

## Effect of seed inoculation of biofertilizer and soil application of biochar on growth, yield and also to evaluate the economics of different treatment combinations of baby corn

### Abstract

The field experiment was conducted at Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, Naini Agriculture Institute, SHUATS, Prayagraj, UP, during the *Zaid* season of 2023. The experiment was laid out in Randomized Block Design with ten treatment combinations which are replicated thrice. The experiment involves with the biofertilizers like *Azospirillum* (10g and 20g/kg seed), *Azotobacter* (10g and 20g/kg seed) along with biochar (0t/ha, 10t/ha, 40t/ha). Among the various treatment combinations in (treatment-9) with the application of *Azospirillum* 10g/kg seed along with *Azotobacter* 10 g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha significantly recorded higher plant height (117.13 cm), plant dry weight (34.33 g), cobs/plant (1.87), cob length without husk (14.58 cm), cob weight without husk (12.09 g) and cob yield without husk (4.70 t/ha). Maximum gross returns (2,35,000.00 ₹ /ha), were obtained in (treatment-9) whereas maximum net returns (1,27,001.00 ₹ /ha) and higher benefit cost ratio (1.74) was obtained in (treatment-8) with application of *Azospirillum* 10g/kg seed along with *Azotobacter* 10g/kg seed and Biochar 10 t/ha.

**Keywords:** *Baby corn, Biochar, Biofertilizers, Growth, Yield*

## INTRODUCTION

Maize is the third most significant cereal crop close to rice and wheat in India. Baby corn is dehusked young cob of maize collected within 2-

3 days of silk rise. Baby corn has high nutrients like vitamin B and of various supplements. Baby corn is a scrumptious, enhancing and nutritious vegetable, without cholesterol. It is a low-calorie vegetable which helps in weight loss. It is also a low-carb, high-fiber, fat-free vegetable, and has rich value of nutrients and minerals

(**Hekmat et al., 2019 [7]**). One baby corn can measure up to an 'egg' concerning minerals. Hundred gram of baby corn contained 89.1% moisture, 0.2g fat, 1.9g protein, 8.2 mg starch, 0.06g ash, 28.0mg calcium, 86.0mg phosphorus, and

11.0 mg of ascorbic acid (**Rakesh et al., 2017 [14]**). India is the fifth-biggest producer of corn on the planet, contributing 3% of worldwide creation across an area of around 9.18 million hectares with a development of 27.23 million tons and a typical efficiency of 2.96 t ha<sup>-1</sup>. Uttar Pradesh contributes an area of around

0.73 M ha with a 7.98% to the whole nation of India, which has a development of around 1.53 M t. Because of expanding mindfulness about wellbeing combined with superior income the interest of baby corn is expanding in Indian market (**Joshi et al., 2018 [8]**).

Biofertilizer is a characteristic information that can be applied as a supplement to, or as a substituent of synthetic manure in sustainable farming (**Meena et al., 2013 [11]**). Bio composts are substances that contain live microorganisms that colonize the rhizosphere or within plants and invigorate plant development by expanding the stock of essential supplement accessibility and additionally animating objective plant development, when applied to seeds, plant surfaces, or soil (**Fitriatin et al., 2021 [5]**). Mycorrhizal advantageous interaction expands ingestion of certain components like phosphorus, nitrogen and micronutrients, further develops water take-up, produces chemicals, lessens harms brought about by ecological pressure, works on nature of soil total (**Marngar et al., 2017 [12]**). Bio-manures assume a significant part in the rising accessibility of nitrogen and phosphorus. Among biofertilizers *Azospirillum* is known to fix air nitrogen and expanded around 10-

15% grain yield in maize (**Rajesh et al., 2023 [17]**). *Azotobacter*, a vigorous free-

living soil microorganism broadly utilized as biofertilizer, converts climatic nitrogen and delivery it as ammonium particles into the soil. They are pervasive and richly tracked down in impartial to feebly acidic soils. The oxygen-consuming microbes *Azotobacter chroococcum* known to fix extensive amount of nitrogen in the scope of 20-40 kg of nitrogen for each hectare in the rhizosphere in non-leguminous harvests (**Tejaswi et al., 2021 [22]**). *Azotobacter* was the first and is the most widely recognized biofertilizer for certain plants, for example, maize, wheat, sorghum and rice which delivers some plant development advancing metabolites, catalysts and chemicals (auxin, cytokinin and gibberellin) as well as fixing air nitrogen. On a normal 20 and 22 kg of nitrogen/ha can be saved by applying of biofertilizers of baby corn seed prior to planting with *azotobacter* or *azospirillum*, individually (**Sri et al., 2023 [**

21]).

