

Effect of FYM, areca husk compost and coir pith compost on growth, yield and quality of baby corn (*Zea mays* L.)

Comment [A1]: Since the abbreviation FYM stands for "farm yard manure", its abbreviation should be given at least once, either in the title or in the abstract section.

ABSTRACT

A field experiment entitled "Effect of FYM, areca husk compost and coir pith compost on growth, yield and quality of baby corn (*Zea mays* L.)" has been conducted during *rabi* 2023 at College of Agriculture, Navile, Shivamogga. The experiment was laid out in Randomized Block Design with thirteen treatments and replicated thrice and treatment consist of twelve organic nutrition treatments and an inorganic treatment which followed the standard package of practice (150:75:40 kg N:P₂O₅:K₂O ha⁻¹). In organic treatments the organic manures FYM, Areca husk compost and Coir pith compost applied in combination and sole. Among the organic treatments, application of 50 percent N through FYM + 50 percent N through areca husk compost (T2) reported higher plant higher plant height (153.13 cm), Leaf area (48.49 dm²), Leaf area index (5.39), Length of babycorn (11.34 cm), Girth of babycorn (5.64 cm), Weight of babycorn (16.10 g), Husked (119.0 q ha⁻¹), Dehusked (45.1q ha⁻¹), and Green fodder yield of baby corn (29.0 t ha⁻¹) which was on par with package of practice (T1). Quality parameters, crude protein (17.37 %), crude fibre (4.32 %) and starch content (8.96%) were significantly higher in 50 percent N through FYM + 50 percent N through areca husk compost (T2).

Comment [A2]: "Effect of farm yard manure (FYM),

Comment [A3]: babycorn should be written baby corn

Keywords: babycorn, FYM, Areca husk compost, coir pith compost, growth, yield, quality

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INTRODUCTION

Growing maize for vegetable purposes, known as 'babycorn', Babycorn is an unfertilized young cob harvested just after two or three days of silk emergence. It is rich in essential fibres and protein and is packed with vital anti-oxidants too. This nutrient rich vegetable is very low in calories (25 kcal), starch (6-7 %) and has a negligible amount of fat (0.3 g 100g-1). Babycorn is eaten both raw and cooked while the early harvest of the crop gives nutritious fodder for livestock. Improved production technology of babycorn can boost its productivity and help to achieve a higher economic return and high-quality product compared to grain maize (Ramchandrapaet *et al.*, 2004).

Babycorn cultivation in Karnataka is approximately 10,000 hectares, with a production of about 75,000 metric tons. The productivity of baby corn in the state is around 7.5 tons per hectare. On a national scale, India has around 60,000 hectares dedicated to baby corn cultivation, yielding approximately 450,000 metric tons annually. The average productivity across the country is about 7.5 tons per hectare, similar to that of Karnataka. These figures reflect the growing interest and efforts in promoting baby corn as a valuable crop for both domestic consumption and export (Anon, 2023)

Organic farming is a holistic way of farming and is one of the several approaches suggested to meet the objective of sustainable agriculture. Organic farming provides higher net profit to farmers compared to conventional farming, mainly due to the premium price of the certified organic produce. Since babycorn is preferred as a raw vegetable or in partially cooked form in soups, salads and Chinese food preparations, nutrient management with organic resources assumes more importance concerning its nutritive value, taste, and overall consumer preference (Anupama *et al.*, 2020).

Good health is considered an asset in any society and staying healthy through consumption of healthy and quality food is highly relevant in current times. Prospects are higher in organic cultivation of babycorn which is preferred as a raw vegetable in urban areas. However, the influence of organic nutrition in babycorn has not been studied so far in Karnataka to make an organic recommendation to the farmers.

With this background, the present study was conducted to see the effect of FYM, areca husk compost, and coir pith compost on growth, yield and quality of babycorn (*Zea mays* L.).

Comment [A5]: The Introduction heading should be filled with better and more literature. The reader cannot understand the importance and need of organic farming and organic product cultivation in baby corn cultivation. The Introduction is very weak. Also, the benefits of composting and its contribution to organic farming are never mentioned. The Introduction section is unacceptable in its current form. The composting process is the crucial method here and the work of experts in this field should be used. If the following articles are examined and used, it will be a very rich introduction.

