Original Research Article

ALLELOPATHIC POTENTIAL OF AQUEOUS EXTRACTS OF WILD SUNFLOWER (*Tithonia diversifolia* (Hemsl.) A.Gray) AND SORGHUM (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) AQUEOUS EXTRACTS TO FOR CONTROLING WEEDS AND ENHANCING YIELD INOF COWPEA (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp) CROPPING SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

A Cowpea is an important significant annual grain legume in Sri Lanka is the cowpea. Approximately 53–60% of yield losses in cowpea cultivation are attributed to weeds. Chemical weed control (herbicide), is one of the method in weed management ofcontrol in cowpea. Importation of herbicide have been prohibited recently since of government policy and the nation's economic problems. As a result, it's critical to identify other herbicide suitable alternatives. In theIn this context, a field experiment was conducted to study the effect of aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed control, groth and yield of cowpea. The experiment consisting of five weed control treatments viz T1 (aqueous extract of wild sunflower; 12 L ha^{-1} ,T2 (aqueous extract of sorghum; 12 L ha^{-1}), T3 (combined application of both wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract in a 1:1 ratio; 6+6 L ha^{-1}), T4 (hand weeding), and T5 (unweeded check-control) were the treatmentswas conducted in Randomized Complete Block Design with four replication in the crop farm of Eastern University, Sri Lanka.., effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed parameters of the cowpea cropping system as well as the growth and yield parameters of cowpea were investigated. This study used a field experimental layout of Randomized Complete Block Design with five treatments and four replications.The experiment was conducted from September to November 2022 in the crop farm of Eastern University, Sri Lanka. T1 (aqueous extract of wild sunflower; 12 L ha^{-1} ,T2 (aqueous extract of sorghum; 12 L ha^{-1}), T3 (combined application of both wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract in a 1:1 ratio; 6+6 L ha^{-1}), T4 (hand weeding), and T5 (unweeded check-control) were the treatments. Hand weeding was done on 21 and 42 DAS while application of aqueous extracts were done on 2, 21, and 35 DAS. Weed parameters, growth and yield parameters of cowpea were collected. Minitab 17 software. It was used for the statistical analysis, and Tukey's test was used to compare the treatment means. The study showedresults revealed that the various different weed control techniques treatments had a substantial ($P<0.05$) impact on cowpea's weed population & dry weight, growth, and yield of cowpea measurements. When compared to the control, hand weeding was found to be mostre effective to control weeds followed by combined application of aqueous extracts from wild sunflower and sorghum than the other treatments. A combined application of aqueous extracts from wild sunflower and sorghum proved to be more successful in suppressing weeds than the control following hand weeding. Also, hHand weeding and the combined application of aqueous extracts significantly reduced the number of weeds by 82.98% and 54.39%, respectively. Further, the hand weeding and combined application of extract significantly enhanced yield by 44.75% and 62.85% respectively in comparison with to the control (unweeded check). According to the study's findings, it can be concluded that under the condition of Sri Laka, applying a combinationcombined application of aqueous extracts wa proved to be more remunerative and

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sustainable alternate option for weed control in cowpea crop. ~~of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract instead of hand weeding would be a more environmentally friendly way to inhibit weed growth as well as increase the growth and yield of cowpea cultivation and enhance sustainable agriculture in Sri Lanka.~~

Keywords: *Allelochemicals, Aqueous extract, Cowpea, Hand weeding, Sorghum and Wild sunflower, Weed control, yield.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Sri Lanka, ~~The~~ Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp) is an important annual ~~grain~~ legume crop in the Fabaceae family [1]. ~~From~~ The area and production under this crop is 10,431.2 hectares , ~~Sri Lanka produced~~and 11,878.1 metric tons, respectively ~~of cowpea~~ [2]. In addition to providing animals with food, hay, silage, and forage, ~~cowpeas~~ it also maintain soil fertility through green manure and cover crops [3].In copea cultivation, infestation by different ~~i~~Insect pests and diseases, ~~a~~ lack of understanding of effective cultural practices, planting at a low density, low soil fertility and weeds infestation are some of the constraints ~~to yield losses~~for low yield ~~in cowpea~~ [4].