Biochar is charcoal acquired from biomass intended to be incorporated into soil (Yeboah et al., 2016 [23]). A couple of significant potential impacts of biochar on soil include: soil carbon sequestration, green-house gas releases (Brassard et al., 2016 [3]), crop-productivity capacity, soil biome (Lehmann et al., 2011 [10]), soil and chemical capacities and solution for polluted soils (Pillala et al., 2023 [13]). In acidic soils, liming impact of biochar improves soil microbial variety and its capability, along with expanding cation exchange capacity and harvest water accessibility. Applying of biochar to soil further develops soil fertility retention, for example, soil pH, CEC, absolute C, all out N, accessible P, water storage capacity, nutrient cycling and also increase in attraction of beneficial microbial organisms (Sharma et al., 2022 [20]). Biochar can work as soil conditioner by enhancing the physical and biological attributes of soils, for example, water holding range and soil nutrient withholding capacity, and furthermore upgrading plant development (Rathia et al., 2023 [18]) and as valuable soil conditioner for crop better production (Huang et al., 2013 [6]).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The experiment on the effect of biofertilizers and biochar on growth and yield of baby corn were conducted in *Zaid* season of 2023 at Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, SHUATS, Prayagraj which is located at 25°39' 42"N latitude, 81°67'56" E longitude and 98 m altitude above the mean sea level (MSL). This area is situated on the right side of the Yamuna River by the side of Prayagraj- Rewaroad about 12 km from the city. A composite soil sample was collected at a depth of 0 to 15 cm. The soil with reaction of (pH 7.3), organic carbon (1.217%), available nitrogen (2748.48 kg/ha), phosphorus (45.1 kg/ha), potassium (223.5 kg/ha), Electric conductivity (0.724 mm/cm). Baby corn (*Zea mays* L.) variety G5414 were selected for sowing. Seeds were sown in line manually on 2023. Seeds were covered with the soil immediately after sowing. The spacing adopted was plant to plant 10 cm and row to row 45 cm according to the treatment details and the seeds were drilled at 3-4 cm depth. All the treatments were applied by balancing to the initial soil test values and crop requirements to justify the crop response to the supplied nutrients.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Effect of biofertilizers and biochar on growth and yield

#### of baby corn. 1. Growth Parameters:

##### 1.1. Plant height

At 40 DAS, significantly higher plant height (117.13 cm) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40t/ha, whereas (treatment 7) and

(treatment-8) were found to be statistically at par with the (treatment-9). The significant response in plant height was recorded with application of biofertilizers along with biochar in baby corn. This might be due to the combined effect of biofertilizers along with use of biochar that have increased the nutrient availability to the plant. Increase in vigorous growth of internode length due to accessibility and uptake of nutrients that might have increased the plant height (Reddy et al. 2021 [16]).

### 1.2. Plant dry weight

At 40 DAS, superiorly higher plant dry weight (34.33 g) was recorded in (treatment 9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40t/ha, whereas (treatment 8) was found to be statistically at par with the higher. The significant increase in plant dry weight might be due to the role of biofertilizers and biochar in enhancing soil moisture status that can indirectly help in better crop establishment and nutrient uptake. The application of biochar with the appropriate dose in plants will help increase microbial activity in the soil and will have an effect on increasing the availability of organic matter in the soil. Optimal organic content in the soil helps in maintaining growth and development in plants (Rahayu et al. 2021 [15]; Babu and Mehera, 2022 [1]).

### 1.3. Crop growth rate

During 30-40 DAS, significantly higher crop growth rate (29.08 g/m<sup>2</sup>/day) was recorded with (treatment 9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha. However, (treatment-7), (treatment-8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher. The significant increase in crop growth rate might be due to the synergistic effect of biofertilizers and biochar might have attributed the crop growth and microbial activity of biofertilizers which have enhanced the supply of nutrients to the plant.