-Effects of initial C/N ratio on organic matter degradation of composting of rose oil processing solid wastes (SCI)
-Co-composting of two-phase olive-mill pomace and poultry manure with tomato harvest stalks(SCI)
-Effect of initialC/Nratio on composting of two-phase olive mill pomace, dairy manure, and straw(SCI)
- Determination of Properties of Apple Processing Waste and Investigation of Appropriate Disposal Methods (<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/615905>)

Comment [A6]: babycorn should be written baby corn

Comment [A7]: babycorn should be written baby corn

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Comment [A9]: babycorn should be written baby corn

Comment [A10]: This paragraph is very inconsistent. After 2-3 sentences explaining organic farming, the use of corn in food is directly explained. The paragraph should be a paragraph explaining organic farming as a general concept and how organic farming ... [1]

Comment [A11]: babycorn should be written baby corn

Comment [A12]: babycorn should be written baby corn

Comment [A13]: What is meant to be said in this sentence? It does not match what is meant to be said in the paragraph.

Comment [A14]: In this study.....

Additionally, this paragraph should be expanded and the importance and purpose of the study should be emphasized.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Site description

The field experiment was conducted in B block of the College of Agriculture, Navile, Shivamogga during *rabi* 2023. The experimental field was situated at 13° 58' to 14° 1' N latitude and 75° 34' to 75° 42' E longitude with an altitude of 615 meters above mean sea level and is located under the southern transition zone of Karnataka. The soil was sandy loam in texture (74.86 % of sand, 17.43 % of silt, and 7.71 % of clay), acidic in nature (pH 5.23) with a low salt load (EC 0.32 dSm⁻¹). It has a low status for organic carbon (4.63 g kg⁻¹) and available nitrogen (243.72 kg ha⁻¹), while the status of available phosphorous (61.08 kg ha⁻¹) and available potassium (233.23 kg ha⁻¹) were high and medium, respectively.

Composting process

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Experimental details

The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design with 13 treatments replicated thrice with plot size 4.5 m x 4.0 m respectively. The treatments comprised twelve organic nutrition treatments and an inorganic treatment which followed the standard package of practice (150:75:40 kg N:P₂O₅:K₂O ha⁻¹). The treatments were T1- As per package of practice (150:75:40 kg N:P₂O₅:K₂O ha⁻¹), T2- 50 percent N through FYM + 50 percent N through areca husk compost, T3- 50 percent N through areca husk compost + 50 percent N through coir pith compost, T4- 50 percent N through coir pith compost + 50 percent N through FYM, T5- 75 percent N through FYM + 25 percent N through areca husk compost, T6- 75 percent N through FYM + 25 percent N through coir pith compost, T7- 75 percent N through coir pith compost + 25 percent N through FYM, T8- 75 percent N through coir pith compost + 25 percent N through areca husk compost, T9- 75 percent N through areca husk compost + 25 percent N through FYM, T10- 75 percent N through areca husk compost + 25 percent N through coir pith compost, T11- 100 percent N through FYM, T12- 100 percent N through areca husk compost, and T13- 100 percent N through coir pith compost. Compost was applied 15 days before sowing.

Table 1:- Nutrient content of the different composts.

Particulars	FYM	AHC	CPC
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Comment [A15]: As a subheading of the material and method heading, either how the compost was produced or where the compost was obtained should definitely be given in 1-2 paragraphs. Although the compost application constitutes the main framework of the study, no information about the composts has been given. This is unacceptable. If the author produced the compost himself, he should explain which waste mixture he produced it with and in what proportions. If he obtained the compost ready-made, he should provide information about the farm or producer he obtained it from and should thank them at the end of the article. This is an ethical violation problem and publishing this article in this way is ethically problematic.

Total N (%)	0.61	1.29	1.06
Total P (%)	0.35	0.75	0.28
Total K (%)	0.52	1.59	0.75
C: N ratio	26.14	31.70	42.51

Collection of experimental data

For recording various biometric observations *i.e.*, plant height (cm), Leaf area (dm²), Leaf area index (LAI), Length of babycorn (cm), Girth of babycorn (cm), Weight of babycorn (g), Husked yield of babycorn (q ha⁻¹), Dehusked yield of babycorn (q ha⁻¹), and greenfodder yield (t ha⁻¹) a sample consisting of five plants was selected at random and tagged in net plot of each treatment. Observations on growth parameters were recorded at 15, 30, 45 DAS and at the crop harvest. The same plants were also used to record the yield components at harvest. Observations on quality parameters like Crude protein content (%), Crude fibre (%) and Starch content (%) of cob were made.