The biggest biological barrier to global agricultural productivity is weeds. Weeds and crops compete against each other for water, sunlight, nutrients, and space [5]. When compared to diseases (which account for 25% of losses) and insect pests (20%), weeds represent the most significant category of agricultural risks, accounting for over 45% of economic losses in field crops [6]. Weeds decreased cowpea and other legume crop yields in Nigeria by 53–60% [7]. *Dactyloctenium aegyptium, Eleusine indica, Gnaphalium indicum, Cyperus rotundus, Echinochloa crusgalli, and Sorghum halepense* are the main weeds in cowpea fields [8].

Weed control is a type of pest management that aims to inhibit the growth of weeds, particularly noxious weeds, in order to lessen their competition with desirable flora and fauna, such as domesticated plants and livestock, and to keep nonnative species from displacing native species in natural settings. ~~The~~ To achieve these targets five ~~categories~~ methods of weed control are preventive, physical, cultural, biological and chemical control [9].

Several herbicides are used in chemical weed control, applied both PRE- and POST-emergence. Herbicide application has shown to be the most workable, affordable, and efficient way to eradicate even harmful or difficult-to-reach weeds [9]. However, if a human were to consume herbicide, exposure to it might be quite dangerous and result in health problems. Furthermore, some pests might get ~~immune~~ resistant to pesticides, which makes it more difficult to get rid of them. The environmental contamination caused by the chemicals ~~used~~ could affect plants or groundwater.

Allelopathy, the direct or indirect effect of one plant species on another by chemical substances released into the root environment, could provide a different approach to controlling the weeds [10]. Many techniques, such as combination application with lower herbicide dosages, absorption into the soil, mix cropping/intercropping, surface mulching, and aqueous extracts, can be utilized to manage weeds in the field using allelopathic potentiality [11]. Substances with an allelopathic effect are known as allelochemicals. Allelochemicals include~~, among other substances,~~ s substances like alkaloids, benzoxazinones, derivatives of cinnamic acid, cyanogenic compounds, ethylene, and other stimulants of seed germination.

Wild sunflower (*Tithonia diversifolia* A. Gray) is an aggressive weed with high invasive capacity because it is known to exhibit allelopathy. Flavonoids, tannins, glycosides, terpenoids, saponins, alkaloids, and phenols are the constituents of the methanolic and water extracts of wild sunflower. Wild sunflower allelochemicals are utilized to control weeds of *Amaranthus cruentus, Cleome gynandra,* and *Tridax procumbens* [12].

Likewise,t~~T~~he allelopathic ~~species~~ plant s~~S~~orghum (*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench) inhibits the growth of weeds such as *Phalaris minor* Retz, *Rumex dentatus* L, *Chenopodium album* L. Benzoic acid, p-hydroxy

benzoic acid, vanillic acid, m-coumaric acid, p-coumaric acid, gallic acid, caffeic acid, ferulic acid, and chlorogenic acid are the allelochemicals found in *Sorghum bicolor* [13].Therefore, this present study was undertaken with the ~~following~~ objective to find the effect of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on ~~weed~~weeds and ~~parameters~~ growth and yield of ~~the~~ cowpea ~~cropping system as well as the growth and yield parameters of cowpea~~.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Experimental location

The field experiment was carried out in a crop farm ~~at~~ of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka from September to November 2022. It is located at the latitude of 7º 48'36.64" N and longitude of 81º ~~,~~'' 35'30.76" E~~,~~ which comes under the Agro-Ecological Zone of the Low Country Dry Zone (DL_2).

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2.2. Experimental design

The experiment consisting of five weed control treatments viz T1 (aqueous extract of wild sunflower; 12 L ha^{-1} ,T2 (aqueous extract of sorghum; 12 L ha^{-1}), T3 (combined application of both wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract in a 1:1 ratio; 6+6 L ha^{-1}), T4 (hand weeding), and T5 (unweeded check-control) was conducted in Randomized Complete Block Design with four replication in the crop farm of Eastern University, Sri Lanka. ~~A Randomized Completely Block Design with five treatments and four replications was used to set up the field trial. In the experiment T1 (aqueous extract of wild sunflower; 12 L ha^{-1}, T2 (aqueous extract of sorghum; 12 L ha^{-1}), T3 (combined application of both wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract in a 1:1 ratio; 6+6 L ha^{-1}), T4 (hand weeding), and T5 (unweeded check-control) were the treatments.~~ Hand weeding was done on 21 and 42 DAS, while, application of aqueous extracts were done on 2, 21, and 35 DAS.

