



Evaluation of the impact of nutritional treatments on the biochemical and physiological factors in *Eryngium planum*

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Nutrition is an essential factor in plants' growth and the chemical composition of medicinal herbs. Using natural fertilizers can enhance the performance and medicinal properties of plants. The present experiment was conducted to evaluate the influence of nutritional treatments on the biochemical and physiological factors in *Eryngium planum* in a greenhouse in Talesh using a randomized complete block design over three iterations in 2020-2021. The studied treatments included 1. The control treatment, 2. Recommended chemical fertilizer, 3. 500mg/l humic acid fertilizer, 4. 800mg/l humic acid fertilizer, and 5. Chemical and humic acid fertilizers. Results revealed significant differences between the fertilizer treatments at 1% and 5% significance levels in terms of all the studied traits. The highest values for the traits of plant height, wet and dry plant weight, number of grains, number of umbels, weight per 1000 grains, essential oil percentage, linalool percentage, and gamma-terpinene percentage were observed in the chemical and humic acid fertilizers and the recommended chemical fertilizer treatments. The recommended chemical treatment fertilizer led to a 35%, 23%, and 52% increase in the traits of wet weight, dry weight, and weight per 100 grains, while the chemical and humic acid fertilizers treatment yielded the higher essential oil and linalool percentages at 0.28 and 53.67, respectively. Results suggested that the use of the recommended chemical fertilizer led to the highest values in many qualitative and quantitative traits, but the humic acid fertilizer had a favorable performance as an alternative for the recommended chemical fertilizer.

Keywords: *Eryngium planum*, biochemical and physiological factors, nutritional treatments

INTRODUCTION

Medicinal plants are among the important sources of pharmaceuticals that have been long used by humans and are increasing in importance. Currently, around 80% of the developing countries are using medicinal herbs in their primary healthcare services (Gedif & Hahn, 2002). According to WHO, the medicinal plant trade will amount to over five billion dollars by 2050 (Gholamin and Khayatnezhad 2020, Karasakal, Khayatnezhad et al. 2020, Bi, Chen et al. 2021, Hou, Li et al. 2021, Huang, Wang et al. 2021). The use of natural ingredients from medicinal plants instead of synthetic additives that have side effects has recently become more popular (Paradiso et al., 208). *Eryngium planum*, also known as the blue eryngo or *Eryngium caucasicum* Trautv is a species native to the north of Iran and is among the medicinal herbs with little-known potential (Gholamin and Khayatnezhad 2020, Jia, Khayatnezhad et al. 2020, Chen, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021, Liu, Wang et al. 2021, Li, Khayatnezhad et al. 2022). This plant has various horticultural and medicinal applications and is among the medicinal herbs used as a Diuretic, painkiller, appetite stimulant, and antioxidant. This plant goes by the Persian name of "Shesh Shakh", and is known as "Zoolang" in Mazandaran, "Shishak" in

Shahsavari, and "Sjousjakh" in Ramsar which is the local phrase for "Shesh Shakh." it is also called Chouchagh or Anar chouchagh in Gilan and "Qarsana Masdas" in Arabic. Some also called it Biveza (Gholamin and Khayatnezhad 2020, Karasakal, Khayatnezhad et al. 2020, Si, Gao et al. 2020, Cheng, Hong et al. 2021, Guo, She et al. 2021, Sun, Lin et al. 2021). Many medicinal thorns that include over 10 species are called Qarsana in Iranian traditional medicine, but when used as an absolute term, it refers to this fragrant plant. Chouchagh contains an abundance of compounds such as folic acid and limonene, which is why it can improve iron deficiency anemia significantly (Lima et al., 2004 and 2014). Fertilizer management is an important factor in the success of medicinal herb cultivation. Using bio-fertilizers in the cultivation of the plants seeking to remove or significantly reduce chemical inputs and improve soil fertility and plant growth and quality is of utmost significance (Gholamin and Khayatnezhad 2020, Khayatnezhad and Gholamin 2020, Ma, Ji et al. 2021, Ma, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021, Peng, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021). The presence of adequate nutrition in the soil plays an essential part in the yield of medicinal plants and crops (Dadvand Sarab et al., 2009)/ most producers have turned to chemical fertilizers to