Statistical analysis

The data recorded on various observations on growth and yield parameters were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) as outlined by [10]. The level of significance used in the 'F' test was at 5 per cent. The critical difference (CD) values were given in the table at 5 per cent level of significance, wherever the 'F' test was significant. Otherwise against CD values abbreviation NS (Non-significant) was indicated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Growth attributes

Among different compost applications, 50 per cent N through FYM + 50 per cent N through areca husk compost (T2) was equally effective as a chemical fertilizer in promoting the growth of babycorn across various parameters. This treatment was as effective as inorganic fertilizer in improving plant height at 15, 30, 45 DAS and at harvest (25.95 cm, 79.92 cm, 152.08 cm and 153.13 cm, respectively), leaf area at 15, 30, 45 DAS and at harvest (5.56, 20.59, 45.04, 48.49 dm², respectively), leaf area index (LAI) at 15, 30, and 45 DAS and at harvest (0.62, 2.28, 5.05 and 5.39, respectively).

The effectiveness of treatments incorporating farmyard manure (FYM) can be attributed to its lower carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio, which facilitates rapid nitrogen mineralization and mobilization, making nutrients readily available to the plant. This promotes early growth in

Comment [A16]: There is no information about the compost used and when the analysis results are examined, it is seen that it is not mature compost. There can be no mature compost with such a C/N value. The literature and especially the sample sources mentioned in the introduction title should definitely be examined. These analysis results do not reflect reality.

Comment [A17]: There is no information about the compost used and when the analysis results are examined, it is seen that it is not mature compost. There can be no mature compost with such a C/N value. The literature and especially the sample sources mentioned in the introduction title should definitely be examined. These analysis results do not reflect reality.

Comment [A18]: This sentence was taken directly from another work by cutting and pasting and cited with a numbered source. Inappropriate

Comment [A19]: ?

Comment [A20]: The C/N ratio (26.14) is not low for a compost used in agriculture. On the contrary, it is high and the quality parameters of this compost such as its physicochemical properties, organic matter, water content, pH, EC, germination index are not explained at all.

babycorn, a finding consistent with the results of Anupama *et al.* (2020). The effectiveness of treatments incorporating areca husk compost (AHC) can be attributed to the development of humic substances resulting from the decomposition of AHC, which enhances the morphological features of the crop and subsequently increases plant height (Kevin *et al.*, 2021). The balanced nutrient supply from the combined use of FYM and AHC likely synchronized the nutrient demand and supply for **babycorn**. The combination of FYM, which has a narrow carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio, and AHC, with a wider carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio, may have improved native nitrogen mineralization and released growth regulators from AHC. Improved **babycorn** growth due to the combined use of FYM and AHC can also be linked to the rich nutrient content of AHC and the enhancement of soil physicochemical and biological properties (Babu *et al.*, 2020).

As a universal trend, the application of major nutrients through inorganic fertilizers produced higher growth parameters like plant height at 15, 30, 45 days after sowing (DAS) and at harvest (27.79 cm, 85.80 cm, 160.36 and 161.12 cm, respectively), leaf area at 15, 30, 45 days after sowing (DAS) and at harvest (5.93, 21.55, 47.04 and 50.91 dm², respectively) and leaf area index (LAI) 15, 30, 45 days after sowing (DAS) and at harvest (0.66, 2.39, 5.23 and 5.66, respectively), compared to organic nutrient sources. These chemical fertilizers release nutrients more quickly than organic sources, allowing for more effective utilization during the early vegetative growth of the crop, as evidenced by the growth parameters. The beneficial effects of mineral fertilizers containing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium on the growth attributes and dry matter production of **babycorn** have been previously reported by Dadarwalet *et al.* (2009) and Singh *et al.* (2010). The values are presented in Table 2 and 3.

Yield and yield attributes

The treatment involving 50 per cent N through FYM + 50 per cent N through areca husk compost (T2) demonstrated a significant positive impact on yield parameters, including a **babycorn** length of 11.34 cm, a girth of 5.64 cm, and a weight of 16.10 g, husked **babycorn** yield (119.0 q ha⁻¹), dehusked **babycorn** yield (45.1 q ha⁻¹), and green fodder yield (29.0 t ha⁻¹). The superior yield observed in this treatment can be attributed to **babycorn**'s enhanced growth and yield attributes, such as increased plant height, leaf area, and overall biomass production. The balanced nutrient supply from the combination of FYM and areca husk compost likely played a crucial role in improving nutrient availability and uptake during the critical growth stages of the crop. This improvement in yield parameters aligns

with the findings of Babu *et al.* (2020) and Anupama *et al.* (2020) who highlighted the benefits of combining organic amendments for enhanced crop performance. Additionally, Kevin *et al.* (2021) demonstrated that the integration of different composts can lead to improved soil structure and microbial activity, further contributing to higher yields.