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2.3. Collection of seeds

~~The experiment included the cowpea cultivar of 'Waruni' variety, and the seeds were~~The seeds of cowpea variety 'Waruni' were collected from the sales center of Crop farm, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

2.4. Aqueous extract

2.4.1. Collection of Allelopathic plants

Sorghum [*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench] plants ~~was~~ were collected from the farmers' fields ~~in the~~of district ~~of~~ Batticaloa. Wild Sunflower [*Tithonia diversifolia* (Hemsl.) A.Gray L.] plants were~~was~~ collected from ~~a~~ the c~~C~~rop farm ~~at~~ of Eastern University, Sri Lanka. Sorghum and Wild Sunflowers plants were collected after harvesting the crops in the field. All the plant samples were cleaned to remove dust and other particles. The plants of sorghum and wild sunflower were cut into small pieces and were dried in a shaded area for 7 days. The dried samples of all ~~the two species~~these plants were kept in bags and labeled

2.4.2. Preparation of aqueous extracts

One kilogram of dry herbage to ten liters of water (weight/volume, or w/v) was the ratio used to ~~generate~~ prepare aqueous extracts from chopped dry sorghum and wild sunflower herbage, which were soaked in water separately for 24 hours [14].

2.5. Agronomic practices

The land was ploughed to a depth of 15-20 cm and ~~prepared using two~~harrowed ~~harrowing after one~~twice ~~ploughing to a depth of 15-20 cm~~. ~~Following~~ After cleaning the land, 20 beds of 1.125 m^2 were prepared. The seeds of cowpea were sown at spacing of 15 cm in 30 cm apart rows. ~~and spaced 30 cm by 15 cm apart were planted with cowpea variety Waruni.~~ For ease of maintenance, 50cm was allowed between each bed and 16 planting holes spaced 30cm by 15cm apart were constructed in each bed. A total of 16 seeds were ~~planted~~ sown in each plot. The Department of Agriculture's recommendations were followed ~~when~~ while carrying out agronomic activities including fertilizer application, irrigation, and pest and disease control.

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2.6. Data Collection

Weed parameters such as weed density, weed fresh weight, weed control index, weed control efficiency, growth parameters such as germination percentage, plant height, fresh weight of shoot, dry weight of shoot, fresh weight of roots, dry weight of roots and yield parameters such as total number of pods per plant and total yield were recorded.

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2.7. Analysis of Data

Collected data were statistically analyzed using the statistical software Minitab 17, and the mean comparison within treatments was performed by Tukey's test at ~~a~~ 5 % significant level.

2.8. Calculation

$$Weed\ Control\ Index = \frac{WPC - WPT}{WPC} \times 100$$

$$Weed\ control\ efficiency = \frac{WDC - WDT}{WDC} \times 100$$

WPC = Weed population in control (unweeded) plot.

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WPT= Weed population in the treated plot

WDC = Weed dry weight in the control (unweeded) plot.

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WDT= Weed dry weight in treated plot.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Weed parameters

3.1.1. Weed density

Table 1 showed the effect of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract on weed density at 35 and 50 DAS. *Richardia scabra* L., *Cyperus rotundus* L., *Digitaria sanguinalis* L. Scop, *Phyllanthus urinaria* L., *Cleome viscosa* L., and *Mollugo cerviana* L. Ser were identified as predominant weeds during the experimental period. One unanticipated finding was that *Richardia scabra* L controlled more in aqueous extract application compared with control (unweeded check).

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Table 1. The effect of aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed density at 35 and 50 DAS.

