

Effect of soil and foliar application of boron on yield and economics of green gram (*Vigna radiata* L.)

ABSTRACT

A field experiment entitled "Effect of soil and foliar application of boron on yield and economics of green gram" was carried out during *Kharif* 2019-20 at ZARS, UAS, GKVK, Bengaluru. The experimental results revealed that significant variation in number of pods plant⁻¹ (25.74), number of seeds pod⁻¹ (14.48), test weight of 100 seeds (5.12 g), grain yield (10.19 q ha⁻¹), haulm yield (2.17 t ha⁻¹) and B:C ratio (1.96) were recorded in treatment T₁₀ which received soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % along with package of practice. The number of nodules plant⁻¹ (20.12) was significantly highest in treatment T₁₂ which received soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % along with RDF over absolute control (14.75).

INTRODUCTION

Pulses are least preferred by farmers because of high risk and less remunerative than cereals; consequently, the production of the pulses is significantly low to meet the demand of pulses. Majority of Indian population is vegetarian, pulses are cheap and best source of protein for Indian diet. It contains 20-25 % protein, which is more than two times of cereals (Singh and Srivastava, 2014).

Among the pulse crops, green gram (*Vigna radiata* L.) is one of the third main pulse crop in India after pigeon pea, chickpea and main source of vegetable protein as far as an Indian dietary is concerned. Green gram is rich in carbohydrates (60-62 %), protein (20-24 %), fat (1.5 %), fiber (4.0 %), ash (3.0 %) and water (10 %), mineral, vitamin A, B and ascorbic acid (Chongre *et al.* 2019). Green gram contributes about 41 lakh ha of total area and 19 lakh tonnes of production under pulse crop in our country, whereas, Karnataka covers an area of 3.97 lakh ha and producing about 0.96 lakh tonnes (Anonymous, 2018-19).

Although, green gram is well adapted to a wide range of growing conditions and soils, its cultivation is neglected by farmers because yield potential of green gram is very low due to insufficient portioning of assimilates, poor pod setting due to flower abscission, slow rate of dry

matter accumulations and attack of pest and diseases. Boron deficiency is more widespread in majority of Indian soils next to zinc. Boron deficiency is more widespread in majority of Indian soils next to zinc (Arunkumar *et al.*, 2018). Its deficiency is found approximately 33 % in Indian soils (Mondal *et al.*, 2012).

Application of boron enhance growth and yield attributes of crop including, cell division and cell elongation and meristematic tissue differentiation, cell wall formation, maintenance of structural and functional integrity of biological membranes, root elongation, sugar translocation, leaf photosynthates migration from source to sink, nitrogen fixation and nitrate assimilation, boron had a vital role in plant reproduction, germination of pollen and pollen tube growth, increase in flower count, pollination, seed set and disease resistance.

Therefore, attention should be given to boron nutrition for green gram to overcome deficiency by application of boron fertilizers at proper rate, source, method, formulations and timing of application in soil or to plants. But management of boron deficiency is a major concern because of narrow difference range between its deficiency and toxicity and total soil boron content can range from around 2 to 200 mg kg⁻¹; though only a few fraction (approximately 3 to 5 %) is available to the crops (Hou *et al.* 1994). Soil application of boron was widely followed by farmers as a basal dose along with RDF. As boron is considered as a micronutrient which receive in small amounts, other methods like foliar application and seed priming might be equally effective against as soil application and become more economic since they will require much smaller amount boron. Therefore, keeping in above facts in view, the present investigation on "effect of soil and foliar application of boron on soil properties on harvest of green gram" was carried out with the following objective: To study the effect of soil and foliar application of boron on growth and yield of green gram.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

General characteristics of experimental site

A field experiment was carried out to assess effect of soil and foliar application of boron on soil properties on harvest of green gram at zonal agricultural research station, college of agriculture (13^o 05" N latitude and 77^o 34" E longitude), GKVK, Bengaluru, Karnataka, during *Kharif* 2019-

20. The soil of the experimental site was sandy loam in texture, acidic in soil reaction (6.1), electrical conductivity (0.11 dS/m), organic carbon (0.55 %), available nitrogen (261.61 kg ha⁻¹), available phosphorus (26.31 kg ha⁻¹), available potassium (154.2 kg ha⁻¹), available Sulphur (10.36 kg ha⁻¹) and available boron (0.31 mg kg⁻¹).

Field experiment

The field experiment was conducted with twelve treatments (Table 1) in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with three replications in plot of 3.5 × 5.0 m each. The green gram crop of variety KKM 3 (Karnataka Kathalagere Moong 3) was selected for this study. Recommended dose of fertilizer (RDF) was applied at 12.5: 25: 12.5 (N:P₂O₅:K₂O kg ha⁻¹) + FYM 7.50 t ha⁻¹ + ZnSO₄ 10 kg ha⁻¹ as Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), Muriate of Potash (MOP), Zinc Sulphate (ZnSO₄), respectively.