Despite the beneficial effects observed with organic composts, the application of inorganic treatments which followed the standard package of practice (T1) significantly enhanced the yield attributes and overall yield of **babycorn**. The quick nutrient release and balanced composition of chemical fertilizers provided an immediate supply of key nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium during critical growth stages, leading to the highest yields of husked and dehusked **babycorn**, as well as green fodder (129.6 q ha⁻¹, 49 q ha⁻¹, and 30.8 t ha⁻¹, respectively). This treatment also produced superior **babycorn** length (11.92 cm), girth (6.03 cm), and weight (16.75 g) compared to organic alternatives. The positive impact of chemical fertilizers on crop performance have been well-documented in studies by Sahoo and Mahapatra (2004) in sweet corn, Dadarwalet *et al.* (2009) in **babycorn**, and further supported by findings from Kumar *et al.* (2013), who demonstrated the significant yield improvements with inorganic nutrient sources in maize cultivation. The values are presented in Table 4.

Quality parameters of **babycorn**

The presence of humic substances in the compost can explain the higher crude protein content (17.37 %) reported in the treatment with 50 per cent N through FYM + 50 per cent N through areca husk compost (T2). These chemicals promote root growth and nutrient absorption, resulting in more effective nitrogen usage, which is required for protein synthesis in plants. Furthermore, the organic matter in FYM and areca husk compost enhances soil aeration and moisture retention, increasing microbial activity and nitrogen mineralization. This consistent nitrogen availability directly correlates to increased protein content in plant tissues. Singh *et al.* (2010) and Yadav *et al.* (2018) findings also support that organic amendments improve protein content and total crop production compared to inorganic cultivation.

The organic treatment which received 50 per cent N through FYM + 50 per cent N through areca husk compost (T2) recorded a lower fiber content in **babycorn** (4.32 %) which was significantly lower than the inorganic treatment which followed the standard package of

practice (6.14 %). The decrease in the fiber content is because of the enhancement of soil structure and microbial activity caused by the application of organic manures which together boosted protein synthesis in **babycorn** reducing the fiber deposition as given by Nweke, 2017. The slow and steady release of nutrients from the organic manure resulted in lower fiber accumulation as given by the Singh *et al.* (2010). The beneficial effect of organic nutrients on cell wall construction and fiber content is in line with the findings of Vishwakarma *et al.* (2019).

The organic treatment which received 50 per cent N through FYM + 50 per cent N through areca husk compost (T2) recorded a higher starch content in **babycorn**(8.96%) which was significantly higher than the inorganic treatment which followed the standard package of practice (6.97 %). The increase in the higher starch content is because of the increased soil health and great microbial activities increased by the organic manure application and also it is because of the higher secondary metabolites compared to fertilizer application. The combination of FYM and areca husk compost release on a demand basis compared to the fertilizer application led to an increase in the starch level which supports the findings of Mahanta *et al.* (2014). Also, the organic manure increases the circulation and nitrogen utilization of the crop as given by Bhattacharyya *et al.* (2015). Ravindran *et al.* (2017) also reported an increase in starch content with the application of organic manures. The values are presented in Table 5.

CONCLUSION

Supplying 50 percent N through FYM + 50 percent N through areca husk compost has recorded higher growth and yield among the organic treatments and was on par to the inorganic practice which followed as per package of practices. Application of 50 percent N through FYM + 50 percent N through areca husk compost produced high quality babycorn with higher quality parameters like crude protein, starch, lower crude fiber content

REFERENCE

1. ANONYMOUS, 2023. *Raitamitra: Farmer service platform*. Available at: <https://raitamithra.karnataka.gov.in>.

Comment [A21]: The conclusion title cannot be this extremely simple and short. There is no paragraph summarizing the study. There is also no suggestion or criticism for the continuation of the study. This title should be expanded to scientific standards. It is unacceptable in its current form.

Comment [A22]: The given internet address cannot be opened. The referred information cannot be accessed. A big problem.