Treatments	35 DAS	50 DAS
Wild Sunflower extract	65.00 ± 1.83^{b}	117.50 ± 1.85^{b}
Sorghum extract	67.25 ± 1.25^{b}	120.75 ± 3.90^{b}
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	55.00 ± 1.08^{c}	88.50 ± 4.05^{c}
Hand weeding	15.75 ± 2.29^{d}	33.00 ± 2.16^{d}
Control (unweeded check)	103.00 ± 3.54^{a}	194.00 ± 3.39^{a}
F-Test	*	*

DAS- Days After Sowing; The value is the average of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test~~,~~ at the 0.05 level of probability.

Weed density was significantly (P<0.05) affected by different weed control ~~methods~~ treatments when compared with the control (unweeded check) at 35 and 50 DAS. ~~The~~ Significantly lowest weed density was recorded in hand weeding and significantly highest weed density was recorded in control (unweeded check). After hand weeding, among the aqueous extract application significantly~~,~~ minimum weed density was recorded in the combined application of aqueous extracts of sunflower and sorghum followed by the alone application of aqueous extract from wild sunflower and sorghum ~~alone~~.

Hand weeding was used to achieve these results because it eliminates weeds before they become mature and start to generate seeds. Furthermore, removing weeds by hand helps to get rid of their roots, rhizomes, and other underground components like tubers and stolons. Additional aqueous extract with allelochemical properties ~~helps~~ might have helped to modify or interfere with pathways that generate plant hormones necessary for seed germination.~~;~~ T~~t~~hey might have also prevented weed seed germination by altering the permeability of the cell membrane and decreasinge the amount of water that weed seedlings take in when exposed to allelopathic stress. Additionally, they affect the photosynthetic process, cell differentiation, and metabolite concentrations required for the weeds to develop their cellular machinery [15]. The synergistic effect of two aqueous extracts in combination might have reduced the weed population~~It has not been documented what happens to weed density when sorghum and wild sunflower aqueous extracts are applied together~~. However, the results are consistent with those of Awan et al., [14] who indicated that allelopathic crop water extracts of brassica, sunflower, and sorghum in wheat significantly reduced the density of weeds.

3.1.2. Weed control index (%)

Table 2 ~~showed~~ presented the effect of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum on the weed control index at 35 and 50 DAS in cowpea. The results showed that weed control index was significantly (P<0.05) influenced by the different weed control ~~method~~ treatments when compared with control at 35 and 50 DAS. ~~The~~ Significantly highest weed control index was recorded in the ~~treatment~~ hand weeding treatment and it was followed by combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum extract. ~~The~~ Significantly lowest weed control index was recorded in unweeded plot. ~~Different~~ Among weed control ~~methods of~~ treatments, aqueous extract of wild sunflower ~~extract~~, sorghum ~~extra~~,~~ct,~~ combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract and hand weeding ~~increased~~ had the weed control index by 39.37~~%~~, 37.79~~%~~, 54.39~~%~~ and 82.98%, respectively at 50 days after sowing compared with the control (unweeded check).

Table 2. The effect of aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed control index at 35 and 50 DAS in cowpea.

Treatments	35 DAS	50 DAS
Wild Sunflower extract	36.41 ± 3.69^{bc}	33.37 ± 1.47^{c}
Sorghum extract	33.63 ± 3.42^{c}	37.79 ± 1.08^{c}
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	46.36 ± 2.54^{b}	54.39 ± 1.90^{b}
Hand weeding	84.83 ± 1.95^{a}	82.98 ±1.17^{a}
Control (unweeded check)	0.00 ± 0.00^{d}	0.00 ± 0.00^{d}
F-Test	*	*

DAS- Days After Sowing; The value is the average of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability.

It might be due ~~to~~to the fact that a larger concentration of the allelochemicals interfered with membrane permeability, photosynthesis, respiration, protein metabolism, and plant/water relationships, which significantly reduced weed growth [15].