Soil application of borax applied at the rate of 2.5, 5.0 and 7.5 kg ha⁻¹. Borax was applied as basal dose for respective plots. Required quantity of borax was thoroughly mixed along with sand to ensure even distribution of borax fertilizer throughout plot because borax was applied in lesser quantity and to reduce toxicity of borax at single location. Foliar application of boric acid at the rate of 0.05, 0.1 and 0.2 % which was sprayed at an interval of 20 DAS at branching and 35 DAS at pre-flowering and pre-pod setting stage.

The seeds are sown at 24 July 2019 and matured pods were harvested in two picking stage at 1st October of 2019 and 8th October of 2019. Intercultural and operations like hand weeding and plant protection measures were adopted uniformly in each plot as and when required. Five random plants from each net plot were labelled. Plant height and number of branches plant⁻¹ was recorded at 30 DAS, 60 DAS and at harvest crop growth stage. Number of pods plant⁻¹, number of seeds pod⁻¹, test weight of 100 seeds (g), seed yield (q ha⁻¹) and haulm yield (t ha⁻¹) were recorded at harvest but number of nodules plant⁻¹ was measured at flowering stage of green gram crop.

Table 1. Treatment details of the experiment

T ₁	Absolute Control
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T ₂	RDF (FYM 7.50 t ha ⁻¹ + NPK 12.5: 25: 25 kg ha ⁻¹ + ZnSO ₄ 10 kg ha ⁻¹)
T ₃	T ₂ + soil application of boron 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹
T ₄	T ₂ + soil application of boron 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹
T ₅	T ₂ + soil application of boron 7.50 kg ha ⁻¹
T ₆	T ₂ + foliar application of boron 0.05 %
T ₇	T ₂ + foliar application of boron 0.1 %
T ₈	T ₂ + foliar application of boron 0.2 %
T ₉	T ₂ + soil application of boron 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boron 0.05 %
T ₁₀	T ₂ + soil application of boron 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boron 0.1 %
T ₁₁	T ₂ + soil application of boron 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boron 0.05 %
T ₁₂	T ₂ + soil application of boron 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boron 0.1 %

Statistical analysis

The comparative study of experimentally collected results was carried out by implementing Fisher's system of measurement of variance as described by Gomez and Gomez (1984). The significance level used in the 'F' evaluation was offered at 5 %. Critical difference (CD) values are presented at a significance level of 5 % in the table, wherever the 'F' measure was found to be relevant at 5 %.

Results and Discussion

Yield parameters

Number of pods plant⁻¹

The mean number of pods plant⁻¹ significantly differs due to soil and foliar application of boron on green gram (Table 2). However, treatment receiving soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % along with RDF (T₁₀) shows significantly highest number of pods plant⁻¹ (25.74) and was on par with treatment T₉ (25.12), T₁₂ (24.90) and T₁₁ (24.13) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. In contrast absolute control recorded significantly lowest number of pods plant⁻¹ (15.32) being on par with treatment T₂ (16.87).

Improved vegetative growth such as number of branches plant⁻¹ provided more sites for translocation of photosynthates and ultimately resulted in higher number of pods plant⁻¹ by Praveena *et al.* (2018). Padbhushan and Kumar (2014) reported that boron helps in the flower and pollen seed formation. Similar results were observed by Dixit and Elamathi (2007), Maqbool *et al.* (2018), Singh and Srivastava *et al.* (2014) in green gram, Pandey and Gupta (2013) in black gram, Meena *et al.* (2011) and Devi *et al.* (2012) in soy bean.

Number of seeds pod⁻¹

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that, the mean number of seeds pod⁻¹ differs significantly due to effect of soil and foliar application of boron. However, treatment receiving soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % along with RDF (T₁₀) shows significantly highest number of pods pod⁻¹ (14.48) and was on par with treatment T₉ (13.91) and T₁₂ (13.23) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. While significantly lower number of pods pod⁻¹ (8.67) was recorded in absolute control and being on par with T₂ (9.30), T₅ (9.65) and T₆ (9.84) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments.

The boron application enhanced the flower count which makes stigma receptive and sticky, thereby causing pollen seed fertile and enhanced pollination leads to increased seeds pod⁻¹ by Kaisher *et al.* (2010). Padbhushan and Kumar (2014) reported that improvement in number of seeds pod⁻¹ may be due to the increase in germination percentage of seed inside the pod. Meena *et al.* (2011) stated that boron fertilization also increased the pollen producing capacity, anthesis and pollen seed viability increased number of seeds per pod in soy bean. Similar results were confirmed by Dixit and Elamathi (2007), Maqbool *et al.* (2018) and Singh *et al.* (2014) in green gram.

