2022**

**Published: 23/11/2022**

## **ABSTRACT**

The present experiment was carried out during *kharif* 2017-18 with the objective to know the effect of biofertilizers on growth and yield parameters of brinjal cv. Azad B-3. The experiment was conducted in Randomized Block Design (RBD) with ten treatments each replicated thrice. The treatments consisted of both biofertilizers, chemical fertilizers and different combinations of both along with control. The observations were recorded on growth and yield parameters like plant height, no. of primary branches per plant, no. of secondary branches per plant, fruit length, fruit width, total no. of fruits per plot and fruit yield/ha. From the investigation, it was found that the treatment T<sub>5</sub> (Azospirillum +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) recorded maximum plant height (96.23 cm), no. of primary branches (6.32), no. of secondary branches (11.27), fruit length (13.89 cm), fruit width (8.42 cm), total no. of fruits per plot (724.66) and yield (448.65 q/ha) and proved as a best combination of biofertilizers along with inorganic fertilizer for the improvement of brinjal cultivation through organically. Where treatment T<sub>5</sub> significantly enhances the growth and yield traits of brinjal, it also recorded maximum benefit per hectare (B:C ratio 1:3.50).

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**Keywords:** Brinjal; biofertilizer; growth; yield.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Brinjal (*Solanum melongena* L.) is one of the most common and principle vegetable grown in India and other tropical and subtropical regions of the world. It is a staple vegetable in almost all tropical countries in the world and liked by both poor and rich consumers. Brinjal fruits are rich in carbohydrate, protein, fat, calcium, phosphorus, iron, riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, ascorbic acid, etc. It is also found effective against treatment of diabetes, asthma, cholera, bronchitis and diarrhea [1]. Generally, Solanaceous vegetables require large quantity of major nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, in addition to secondary nutrients such as calcium and sulphur for better growth, fruit and seed yield [2]. However, the continuous sole and erratic use of chemical fertilizers in imbalance form has led to decline in soil fertility as well as nutrient uptake efficiency of plants, resulting in either yield stagnation or decrease consequently [3]. The rising cost of chemical fertilizers and its potential hazard to environment has further focused attention on recycling of plant nutrients through organic materials. Effort to improve the fertilization system can be done by balancing the application between inorganic and organic fertilizers in the soil. One of the ways is the combined application between inorganic fertilizer and biofertilizer [4].

Biofertilizers are the bio-inoculants of specific beneficial microorganisms that promote the growth of plants by converting the unavailable form of nutrients into available form. They also induce resistance in plants against pests, improve soil fertility, help plant growth by increasing the number and biological activity of desired microorganisms in the root surface [5]. Biofertilizers are eco-friendly and low cost input which not only improve the crop growth and yield but also improve fruit quality and fertilizer use efficiency. They improve the quantitative and qualitative features of many plants [6].

In brinjal, generally biofertilizers like *Azotobacter*, *Azospirillum*, Phosphate Solubilizing Bacteria (PSB) and Vesicular Arbuscular Mycorrhiza (VAM) are used. *Azotobacter* is a group of aerobic, free living soil microbes which grows well on a nitrogen free medium. They utilize atmospheric nitrogen for their cell protein synthesis which is then mineralized in soil after their death, thereby contributing towards the

nitrogen availability of the crop plants [7]. They can fix nitrogen equivalent to 30-40 kg N/ha and also produce hormones like IAA, GA<sub>3</sub>, vitamins like biotin and folic acid which ensure good seed germination and increases productivity. *Azospirillum* is an eco-friendly liquid bio fertilizer formulation containing bacteria *Azospirillum* which can positively influence plant growth, crop yield and nitrogen content of the plant under certain environmental and soil conditions. They fix up atmospheric nitrogen (around 40-50 kg/ha), produce biologically active substances like vitamins, nicotinic acid, IAA, Gibberellins, etc and help in retention of flowers and enhance plant growth. It increases root biomass in the inoculated plant thereby helps in greater absorption of native nutrients in soil resulting in higher yield. The PSB converts insoluble form of phosphate to soluble form by producing organic acids. About 15-25% of insoluble phosphate can be solubilized saving chemical fertilizers significantly. VAM is found associating symbiotically with root of the plants and helps in greater absorption of phosphorous, water and other important macro and essential micro elements and making them available to the plants in an easily usable organic form. Besides they are also reported to impart resistance to plants against drought and soil borne fungal pathogens and nematodes. Biofertilizers, being cheap input, provide high economic assurance, eco-friendly environment, sustain soil health and plant growth by adding organic contents as well as supplement 25-40% of chemical fertilizers N and P requirement in terms of urea and DAP. Keeping all these facts in view, the present investigation was undertaken with objectives to know the effect of biofertilizers on growth and yield parameters and economics of brinjal cv. Azad B-3.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Experimental Site

The experiment was carried out at the Vegetable Research Farm, Department of Vegetable Science, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur during the *kharif* season of 2017-18. Geographically, Kanpur district is situated in the Gangetic alluvial belt of Central Uttar Pradesh, thus has a sub-tropical climate. It lies between 25.26° to 26.28° north latitude and 79.31° to 80.34° east longitude at an elevation of 127.00 meter.