3.1.3. Weed fresh weight (g)

Table 3 described the impact of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh weight of weeds at 50 DAS. The results revealed that the fresh weight of weeds was significantly (P<0.05) influenced when compared with the control (unweeded check). ~~The~~ Significantly lowest weed fresh weight was recorded in hand weeding and significantly highest weed fresh weight was recorded in control (unweeded check). After hand weeding, among the aqueous extracts, ~~application,~~significantly ~~minimum~~ lower weed fresh weight was recorded by all statistically similar treatments of aqueous extract applied either alone or in combination over weedy check~~in the combined application of extract followed by the application of aqueous extract from wild sunflower and sorghum alone~~.

~~Among the aqueous extract application sorghum extract showed the highest fresh weight of weeds than wild sunflower extract.~~

Table 3. The effect of aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh weight of weeds at 50 DAS.

Treatments	Weed fresh weight (g)
Wild Sunflower extract	213.02 ± 5.68 [b]
Sorghum extract	215.86 ± 3.35 [b]
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	188.85 ± 2.24 [b]
Hand weeding	30.36 ± 2.49 [c]
Control (unweeded check)	573.8 ± 73.4 [a]
F-Test	*

DAS- Days After Sowing; The value is the average of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability.

Numerically, among the aqueous extracts, sorghum extract is least effective for reducing the weed fresh weight. ~~.~~It might be due to the fact that allelochemicals from wild sunflower ~~having~~ have a greater inhibitory impact ~~in the aqueous extract of wild sunflower~~ than sorghum. These results are ~~is finding is confirmed~~ in conformity with the findings of~~by~~ Mubeen et al., [16] who reported more inhibitory effects of allelochemicals in the aqueous extract of sunflower than in sorghum.

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3.1.4. Weed control efficiency (%)

Figure 1 ~~explained~~ depicted the effect of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed control efficiency. There were significant differences (P<0.05) in the weed control efficiency when compared with the control (unweeded check) at 50 DAS. The highest weed control efficiency was reported in hand weeding than other treatments when compared with the control (unweeded check). Among the aqueous extract application, the combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum recorded significantly more weed control efficiency when compared with control (unweeded check). The treatments of wild sunflower extract, sorghum extract, combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract and hand weeding enhanced the weed control efficiency by 42.58%, 40.40%, 64.22% and 95.46% compared with the control (unweeded check).

It might be due to the fact that a larger concentration of the allelochemicals interfered with membrane permeability, photosynthesis, respiration, protein metabolism, and plant/water relationships, which significantly reduced weed growth [17]. These results are in conformity with the findings ~~reflect those~~ of Ajayi et al., [18] who also found that hand weeding had more weed control efficiency followed by the application of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract.

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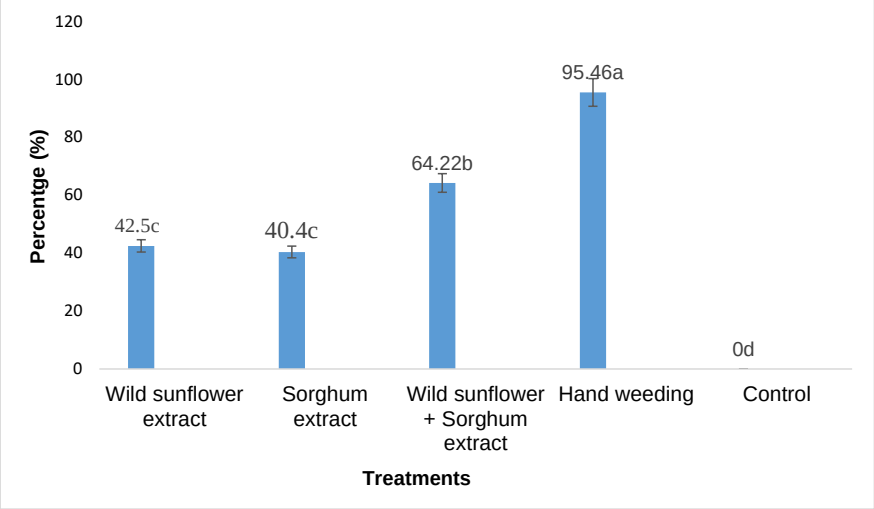

Error bar denotes a standard error of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability.

Figure 1. The effect of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed control efficiency.