increase the agricultural production per unit area, assuming that the more fertilizer they use, the greater the yield will be (Khayatnezhad and Gholamin 2020, Gholamin and Khayatnezhad 2021, Shi, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021, Wang, Shang et al. 2021, Tao, Cui et al. 2022, Wang, Khayatnezhad et al. 2022). These fertilizers harm the physio-chemical properties of soil over the long term, distress the roots of the plants because of the reduced soil permeability, and will eventually result in a reduced yield. On the other hand, they reduce the quality of agricultural products and cause environmental problems and groundwater pollution (Mehrafarin et al., 2011). The use of chemical fertilizers causes ecological damages in many cases, which increases the production costs in turn (Khayatnezhad and Gholamin 2021, Li, Mu et al. 2021, Ren and Khayatnezhad 2021, Yin, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021, Zhang, Khayatnezhad et al. 2021). Therefore, it appears necessary to use inputs that meet the nutritional needs of the plants while improving the ecological aspects of the system and reducing environmental risks (Ahmad et al., 2013). Moreover, using biological and organic fertilizers increases the medicinal quality of the medicinal plants, which is why many herbal medicine companies prefer herbal compounds obtained from biodynamic or organic cultivation (Khayatnezhad and Gholamin 2021, Sun and Khayatnezhad 2021, Wang, Ye et al. 2021, Zhu, Liu et al. 2021, Wang, Ma et al. 2022). Today's organic agriculture cares about the quality and sustainability of the products just as much as the production quantity. Still, chemical fertilizers cannot be abruptly cast aside from the agricultural systems since sustainable agriculture entails food security and adequate income. In this regard, not only does the use of organic and chemical fertilizers together reduce the use of chemical fertilizers, but it also reduces the environmental pollution, improves the physical features of soil, and increases their absorbance by the plants (Khayatnezhad and Nasehi 2021, Xu, Ouyang et al. 2021, Zhang, Khayatnezhad et al. 2022). Higher consumption of the inputs –specifically chemical fertilizers- is among the essential components of increasing agricultural yield; however, the increased consumption of chemical fertilizers over the recent decades has led to severe environmental problems. On the other hand, the risk of negative impacts resulting from the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and toxins on the quality and quantity of the active ingredients in medicinal plants has led many pharmaceutical companies to prefer herbal compounds obtained from biodynamic or organic cultivation (Gewaily et al., 2006). Thus, other fertilizer sources that have lower costs and destructive effects on the environment would be better substitutes for these fertilizers. Non-chemical (biological and organic) fertilizers are among the healthy, convenient, and cheap available fertilizing sources that have been considered in sustainable systems (Nehvi et al., 2009). Among the ecologically sound fertilizers, humic acid is an organic acid that has no destructive impacts on the environment and

improves the physical, chemical, and biological structure of the soil while leaving significant positive impacts on the qualitative and quantitative agricultural crops due to its hormonal compounds (Zhao, Wang et al. 2021, Zheng, Zhao et al. 2021, Zhu, Saadati et al. 2021). Humic acid is a natural organic polymer compound generated as a result of decay in peat, lignin, and organic matter in the soil which increases crop quality and yield (Ghorbani et al., 2010).