Test weight of 100 seeds (g)

The result distinctly indicated that, the mean test weight of 100 seeds differs significantly due to effect of soil and foliar application of boron (Table 3). Significantly, maximum test weight of 100 seeds was recorded in treatment T₁₀ (5.12 g) (T₂ +soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ +

foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %) and was on par with T₉ (5.07 g) and T₁₂ (4.93 g) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. Absolute control recorded significantly lower test weight of 100 seeds (3.70 g). Combination of soil and foliar application of boron shows superior effect than soil/foliar application of boron alone.

Increase in test weight of 100 seeds in green gram may be due to the involvement of boron in physiological and biochemical processes like membrane permeability, sugar translocation, leaf photosynthates migration from source to sink etc. Padbhushan and Kumar (2014) noticed that role of boron on pollen production capacity of anther, fertilization, viability of pollen seeds, pollen tube growth and pollen germination enhanced test weight of 100 seeds in green gram. Kaisher *et al.* (2010) concluded that enhanced pod setting and reduced the sterility of flower, thereby increase in test weight of green gram. The results are in harmony with those reported by Singh and Srivastava *et al.* (2014) and Maqbool *et al.* (2018) in green gram, Devi *et al.* (2012) in soy bean.

Number of nodules plant⁻¹

A perusal of the data (Table 2) indicated that effect of soil and foliar application of boron differs significantly on the number of nodules plant⁻¹ of green gram. Application of RDF + soil application of borax 5.00 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid 0.1 % (T₁₂) recorded significantly maximum number of nodules plant⁻¹ (20.12) and was found on par with T₁₂ (20.12) and was on par with treatment T₁₁ (19.86), T₁₀ (19.55), T₉ (19.09), T₄ (18.96) and T₇ (18.84) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. While significantly minimum number of nodules plant⁻¹ (14.75) was recorded in absolute control. Bolanos *et al.* (2014) results showed that application of boron increased nodule mass (61-90 mg dwt plant⁻¹) and nodule number (17-44) due to the stimulatory effects of boron on development and improvement of nodule.

Table 2: Effect of soil and foliar application of boron on number of pods plant⁻¹, number of seeds pod⁻¹ and test weight of 100 seeds (g), number of nodules plant⁻¹, seed yield and haulm yield of green gram

Sl. No.	Treatments	Number of pods plant ⁻¹	Number of seeds pod ⁻¹	Test weight of 100 seeds (g)	Number of nodules plant ⁻¹	Seed yield (q ha ⁻¹)	Haulm yield (t ha ⁻¹)
T ₁	Absolute Control	15.32	8.67	3.70	14.75	5.99	1.22
T ₂	RDF (FYM 7.50 t ha ⁻¹ + NPK 12.5: 25: 12.5 kg ha ⁻¹ + ZnSO ₄ 10 kg ha ⁻¹)	16.87	9.30	3.92	16.94	8.34	1.70
T ₃	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹	23.26	10.45	4.36	18.43	9.18	1.91
T ₄	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹	22.89	10.17	4.13	18.96	8.97	1.86
T ₅	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 7.50 kg ha ⁻¹	19.72	9.65	4.03	17.59	8.84	1.80
T ₆	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	21.89	9.84	4.32	17.35	9.05	1.85
T ₇	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	23.82	11.76	4.78	18.84	9.23	2.01
T ₈	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.2 %	23.44	10.83	5.11	18.23	9.17	1.99
T ₉	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	25.12	13.91	5.07	19.09	9.94	2.12
T ₁₀	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	25.74	14.48	5.12	19.55	10.19	2.17
T ₁₁	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	24.13	12.80	4.86	19.86	9.41	2.08
T ₁₂	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	24.90	13.23	4.93	20.12	9.61	2.13
S.Em±		0.65	0.50	0.08	0.56	0.31	0.06
CD 5%		1.91	1.49	0.21	1.63	0.92	0.17

Seed yield (q ha⁻¹)

The data in Table 10 showed that soil and foliar application of boron differs significantly on seed yield of green gram. Combination of soil and foliar application shows superior effect as compared to foliar/soil sole application. However, significantly higher seed yield were recorded in treatment T₁₀ (10.19 q ha⁻¹) which receive soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % along with RDF and being on par with treatment T₉ (19.86), T₁₂ (19.55) and T₁₁ (19.09) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. Absolute control (T₁) recorded significantly lowest seed yield (5.99 q ha⁻¹) and being on par with T₂ (8.34 q ha⁻¹) which receives RDF.