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3.2. Growth parameters

3.2.1. Germination (%)

~~Table 4 described~~ T~~t~~he effect of the aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the germination of cowpea Has been mentioned in Table 4. There were no significant differences (P>0.05) among the treatments. The germination percentages ranged from 98~~%~~ to 99%.

Table 4. The effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the germination of cowpea.

Treatments	Germination (%)
Wild Sunflower extract	99.25 ± 0.75[a]
Sorghum extract	98.50 ± 0.86[a]
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	99.25 ± 0.75[a]
Hand weeding	99.25 ± 0.75[a]
Control (unweeded check)	98.50 ± 0.86[a]
F-Test	**~~ns~~NS**

The value is the average of four replicates. The letter ~~'ns'~~ 'NS' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05. The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability

Ajayi et al., [18] reported that 97% to 98% of germination was recorded using an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum in cowpea. Th~~ese~~ese ~~is~~ results ~~is~~ are consistent with that of Oyerinde et al., [19] who found that the shoot extract of wild sunflower did not have an inhibitory effect on germination on maize. Similarly, Moosavi et al., [20] recorded that utilizing sorghum leaf, stem, and root extract had no significant effects on seed germination of green gram.

3.2.2. Plant height (cm)

~~Table 5 described~~The data on the effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the plant height of cowpea have been presented in Table 5. Plant height was significantly varied (P<0.05) during 4 and 6 ~~WAP~~ WAS when compared with a control (unweeded check). ~~The~~ Significantly higher values ~~in~~ of plant height ~~was~~ were recorded ~~in~~ with statistically alike treatments of the combined application of aqueous extract and hand weedings, while, ~~and the~~significantly lowest plant height was recorded in ~~the~~a control (unweeded check) plot at 4 and 6 ~~WAP~~WAS.

Table 5. The effect of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum on the plant height of cowpea.

Treatments	4 ~~WAP~~WAS	6 ~~WAP~~WAS
Wild Sunflower extract	40.29 ± 0.45^{b}	49.98 ± 0.65^{b}
Sorghum extract	40.78 ± 0.44^{b}	50.80 ± 0.45^{b}
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	45.63 ± 0.46^{a}	54.49 ± 0.31^{a}
Hand weeding	44.26 ± 0.51^{a}	53.21 ± 0.29^{a}
Control (unweeded check)	37.27 ± 0.54^{c}	46.03 ± 0.36^{c}
F-Test	*	*

WAP- Weeks After Planting; The value is the average of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability

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These results ~~may~~ might have been achieved as a result of more effective weed management, which allowed the cowpea plants to make the best use of the available resources ~~at their availability~~, along with the nutrients present in the aqueous extract, which led to an increase in plant height. ~~This finding~~These results are ~~is~~ consistent with the findings of Ajayi et al., [18] who reported that the allelopathic effect of wild sunflower and sorghum extract did not affect crop growth negatively.

3.2.3. ~~Shoot f~~Fresh and dry weight of Coepea Shoots (g)

Figure 2 ~~described~~ depicted the effect of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh and dry weight of shoots of cowpea at 50 DAS. The fresh and dry weight of shoots ~~was~~ were significantly (P<0.05) affected by the application of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum when compared with the control (unweeded check). Among the treatments, ~~the~~ significantly highest shoot ~~and~~ fresh and dry weight were recorded ~~in~~ with the combined application of sunflower and sorghum plant extracts, and ~~the~~ significantly lowest shoot ~~and~~ fresh and dry weight were recorded in control (unweeded check).