The hormonal effects and improved absorption of the nutrients which increase yield –especially when put under stress- are among the other impacts of humic acid resulting from humus and other natural resources and growth-stimulate bacteria (Gzik, 1996). Sensei et al. (2006) believed that as a part of the organic matter in the soil, humics result from the chemical, physical, and biological transformations of the biological molecules and are classified into the three categories of humic acid, fulvic acid, and humin based on their solubility. Humic acid makes up the majority of humics (Abdi 2021, Alizadeh 2021, Karasakal 2021, Karasakal 2021, Mohammadzadeh 2021, Radmanesh 2021). Nowadays, increasing agricultural production is cost-convenient thanks to the use of acid humic which is used directly in the soil or through spraying (Gad El-Hak et al., 2012). Spraying humic acid on green tea plant is reported to have resulted in increased plant height, stem diameter, number of secondary branches, wet and dry leaf and branch weight, number of fruits, wet and dry sepal weight, grain yield, and total anthocyanin content (Chamani et al., 1391). Research on organic cultivation aimed at clean production with favorable yield has gained more importance due to the importance of medicinal herbs in ensuring public health. The evaluation of various plant nutrition systems is thus necessary. The present experiment was conducted to evaluate the impact of nutritional treatments on the biochemical and physiological factors in *Eryngium planum* medicinal herb in Talesh County.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out to evaluate the influence of nutritional treatments on the biochemical and physiological factors in *Eryngium planum* in a greenhouse in Talesh using a randomized complete block design over three iterations in 2020-2021. The studied treatments included 1. The control treatment, 2. Recommended chemical fertilizer, 3. 500mg/l humic acid fertilizer, 4. 800mg/l humic acid fertilizer, and 5. Chemical and humic acid fertilizers. For this purpose, pots with a height of 30cm and a diameter of 30cm were selected and filled with soil from a farm, and 10 *Eryngium planum* seeds were cultivated in each pot in March 2021. After the first two leaves emerged, three plants were kept in each pot after thinning. The fertilizer treatments were applied after the emergence of the first four leaves. Fertilizer treatments were applied over four stages and at 10-day intervals. The humic acid treatment was applied through a solution in the

irrigation water with concentrations of 500 and 800 mg/l and was sprayed over four stages. The humic acid used in the present study contained 15% humic acid and 2% folic acid. Drop care was observed throughout the growing season. At the full flowering stage, one plant was harvested from each pot and the other two were kept in the pot for grain yield purposes. The present study examined the traits of plant height, wet and dry plant weight, number of grains, number of umbels, weight per 1000 grains, essential oil percentage, linalool percentage, and gamma-terpinene percentage. The statistical analysis conducted in the study included variance analysis and simple correlation coefficients using SPSS-16 and MSTAT-C and Minitab-15 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 demonstrates the results of variance analysis. Results revealed significant differences between the fertilizer treatments at 1% and 5% significance levels in terms of all the studied traits, which was consistent with the results of Gardner et al. (1985), Scott et al. (1988), and Rezvani Moghaddam et al. (2013).

Results of comparing the mean values of the studied traits (Table 2) indicated that treatment with chemical and humic acid fertilizers resulted in the highest plant height at 40.49cm which was 46.73% higher than the control plants (Table 2). The use of humic acid and chemical fertilizer together seems to have simulated growth and increase plant height through the faster release of nutritional elements. Moreover, since the microorganisms in biofertilizers can increase the permeability of the root cells and stomatal resistance through the section of various plant hormones, they appear to have positive impacts on the general growth and water relations of the plants (Rezvani Moghaddam et al., 2013). The correlation between the evaluated traits under the influence of various fertilizer treatments indicated that plant height has a positive and significant relationship with the traits of dry plant weight, number of grains, weight per 1000 grains, and linalool percentage (Table 3).

In terms of the dry and wet plant weight, the recommended chemical fertilizer treatment yielded the highest mean values of 60.92 and 5.87 gr/plant while the control treatment yielded the lowest mean values of 39.98 and 4.52 gr/plant, respectively. Results also indicated that treatment with the recommended chemical fertilizer resulted in a 35% increase in wet and 23% increase in dry weight compared to the control treatment (Table 2). Among the reasons for the increased wet plant weight, one can mention the provision of better physiological conditions for the plant to absorb nutritional elements and suitable environmental conditions for adequate access to nutritional elements as a result of using other studied fertilizers (Karimijalilehvandi et al., 2017). On the other