**Table 1. Effect of biofertilizers on growth and yield parameters of brinjal cv. Azad B -3**

Treatment Symbol	Treatment Details	Plant Height (cm)	No. of Primary Branches/Plant	No. of Secondary Branches/Plant	Fruit Length (cm)	Fruit Width (cm)	Total no. of Fruits per Plot	Yield (q/ha)	Benefit: Cost Ratio
T <sub>1</sub>	Control	79.15	3.95	7.15	7.25	6.65	580.00	237.44	1:1.46
T <sub>2</sub>	PSB + <i>Azotobacter</i> + 75% P + Full N&K	92.30	5.48	9.42	12.24	8.08	698.00	404.35	1:3.06
T <sub>3</sub>	<i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Azospirillum</i> + 75% N + Full P&K	86.66	4.50	9.21	9.42	7.50	682.33	332.48	1:2.34
T <sub>4</sub>	PSB + VAM + 75% P + Full N&K	93.41	5.88	11.21	12.87	8.41	705.33	413.26	1:3.15
T <sub>5</sub>	<i>Azospirillum</i> + PSB + 75% N + Full P&K	96.23	6.32	11.27	13.89	8.42	724.66	448.65	1:3.50
T <sub>6</sub>	<i>Azospirillum</i> + RDF NPK	86.30	4.56	10.43	10.91	8.02	676.00	378.10	1:2.80
T <sub>7</sub>	<i>Azotobacter</i> + RDF NPK	90.11	5.07	10.12	10.82	7.94	695.33	336.81	1:2.38
T <sub>8</sub>	PSB + RDF NPK	90.52	4.35	9.90	10.47	7.75	672.33	360.20	1:2.62
T <sub>9</sub>	VAM + RDF NPK	92.19	5.63	10.93	11.94	8.27	636.66	393.00	1:2.95
T <sub>10</sub>	RDF NPK	83.25	4.24	8.25	9.04	8.00	625.66	291.12	1:1.92
	C.D. at 5%	5.16	1.21	1.82	1.45	0.60	43.20	50.77	
	SEm	1.73	0.40	0.61	0.49	0.20	14.53	17.08	
	SEd	2.45	0.57	0.86	0.69	0.28	20.55	24.15	

The temperature of the location ranged between 5.3-36<sup>0</sup>C during the experiment period. The relative humidity ranged between 48.16%-90%. The average rainfall in this area is around 820mm annually. However, occasional precipitation is also not uncommon during winter months.

## 2.2 Experimental Details

The brinjal crop with variety Azad Brinjal-3 (Kalyanpur Selection-331) was grown in Randomized Block Design with 10 treatments and each replicated thrice. Treatment details were T<sub>1</sub> (Control with no RDF and biofertilizers), T<sub>2</sub> (PSB + *Azotobacter* + 75% P + Full N& K), T<sub>3</sub> (*Azotobacter* + *Azospirillum* + 75% N + Full P&K), T<sub>4</sub> (PSB + VAM + 75% P + Full N&K), T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K), T<sub>6</sub> (*Azospirillum* + RDF NPK), T<sub>7</sub> (*Azotobacter* + RDF NPK), T<sub>8</sub> (PSB + RDF NPK), T<sub>9</sub> (VAM + RDF NPK) and T<sub>10</sub> (RDF NPK). Each plot consisted of 6 X 3.60 m<sup>2</sup> area with 60 cm row spacing and 60 cm plant spacing. As per the treatment details, all the biofertilizers were used for root inoculation of brinjal seedlings (root dipping). For the preparation of biofertilizer solution, 200g each of *Azospirillum*, *Azotobacter*, PSB and VAM were dissolved in 3 liters of water in plastic containers separately. Immediately after uprooting, the seedlings were dipped in each of the solution separately for 10 minutes and again for 10 minutes in case of more than one biofertilizer combination. Then the roots were allowed to dry in the shade for 5-10 minutes and then they were used for transplanting. The observations were recorded on plant height (cm), no. of primary branches per plant, no. of secondary branches per plant, fruit length (cm), fruit width (cm), total no. of fruits per plot and fruit yield (q/ha). The plant height was measured at the time of last harvest. No. of primary and secondary branches per plant were recorded at different intervals. No. of fruits per plot, fruit length and width were recorded at the time of each picking. Economics was calculated with respect to different treatments on the basis of prevalent rates at the time of experiment. The data were collected from five randomly selected plants of each treatment and the analysis of variance and interpretation of data were done as per procedures given by Chandel [8].