It might be the result of ~~an~~ positive interaction between soil microorganisms and the allelochemicals in the aqueous extracts, which might have helped in more availability of ~~converted them into~~ nutrients and increased the amount of fresh and dry weight shoot production. The results of this study corroborate with the findings ~~those~~ of Oyerinde et al., [19] who found that an aqueous extract of wild sunflower greatly increased the shoot dry weight of maize, and Ajayi et al., [18] who found that an aqueous extract of sorghum and wild sunflower significantly enhanced shoot dry weight of cowpea

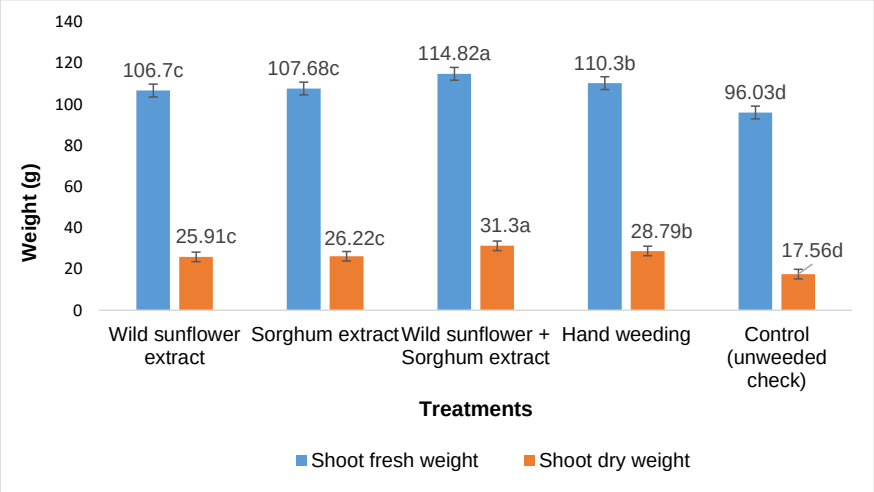

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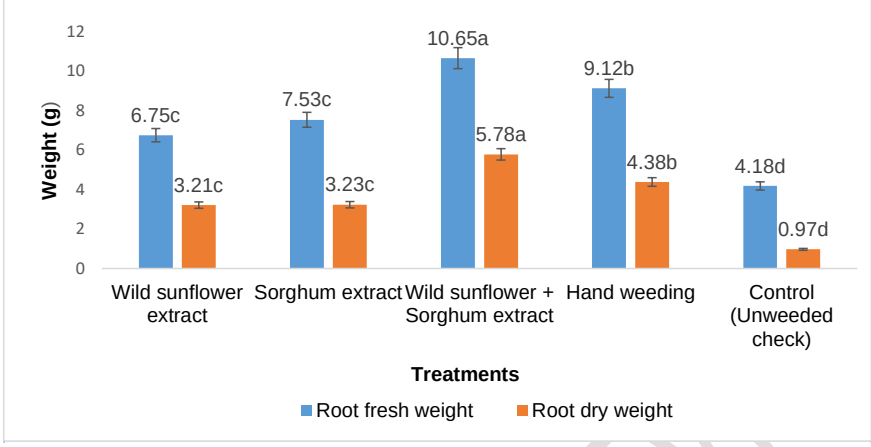
Figure 2. The effect of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh and dry weight of shoots of cowpea at 50 DAS.

3.2.4. ~~Root F~~fresh and dry weight ~~of~~ Cowpea roots (g)

~~Figure 3 described t~~The effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh and dry weight of roots of cowpea at 50 DAS has been shown in Figure 3. The fresh and dry weight of cowpearoots was significantly (P<0.05) affected by the application of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum when compared with the control (unweeded check). Among the treatments, ~~the highest~~significantly maximum shoot and fresh weight were recorded in the combined application of sunflower and sorghum extracts, and ~~the~~ significantly lowest shoot and fresh weight were recorded in control (unweeded check).

~~This result~~These results have indicated higher stimulatory effects on the root fresh and dry weight than the shoot fresh and dry weight. The result might be due to the fact that roots have direct contact with the allelochemicals applied to the soil [21].



Error bar denotes a standard error.of four replicates. The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05. The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability.

Figure 3. The effect of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the fresh and dry weight of roots of cowpea at 50 DAS.

3.3. Yield parameters

3.3.1. Pods per plant

~~Table 6 showed~~The data on the effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the number of pods per plant of cowpea have been given in Table 6. The number of pods per plant was significantly (P<0.05) affected by the aqueous extract application of wild sunflower and sorghum when compared with the control (unweeded check). ~~The highest~~Significantly maximum number of pods was recorded ~~in~~ with the combined application of sunflower and sorghum aqueous extracts followed by hand weedings, and ~~the~~ significantly lowest number of pods was recorded in the control (unweeded check) plot.