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UNDER PEER REVIEW

Table 2: Plant height (cm) and leaf area (dm²) recorded at various growth phases (15, 30, 45 days after sowing (DAS) and at harvest) as influenced by FYM, areca husk

Treatment	Plant height (cm)				Leaf area (dm ²)			
	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest
T1	27.79	85.80	160.36	161.12	5.93	21.55	47.04	50.91
T2	25.95	79.92	152.08	153.13	5.56	20.59	45.04	48.49
T3	20.17	65.62	123.93	124.89	4.59	17.43	33.13	37.15
T4	20.10	65.31	124.28	124.95	4.59	17.86	36.20	40.07
T5	24.07	73.37	143.05	143.72	5.30	19.53	41.77	45.39
T6	21.98	69.16	133.59	136.30	4.88	18.46	38.05	41.92
T7	20.02	65.25	123.56	124.26	4.59	17.38	32.07	36.21
T8	19.10	62.23	117.18	118.17	4.33	16.40	30.95	34.93
T9	22.52	70.57	135.91	137.04	4.82	18.48	39.32	43.19
T10	20.54	67.50	130.03	131.03	4.59	17.92	37.04	41.10
T11	23.86	72.47	141.75	142.98	5.17	19.09	41.07	45.06
T12	21.03	67.93	130.44	131.71	4.67	18.44	37.20	41.07
T13	17.46	56.70	105.72	106.58	4.05	15.49	29.55	33.77
S.Em±	0.94	2.71	5.28	5.63	0.14	0.55	1.63	1.70
C.D. at 5%	2.73	7.92	15.42	16.43	0.43	1.61	4.76	4.96

compost and coir pith compost.

Table 3:- Leaf area index (LAI) recorded at various growth phases (15, 30, 45 days after sowing (DAS) and at harvest) as influenced by FYM, areca husk compost and coir pith

Treatment	Leaf area index (LAI)			
	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest
T1	0.66	2.39	5.23	5.66
T2	0.62	2.28	5.05	5.39
T3	0.51	1.93	3.68	4.13
T4	0.51	1.98	4.02	4.45
T5	0.59	2.15	4.64	5.04
T6	0.54	2.05	4.23	4.66
T7	0.51	1.93	3.56	4.02
T8	0.48	1.82	3.44	3.88
T9	0.54	2.05	4.37	4.80
T10	0.51	1.99	4.12	4.57
T11	0.57	2.12	4.56	5.01
T12	0.52	2.05	4.13	4.56
T13	0.45	1.72	3.28	3.75
S.Em±	0.02	0.06	0.18	0.19
C.D. at 5%	0.05	0.18	0.53	0.55

compost in babycorn.

Table 4:- The Length of babycorn (cm), girth of babycorn (cm), weight of babycorn (g), husked yield of babycorn (q ha-1), dehusked yield of babycorn (q ha-1) and green fodder yield of babycorn (t ha-1) as influenced by FYM, areca husk compost and coir

Treatment	Length of babycorn (cm)	Girth of babycorn (cm)	Weight of babycorn (g)	Husked yield of babycorn (q ha-1)	Dehusked yield of babycorn (q ha-1)	Green fodder yield of babycorn (t ha-1)
T1	11.92	6.03	16.75	129.6	49.0	30.8
T2	11.34	5.64	16.10	119.0	45.1	29.1
T3	8.99	4.65	12.94	94.7	35.4	23.2
T4	9.60	4.68	13.68	98.2	36.4	23.8
T5	10.53	5.28	15.48	110.2	43.1	27.7
T6	10.02	4.87	14.60	101.7	38.8	24.9
T7	9.09	4.31	12.67	89.8	33.6	22.2
T8	8.82	4.28	12.39	86.8	32.6	21.6
T9	10.16	5.05	15.09	104.8	40.8	27.1
T10	9.67	4.71	13.91	99.1	37.0	23.9
T11	10.34	5.14	15.39	107.4	42.0	27.3
T12	9.84	4.76	14.25	99.6	37.4	24.1
T13	8.29	4.18	11.74	83.6	31.4	21.1
S.Em±	0.42	0.23	0.40	5.16	1.78	0.77
C.D. at 5%	1.23	0.68	1.17	15.07	5.19	2.26

pith compost in babycorn.

Table 5:-Crude protein (%), Crude fibre (%) and Starch (%) as influenced by FYM,

Treatment	Crude protein (%)	Crude fibre (%)	Starch (%)
T1	13.20	6.14	6.97
T2	17.37	4.32	8.96
T3	15.28	5.36	8.13
T4	15.58	5.17	8.15
T5	15.44	5.23	8.09
T6	14.69	5.72	7.89
T7	14.43	5.85	7.69
T8	15.39	5.31	8.28
T9	16.11	4.88	8.61
T10	15.65	5.14	8.19
T11	16.34	4.63	8.70
T12	16.49	4.54	8.83
T13	14.37	5.99	7.60
S.Em±	0.57	0.16	0.21
C.D. at 5%	1.66	0.46	0.62

areca husk compost and coir pith compost in babycorn.

