Journal of Experimental Agriculture International

Volume 47, Issue 1, Page 325-330, 2025; Article no.JEAI.128536
ISSN: 2457-0591
(Past name: American Journal of Experimental Agriculture, Past ISSN: 2231-0606)

Effects of PGR and Media on Survivality and Growth of Papaya Seedlings

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/jeai/2025/v47i13234

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/128536

Original Research Article

Received: 16/11/2024
Accepted: 18/01/2025
Published: 20/01/2025

ABSTRACT

The study aims to explore the optimal conditions for the successful germination and growth of papaya seedlings through the application of various growth media and plant growth regulators. Papaya is a tropical fruit with significant economic and nutritional importance, and its successful propagation is crucial for improving crop yields and enhancing profitability for farmers. The research investigates how different plant growth regulators such as auxins, cytokinins, and gibberellins, in combination with various growth media, influence the germination rate, seedling vigor, and post-

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Cite as: *Pareek, Sharmila, Puspha Yadav, Vaibhav Yadav, Dinesh Pareek, Farjana Mugal, Neetu, and Naresh Kalia. 2025. "Effects of PGR and Media on Survivality and Growth of Papaya Seedlings". Journal of Experimental Agriculture International 47 (1):325-30. https://doi.org/10.9734/jeai/2025/v47i13234.*

transplant survival rate of papaya seedlings. By conducting controlled experiments, the study seeks to determine the most effective treatment combinations that result in enhanced seedling growth, improved germination percentages, and higher survival rates after transplanting. Through the statistical analysis of the data, the research provides valuable insights into the physiological responses of papaya seedlings to different growth conditions. The findings from this study not only contribute to the development of more efficient and sustainable papaya cultivation practices but also offer broader implications for the propagation of other economically important crops.

Keywords: Carica papaya L.; growth media; plant growth regulators; seedling growth; vermicompost; gibberellic acid; naphthalene acetic acid; seedling vigor; survival percentage.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's diverse climatic conditions have nurtured a thriving fruit industry, making it a major contributor to the country's economy. Fruits, rich in essential nutrients and vitamins, are vital components of a balanced diet and have gained significant prominence in the global market.

According to recent data, India's fruit production has continued to rise. In 2021-2022, the country produced an estimated 320 million tons of fruits, solidifying its position as the world's second-largest fruit grower. This significant increase from previous years is a testament to the industry's growth and the government's efforts to promote fruit cultivation.

Papaya remains a key export for India, with the country maintaining a dominant global market share of around 44%. Other fruits, such as mangoes, grapes, bananas, and pomegranates, are also exported to various countries, contributing to India's agricultural exports. The fruit industry has not only provided economic benefits but has also played a crucial role in improving rural livelihoods. It has generated employment opportunities, particularly for small-scale farmers and women, leading to rural development and poverty reduction. While India remains the leading producer, other countries like Brazil, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, and Ethiopia have also made strides in expanding their papaya cultivation.

Factors such as climate change, market demand, and technological advancements can influence production levels and market shares. (NHB, India). The fruit of the papaya plant is 15-50 cm in length and 10- 20 cm in thickness. The fruit which are produced by the female is generally round or ovoid while the one produced by hermaphrodite, develops an elongated and cylindrical fruit. The immature fruit has greenish or white flesh which contains white milky latex. However, when the fruit matures, it changes to reddish-orange and contain small, black, ovoid seeds (Sharma and Pooja, 2023; Kumar et al., 2023).

A molecular study looks for, characterizes, and assesses the genetic diversity of a desired genotype. The technique offers several advantages over conventional techniques and has become an essential tool for the study, conservation and improvement of plant species. The study of genetic diversity is done by DNA based markers for identification, development of genotypes.

Applying plant growth regulators (PGRs) and choosing the right growth medium can have a big impact on papaya (*Carica papaya* L.) seedling growth and germination. Understanding these factors can help optimize conditions for successful papaya cultivation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Three replications were included in the Completely Randomized Design (CRD) setup for the investigation. There were 150 polybags in each of the ten treatments (Table 1), and each polybag contained one "Red Lady" seedling variety.

- **Seedling height**

From each treatment, ten seedlings were chosen at random and given permanent tags. At 30 and 45 days following planting, the level of the labeled seedlings was estimated utilizing a meter scale, and the mean plant level was determined by averaging the levels of ten randomly picked seedlings.

Table 1. Treatment symbols

Treatment	Symbols
Vermicompost + Soil (2:1)	T_1
Soil + Vermicompost (2:1) + GA3 @ 150 ppm seed soaking	T_2
Soil + Vermicompost (2:1) + 50 ppm of NAA soaked in the seeds	T_3
Copaceat + Soil (2:1)	T_4
Soil + Cocopeat (2:1) + 150 ppm GA3 soaking of seeds	T_5
Soil + Cocopeat (2:1) + 50 ppm NAA soaking of seeds	T_6
Vermiculite + Soil (2:1)	T_7
Soil + Vermiculite (2:1) + 150 ppm of GA3 soaking for seeds	T_8
Soil + Vermiculite (2:1) + 50 ppm NAA soaking for seeds	T_9
Control (Soil)	T_{10}

- **Number of roots**

At the hour of relocating, ten randomly chosen seedlings from every treatment had their foundations counted.

- **Root length**

Utilizing a meter scale, the root length of 10 randomly chosen papaya seedlings was estimated 45 days in the wake of sowing, starting from the place where the roots began to the tip, in centimeters. The average length of the roots was then determined.