### 1.4. Relative growth rate

During 30-40 DAS, the higher relative growth rate (0.0565 g/g/day) was recorded (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g + Azotobacter 10g/kg seed + Biochar 40 t/h and also, which was found to be statistically at par with higher among all treatments.

## 2. Yield Parameters:

### 2.1. Number of cobs/plant

Significantly maximum number of cobs/plant (1.87) was recorded with (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.2. Cob length with husk

Significantly higher cob length with husk (22.62 cm) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.3. Cob length without husk

Significantly higher cob length with husk (14.58 cm) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.4. Cob girth with husk

Significantly higher cob girth with husk (7.16 cm) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.5. Cob weight with husk

Significantly higher cob weight with husk (41.13 g) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) and (treatment-7) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.6. Cob weight without husk

Significantly higher cob weight without husk (12.09g) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the higher.

### 2.7. Cob yield without husk

Significantly higher cob weight without husk (4.70 t/ha) was recorded in (treatment-9) with application of Azospirillum 10g along with Azotobacter 10g/kg seed and Biochar 40 t/ha, whereas (treatment -8) were found to be statistically at par with the (treatment-9).

Significant increase in the yield parameter and yield of baby corn might be due the application of biofertilizer

that have been proved beneficial for development of corn yield attributing characters mainly due to availability of optimum amount of nutrients during reproductive phase of the crop. (Tejaswita et al. 2021 [22]). Usage of biochar might have increased the organic carbon in the soil, that helps the roots of baby corn in nutrient uptake and rapid photosynthesis and supply of nutrients from source to sink. Biofertilizers increase the nitrogen availability in the soil that might have improved the yield of baby corn (Barlani and Adhikari. 2013 [2]). The increase in the yield attributes and yield of baby corn might be due to the synergistic effect of biofertilizers and biochar that have enhanced water holding capacity, increased cation exchange capacity (CEC) and provision of a medium for adsorption of plant nutrients and improved conditions for soil micro-organisms and direct nutrients from NPK. The rise in corn yield could be credited due to the overall enhancement in soil chemical, physical and biological properties (Dzomeku et al. 2018 [4]; Sashi et al. 2018 [19]).

### 3. Economics

#### 3.1. Cost of cultivation

The cost of cultivation of treatments varies between 93,007.80 ₹ /ha and 52,974.80 ₹ /ha. Maximum cost of cultivation is recorded with application of Azotobacter 20g/kg seed + Biochar 40t/ha (₹ 1,33,007.80). The minimum cost of cultivation is in control (₹ 52,974.80).

#### 3.2. Gross returns

Maximum gross returns (2,35,000.00 ₹ /ha) were recorded in (treatment-9) Azospirillum 10g and Azotobacter 10g/kg seed along with Biochar 40 t/ha and minimum gross return (78,333.33 ₹ /ha) was recorded in control.

#### 3.3. Net returns

Maximum net returns (1,27,001.00 ₹ /ha) were recorded in (treatment-8) Azospirillum 10g and Azotobacter 10g/kg seed along with Biochar 10 t/ha and minimum (25,358.53 ₹ /ha) was recorded in control.

#### 3.4. Benefit cost ratio

Higher benefit cost ratio (1.74) was recorded in (treatment-8) Azospirillum 10g and Azotobacter 10g/kg seed along with Biochar 10 t/ha and lowest (0.22) was recorded in Azospirillum 20g/kg seed + Biochar 40t/ha.

### CONCLUSION

It is concluded that among different treatment combinations, with the application of Azospirillum 10g + Azotobacter 10g/kg seed & Biochar 10 t/ha has recorded maximum net returns (1,27,001.00 ₹ /ha) and higher benefit cost ratio (1.74). It also found to be statistically at par with maximum plant height, plant dry weight, number of cobs, cob yield. So, it is the treatment best and economically profitable for farmers. Although the findings are based on one season. Further research is needed to confirm the findings and its recommendation.