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Growth Parameters

The data recorded at the time of final harvest clearly indicated that the differences in plant

height due to different treatments were significant. Maximum plant height was recorded in T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) which was 96.23 cm followed by T<sub>4</sub> (93.41 cm) and T<sub>2</sub> (92.30 cm) which were at par to each other while the minimum plant height was recorded in T<sub>1</sub> (Control) which was 79.15cm (Table 1).

Number of primary branches was found maximum in T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) which was 6.32 followed by T<sub>4</sub> (5.88) and T<sub>9</sub> (5.63) while the minimum was found in T<sub>1</sub> (Control) which was 3.95.

The data mentioned in Table 1 depicted that number of secondary branches was found maximum in T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* + PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) which was 11.27 followed by T<sub>4</sub> (11.21) and T<sub>9</sub> (10.93) while the minimum was found in T<sub>1</sub> (Control) which was 7.15.

Similar results were also reported by Anburani and Manivanna [9], Nanthakumar and Veeraraghavathatham [10], Wange and Kale [11], Kiran et al. [12], Solanki et al. [13], Doifode and Nandkar [14].

Significant increase in plant height, number of primary branches and number of secondary branches was due to increased uptake of nutrients in the plant leading to enhanced chlorophyll content and carbohydrate synthesis and increased activity of hormones produced by *Azospirillum* and PSB. The PSB seedling root dip treatment increased phosphate availability in soil which in turn helped better proliferation of root growth and uptake of other nutrients to the greater extent so that there is enlargement in cell size and cell division which might have helped in increasing plant height, number of primary and secondary branches.

### 3.2 Yield Parameters

The length of fruits as presented in Table 1 found highest in treatment T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) which was 13.89 cm followed by treatment T<sub>4</sub> (12.87 cm) and T<sub>2</sub> (12.24 cm) which were significantly superior over all the treatments. The statistically lowest fruit length was observed in treatment T<sub>1</sub> (Control) which was 7.25 cm.

Maximum fruit width was recorded in T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) with 8.42 cm followed by treatment T<sub>4</sub> (8.41 cm) and

T<sub>9</sub> (8.27 cm) which were significantly superior over other treatments. The statistically lowest fruit width was observed in treatment T<sub>1</sub> (Control) with 6.65 cm.

Total number of fruits per plot as presented in Table 1 was found maximum in treatment T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) with 724.66 number of fruits followed by T<sub>4</sub> (705.33) and T<sub>2</sub> (698.00), whereas minimum total number of fruits per plot was reported in T<sub>1</sub> (Control) with 580.00.

These results were in close conformity with Nanthankumar and Veeraragavathatham [10], Kiran et al. [12] and Suryanto et al. [4].

Fruit development is highly affected by auxin formation in the growing seeds and other parts of the fruit to supply food reserves in order to increase fruit development. Moreover, microorganisms that produce auxin are *Azospirillum* and VAM as microbe, which attaches nitrogen and plays as growth regulator [2].

Yield was recorded maximum in treatment T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) which was 448.65 q/ha followed by T<sub>4</sub> (413.26 q/ha) and T<sub>2</sub> (404.35 q/ha) and the lowest fruit yield per hectare was found in treatment T<sub>1</sub> (Control) which is 237.44 q/ha. The above result corroborates with Anburani and Manivanna [9], Nanthakumar and Veeraraghavathatham [10] and Kiran et al. [12]. Increase in fruit yield and its parameters may be due to increase in number of branches which produced more leaves and this worked as an efficient photosynthesis structure and produced high amount of carbohydrate in the plant. More number of branches produced more number of flowers which resulted higher fruits per plant and increased fruit yield and their attributes.

### 3.3 Economics

The economics is the need of the farmers while taking decision regarding the adoption of the techniques and scientific knowledge. Maximum Gross Return, Net Return and Cost Benefit ratio of 1:3.50 was recorded in treatment T<sub>5</sub> with *Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K and the minimum Gross Return, Net Return and Cost Benefit ratio of 1:1.46 was recorded in treatment T<sub>1</sub> (Control). This result clearly indicates the importance of biofertilizers and also the use of fertilizers up to an optimal range results in higher yield and high dose of fertilizers diminished net

return and benefit: cost ratio. Such results are also confirmed by Bhonde et al. [15] and Mishra et al. [16]. The beneficial use of nitrogen fixing microorganisms and PSB as a supplementary source of plant nutrition on agricultural crops is well documented [17]. These non-conventional sources of fertilizers are not only cost effective but also boost up the productivity of field crops simultaneously [18].

## 4. CONCLUSION

On the basis of present investigation, it is concluded that the treatment T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) is proved as a best combination of biofertilizers along with inorganic fertilizer for the improvement of brinjal cultivation through organically. Where treatment T<sub>5</sub> (*Azospirillum* +PSB + 75% N + Full P&K) significantly enhances the growth and yield parameters of brinjal, it also gave maximum benefit/ha.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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