- **Survival percentage**

By transferring the seedlings into the field, the survival percentage of papaya seedlings was measured. Each treatment was applied to five plants, and the survival rate up to ten days following transplanting was computed using the following formulas:

$$\text{Survival \%} = \frac{\text{Total number of survival seedlings}}{\text{Total number of transpanted seedlings}} \times 100$$

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- **Height of Seedling (cm)**

The information in Table 2 and Plate C showed that, at 30 and 45 days after papaya seedling sowing, there was a huge impact on seedling height from different growth media and plant growth controllers. Except for treatment T6, which stayed at standard at the two phases, growth media and plant growth controllers recorded essentially higher seedling height at 30 and 45 DAS. At 30 and 45 DAS, separately, the expansion in plant height of papaya seedlings under T3 was recorded as being 88% and 74% higher than that of T10 plants.

- **Roots Number**

Table 3's data showed that, compared to the other treatments, treatment T3 had a noticeably greater number of roots per plant than the others, with the exception of treatment T6, which stayed at par. But under treatment T10, or soil, the fewest amount of roots were noted. The treatment T3 showed a 50.20 percent increase in the number of roots per plant.

This might be due to combination of this media provided better condition like aeration and porosity for proper growth and development of seedlings leads to increase number of leaves. These results were in close agreement with Ramteke et al. (2015) in papaya when they used cocopeat as ingredients of growing media.

- **Length of Root (cm)**

The root length data shown in Table 3 and Plate B made it abundantly evident that the papaya seedling treatment T3 at 45 days after sowing had the longest roots. However, treatment T10 recorded the least. With the exception of treatment T6, which was statistically equivalent to treatment T3, treatment T3 turned out to be noticeably better than the other treatments.

It might be due to the cocopeat provides adequate nutrients and enhances both the physical and biological properties and the water holding capacity of soil (Soegiman, 1982).

Table 2. Impact of growth media and controllers on papaya seedling height

Treatments		Height of Seedling(cm)	
		30DAS	45 DAS
T_1	Vermicompost + Soil (2:1)	8.9	11.5
T_2	Soil + Vermicompost (2:1) + GA3 @ 150 ppm seed soaking	10.3	13.9
T_3	Soil + Vermicompost (2:1) + 50 ppm of NAA soaked in the seeds	11.2	15.6
T_4	Copaceat + Soil (2:1)	8.6	11.6
T_5	Soil + Cocopeat (2:1) + 150 ppm GA3 soaking of seeds	9.8	14.0
T_6	Soil + Cocopeat (2:1) + 50 ppm NAA soaking of seeds	11.2	10.2
T_7	Vermiculite + Soil (2:1)	7.7	11.9
T_8	Soil + Vermiculite (2:1) + 150 ppm of GA3 soaking for seeds	7.7	13.4
T_9	Soil + Vermiculite (2:1) + 50 ppm NAA soaking for seeds	8.9	9.01
T_{10}	Control (Soil)	6.0	3.8
	S. Em±	2.3	3.6
	CD (P =0.05)	6.3	1.11

Table 3. Growth media and plant growth controllers influence papaya seedling root amount and length

Treatments	Roots Number	Length of Root (cm)
T_1	15.2	8.2
T_2	16.9	9.5
T_3	18.7	10.9
T_4	15.6	8.3
T_5	16.6	9.5
T_6	18.0	10.5
T_7	13.4	8.0
T_8	14.9	8.5
T_9	16.1	9.6
T_{10}	12.5	6.3
S.Em ±	0.31	0.26
CD	0.88	0.80

Table 4. Plant growth regulators and growth media affect papaya survival 10 days after transplanting

Treatments	Survival (%)
T_1	85
T_2	90
T_3	92
T_4	88
T_5	90
T_6	92
T_7	82
T_8	83
T_9	86
T_{10}	74
S.Em ±	2.1
CD	4.7

These results were also in conformity with the finding of Kumawat et al. (2014) in papaya when they used cocopeat as ingredients of growing media.

- **Survival percentage**

The statistics (Table 4) show that the survival percentage of papaya seedlings in the field after ten days was considerably increased by the application of growth media and plant growth regulators. Treatment T3 had the highest survival rate, whereas treatment T10 had the lowest. Although T3 was shown to be statistically comparable to treatments (T2, T4, T5, and T6), it was much better than T10.

It might be due to soil and cocopeat is improved soil texture, structure, porosity, water holding capacity, activity of useful soil micro fauna and flora, maintained soil temperature and improved soil health and nutrient status of medium (Hartmann and Kester, 1997).

Similar results were also obtained by Bhardwaj (2014) and Ramteke et al. (2015) in papaya.

4. CONCLUSION

The experiment illustrated that the utilize of different growth media and plant growth regulators altogether affected the development parameters and survival rate of papaya seedlings. Among the treatments, (T3) consistently resulted in superior outcomes, including the highest seedling height, number of roots, root length, and survival percentage. Specifically, the T3 treatment showed an 88% and 74% increase in seedling height over the control (T10) at 30 and 45 days after sowing, respectively. Additionally, T3 recorded a 50.20%

higher number of roots and significantly longer root length compared to the control. The survival percentage of seedlings under T3 was also the highest, underscoring the effectiveness of combining vermicompost and NAA in promoting robust seedling growth and establishment. These results suggest that integrating organic media with appropriate growth regulators can substantially enhance the early growth and survivability of papaya seedlings, thereby potentially improving overall crop productivity.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/128536