**Table.1 Effect of biofertilizers and biochar on growth attributes of baby corn**

S.No	Treatments	Plant height(cm) At 40DAS	Plant dry weight (g/plant) At 40DAS	Crop growth rate(g/m <sup>2</sup> /day) During (30-40DAS)	Relative growth Rate(g/g/day) During (30-40DAS)
1.	Azospirillum 20g/kg seed + Biochar 0t/ha	109.13	29.61	24.61	0.0550
2.	Azospirillum 20g/kg seed + Biochar 10t/ha	110.60	30.09	25.00	0.0548
3.	Azospirillum 20g/kg seed + Biochar 40t/ha	111.13	30.59	25.42	0.0549
4.	Azotobacter 20g/kg seed + Biochar 0t/ha	112.67	31.01	25.80	0.0550
5.	Azotobacter 20g/kg seed + Biochar 10t/ha	114.07	31.74	26.44	0.0551
6.	Azotobacter 20g/kg seed + Biochar 40t/ha	114.60	32.41	27.22	0.0558
7.	Azospirillum 10g + Azotobacter 10g/kg seed & Biochar 0t/ha	115.13	32.85	27.64	0.0559
8.	Azospirillum 10g + Azotobacter 10g/kg seed & Biochar 10t/ha	115.87	33.13	27.90	0.0560
9.	Azospirillum 10g + Azotobacter 10g/kg seed & Biochar 40t/ha	117.13	34.33	29.08	0.0565
10.	Control (120-60-40 NPK kg/ha)	107.47	29.84	24.98	0.0555
	F-Test	S	S	S	NS
	SEm(±)	0.67	0.40	0.57	0.0010
	CD(p=0.05)	2.01	1.19	1.70	-

**Table.2Effectofbiofertilizersandbiocharonyieldattributesofbabycorn**

S.No	Treatments	Number ofcobs/plant	Cob lengthwith husk(cm)	Cob lengthwith out husk(cm)	Cob girthwith husk(cm)	Cob weightwith husk(g)	Cob weightwith outhusk (g)	Cob yieldwith outhusk(t/ha)
1.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar0t/ha	1.20	19.29	10.95	5.45	35.99	07.33	1.67
2.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar10t/ha	1.40	20.02	11.64	5.63	36.13	10.54	2.83
3.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar40t/ha	1.53	20.38	12.08	5.88	37.03	11.06	3.23
4.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar0t/ha	1.40	20.98	12.49	5.99	37.40	08.19	2.23
5.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar10t/ha	1.47	21.20	12.81	6.30	38.43	10.81	3.10
6.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar40t/ha	1.60	21.47	13.48	6.34	39.42	11.15	3.77
7.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed& Biochar0t/ha	1.40	21.91	13.76	6.46	40.00	08.41	2.33
8.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed& Biochar10t/ha	1.60	22.29	14.10	6.93	40.43	11.79	4.00
9.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed& Biochar40t/ha	1.87	22.62	14.58	7.16	41.13	12.09	4.70
10.	Control(120-60-40NPKkg/ha)	1.13	18.87	10.76	5.37	35.31	07.21	1.57
	F-Test	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	SEm(±)	0.10	0.22	0.23	0.10	0.34	0.10	0.23
	CD(p=0.05)	0.30	0.65	0.69	0.32	1.02	0.31	0.71

**Table.3Effectofbiofertilizersand biocharoneconomicsofbabycorn**

S.No	Treatments	Costofcultivation(₹ )	Grossreturns(₹ )	Netreturns(₹ )	Benefit costrati o
1.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar0t/ha	52,990.20	83,333.33	30,343.13	0.57
2.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar10t/ha	72,990.20	1,41,666.67	68,676.47	0.94
3.	Azospirillum20g/kgseed+Biochar40t/ha	1,32,990.20	1,61,666.66	28,676.47	0.22
4.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar 0t/ha	53,007.80	1,11,666.67	58,658.87	1.11
5.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar10t/ha	73,007.80	1,55,000.00	81,992.20	1.12
6.	Azotobacter20g/kgseed+Biochar40t/ha	1,33,007.80	1,88,333.33	55,325.53	0.42
7.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed&Biochar0t/ha	52,999.00	1,16,666.67	63,667.67	1.20
8.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed&Biochar10t/ha	72,999.00	2,00,000.00	1,27,001.00	1.74
9.	Azospirillum10g+Azotobactor10g/kgseed&Biochar40t/ha	1,32,999.00	2,35,000.00	1,02,001.00	0.77

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