Foliar applied boron shows better seed yield as compared to soil application, because boron availability is more during reproductive stage and foliar application helps immediate supplementation of boron to green gram by Padbhusan and Kumar (2014). Kaisher *et al.* (2010) reported that boron improves growth parameter which ultimately enhanced photosynthesis activity, protein and carbohydrate metabolism, higher uptake of nutrients and translocation of these compounds from source to sink. Also, boron improves pollen germination, pollen tube growth; make stigma receptive helps in better yield parameters so increase in seed yield. The result is supported by Patra and Battacharya (2009), Quddus *et al.* (2011), Singh and Srivastava (2014) and Maqbool *et al.* (2018), Alam and Islam (2016) in green gram.

Haulm yield (t ha⁻¹)

Haulm yield affected significantly due to the effect of soil and foliar application of boron on green gram (Table 2). Application of RDF + soil application of borax at 2.50 t ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % (T₁₀) recorded significantly maximum haulm yield (2.17 t ha⁻¹) and was on par with treatment T₉ (19.86), T₁₂ (19.55) and T₁₁ (19.09) and differed significantly with rest of the treatments. Absolute control (T₁) recorded lowest haulm yield (1.62 t ha⁻¹).

Dixit and Elamathi (2007) witnessed that foliar application of boron (0.2 %) in green gram increased haulm yield (30.0 q ha⁻¹) when foliar application of DAP 2 % + NAA 40 ppm + B 0.2 % + Mo 0.05 % at 30 DAS over the control. These results are also confirmed Meena *et al.*

(2011), Choudhary *et al.* (2015), Mishra *et al.* (2015) and Praveena *et al.* (2018) in terms of haulm yield.

Effect of soil and foliar application of boron on economics of green gram

The economics of crop in terms of cost of cultivation, gross returns, net return and benefit cost ratio are presented in Table 3. Higher gross returns (69,292 Rs. ha⁻¹), net return (45,912 Rs. ha⁻¹) and benefit cost ratio (1.96) was found in T₁₀ which receive soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 per cent along with RDF. This may be due to the better utilization of native and soil nutrients, higher seed and biomass yield. However, minimum gross returns (40,732 Rs. ha⁻¹) and net returns (23,982 Rs. ha⁻¹) were recorded in absolute control but minimum B:C ratio (1.41) was recorded in treatment T₅ (T₂ + soil application of borax at 7.50 kg ha⁻¹). Devi *et al.* (2012) stated that application boron could enhance the yield attributes such as increasing pods on lateral branches, seed number, and overall seed yield of soybean. Maximum benefit cost ratio was obtained by increasing the yield with the application of boron at 1.5 kg per ha.

In the present investigation it was observed that, the number of pods plant⁻¹, number of seeds pod⁻¹, test weight of 100 seeds (g), seed yield, haulm yield and B:C ratio were found significantly higher in treatment (T₁₀) receiving RDF + soil application of borax at 2.50 t ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % (T₁₀) but number of nodules plant⁻¹ was significantly higher in treatment receiving RDF + soil application of borax at 5.00 t ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % (T₁₂). Based on above findings,

Conclusion

It is concluded that T₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 t ha⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 % (T₁₀) was proved to be better in yield attributes of green gram. Since, this result is based on one year experiment; further long term and multi locational experimental trial must be done to conform the finding.

Table 3: The effect of soil and foliar application of boron on economics of green gram

Sl. No.	Treatments	Cost of cultivation (Rs. ha ⁻¹)	Gross returns (Rs. ha ⁻¹)	Net returns (Rs. ha ⁻¹)	B:C
T ₁	Absolute Control	16750	40732	23982	1.43
T ₂	RDF (FYM 7.50 t ha ⁻¹ + NPK 12.5: 25: 12.5 kg ha ⁻¹ + ZnSO ₄ 10 kg ha ⁻¹)	21870	56712	34842	1.59
T ₃	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹	22880	62424	39544	1.73
T ₄	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹	23890	60996	37106	1.55
T ₅	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 7.50 kg ha ⁻¹	24900	60112	35212	1.41
T ₆	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	22120	61540	39420	1.78
T ₇	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	22370	62764	40394	1.81
T ₈	T ₂ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.2 %	22620	62356	39736	1.76
T ₉	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	23130	67592	44462	1.92
T ₁₀	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 2.50 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	23380	69292	45912	1.96
T ₁₁	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.05 %	24140	63988	39848	1.65
T ₁₂	T ₂ + soil application of borax at 5.00 kg ha ⁻¹ + foliar application of boric acid at 0.1 %	24390	65348	40958	1.68

* cost of green gram- Rs. 6800 per quintal.

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