Table 6. The effect of ~~an~~ aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the number of pods per plant of cowpea.

Treatments	Pods/plant
Wild Sunflower extract	19.12 ± 0.31^{c}
Sorghum extract	19.87 ± 0.42^{c}
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	25.12 ± 0.31^{a}
Hand weeding	23.25 ± 0.14^{b}
Control (unweeded check)	15.87 ± 0.31^{d}
F-Test	*

The value is the average of four replicates. ~~The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05.~~ The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability

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These resulst might be obtained due to the fact that the aqueous extract containing the allelochemicals that aremight be responsible for controlling weeds. In addition, allelochemicals have improved the mineralization of nutrients and nutrient uptake, which led to greater nutrient absorption and an increase in the number of pods per plant [18] was recorded. This These finding results is are consistent with that the findings of Ajayi et al., [18] who reported wild sunflower leaf extract had the highest number of pods compared with the control (unweeded check) plot.

3.3.2. Total yield (kg/ha)

Table 7 described theThe data on theeffect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the total yield of cowpea have been presented in Table 7. The total yield of cowpea was significantly (P<0.05) affected by the aqueous extracts application of wild sunflower and sorghum when compared with the control (unweeded check). The treatments of wild sunflower extract, sorghum extract, combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract and hand weeding increased the total yield by 20.5%, 25.3%, 62.84% and 45%, respectively compared with the control (unweeded check).

Table 7. The effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on the total yield of cowpea.

Treatments	Total yield (kg/ha)
Wild Sunflower extract	1071.6 ± 18.7^{c}
Sorghum extract	1114.0 ± 19.7^{c}
Wild Sunflower + Sorghum extract	1447.4 ± 28.^{a}
Hand weeding	1289.6 ± 19.3^{b}
Control (unweeded check)	888.8 ± 16.2^{d}
F-Test	*

The value is the average of four replicates. The letter 'ns' denotes a difference that is not significant at the probability level of 0.05. The mean value in a column with a different letter or letters indicates that the difference is significant by Tukey's test at the 0.05 level of probability

The result might be obtained due to the fact that the aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum controlled the weed interference of thein cowpea plants during the critical period was the cause of the higher yield. According to Arif et al., [22] two foliar sprays of sorghum, sunflower, and brassica at 18 l/ha increased wheat grain yield. Ajayi et al., [18] reported that the wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extract increased the yield of crop as compared with to the unweeded check plot.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the effect of an aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum on weed parameters of the cowpea cropping system as well as the growth and yield parameters of cowpea. Different weed control techniques treatments had a substantial impact on cowpea's weed population & dry weight, growth, and yield measurementsof cowpea. Hand weeding was found to be more most successful effective for controlling weeds than the other treatments when compared to the control. After hand weeding, a combined application of wild sunflower and sorghum aqueous extracts from wild sunflower and sorghum were found to be more the effective treatment forat suppressing weeds than the control. Furthermore, hHand weeding and the combined application of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghum significantly suppressed the weeds by 82.98% and 54.39%, respectively. Furthermore, when compared to the control (an unweeded check), hand weeding and combined application of aqueous extracts of wild sunflower and sorghumextract significantly improved yield by 44.75% and 62.85%, respectively. While tThe combined application of aqueous extract increased production and served as the primary means of controlling weeds in cowpea cropping systems, but itfrom different plants did not achieve the same level of weed reduction as the traditional approachesconventional methods (herbicide and hand weeding). however, had pronounced effect in increasing the yield attribute and yield of cowpea. The From the present studyfinding, it can be concluded that will be help to add knowledge ofcombined application of

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aqueous extract of wild sunflower and sorghum could be an organic alternative to synthetic herbicides ~~in the~~for achieving acceptable weed control, better ~~and increase the~~ growth and getting higher yield ~~of~~ in cowpea, ~~cropping systems s~~since ~~they are~~it is less labor-intensive and have ~~fewer~~ no negative impacts on the environment and human health.

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