hand, the dry plant weight increased as a result of using humic acid compared to the control treatment. Humic acid fertilizer appears to improve plant growth alongside other growth factors such as indole butyric acid, indole acetic acid, gibberellic acid, macro and microelements, vitamins, and amino acids (Shahbaz et al., 2015). The correlation coefficients of the studied traits under the influence of fertilizer treatment indicated that wet plant weight had significant relationships with the number of umbels, weight per 100 grains, and essential oil percentage. Dry plant weight was also revealed to have significant relationships with the number of umbels, number of grains, weight per 1000 grains, and gamma-terpinene percentage (Table 3). In terms of the number of umbels and grain, treatment with recommended chemical fertilizer had the best results averaging 11.9 and 90.70, while the control treatment had the lowest results at an average of 7.5 and 60.58, respectively (Table 3). Al-Khayyat (2014) and Amran (2014) reported similar results for the two plants of *Pelargonium graveolens* and *Rosmarinus officinalis*. Treatment with the recommended chemical fertilizer yielded the highest weight per 100 grains at an average of 7.27gr, which indicated a 52% increase compared to the control treatment. Overall, the presence of adequate nutrients in the soil improves the nutritional state of the plant, the efficiency of photosynthetic conversion of material into dry material, and –as a result- grain number and weight (Mukesh et al., 2013). The growth of grains as important economic storage includes a set of growth stages including cell division and storage and storage of photosynthetic material. Higher grain weight and weight per 100 grains are due to the increased photosynthetic material, which was probably because of the impact of the growth hormones present in the humic acid treatment on cell division (Vijayanand et al., 2014). The significance of a medicinal herb depends on the active ingredients produced in its medicinal parts, and vastly different results have been reported regarding the influence of nutrients on the composition of essences in medicinal plants. A nutrient resource can increase some essential oils and reduce the others. Results of the present study indicated that the essential oil and linalool percentages were the highest in the treatment with recommended chemical fertilizer followed by chemical and humic acid fertilizers at 0.28% and 83.67%, respectively (Table 2) which is consistent with the results of Mostafa (2015) in the case of fennel, Badran et al. (2007) in the case of cumin, El-Gate et al. (2012) in the case of Indian Fennel, and Dadkhah (2012). A significant and positive relationship was observed between the number of umbels and the traits of weight per 1000 grains, the number of grains, and essential oils (Table 3).

Table 1: Results of analysis of variance of evaluated traits s

Source	df	Mean of Squares								
		Plant height	Fresh plant weight	Dry weight of the plant	Number of umbrellas	Number of seeds	Weight of 1000 seeds	Percentage of essential	Percentage of linalool	Percentage of gamma-terpinene
Replication	2	2.077	0.143	9.01E ⁻⁵	0.07	0.007	0.0005	6.09E ⁻⁷	0.002	0.01
Fertilizer treatment	7	136**	165.3**	0.749**	8.642**	469.6**	2.761**	0.004**	22.94**	0.295**
Error	14	0.803	0.248	0.027	0.084	1.701	0.024	6.94E ⁻⁵	2.608	0.014
C. V %		2.73	0.99	3.07	2.92	1.66	2.45	3.49	3.21	2.33

* and ** Significantly at p < 0.05 and < 0.01, respectively.

Table 2: Comparison of the mean of the evaluated traits under the influence of fertilizer treatments

fertilizer treatments	Plant height	Fresh plant weight	Dry weight of the plant	Number of umbrellas	Number of seeds
Control (no fertilizer)	21.57 ^d	39.98 ^d	4.52 ^c	7.50 ^d	60.58 ^c
Chemical fertilizer	35.29 ^b	60.92 ^a	5.87 ^a	11.90 ^a	90.70 ^a
Humic acid 500 mg/lit	32.26 ^c	49.51 ^c	5.39 ^b	9.52 ^c	74.50 ^b
Humic acid 800 mg/lit	34.67 ^b	50.19 ^c	5.40 ^b	9.57 ^c	75.15 ^b
Chemical fertilizer + humic acid 500 mg / liter	40.49 ^a	51.15 ^b	5.57 ^{ab}	11.18 ^b	90.44 ^{ab}

Different letters indicate a significant difference using the test (Duncan).

Table 2 continue

fertilizer treatments	Weight of 1000 seeds	Percentage of essential	Percentage of linalool	Percentage of gamma-terpinene
Control (no fertilizer)	4.77 ^d	0.17 ^c	45.70 ^c	4.50 ^b
Chemical fertilizer	7.27 ^a	0.28 ^a	50.55 ^{ab}	5.24 ^a
Humic acid 500 mg/lit	6.14 ^c	0.21 ^b	50.54 ^{ab}	5.15 ^a
Humic acid 800 mg/lit	6.31 ^c	0.22 ^b	50.18 ^b	5.20 ^a
Chemical fertilizer + humic acid 500 mg / liter	6.96 ^b	0.23 ^b	53.67 ^a	5.24 ^a

Different letters indicate a significant difference using the test (Duncan).

Table 3: Correlation coefficients of the evaluated traits under the influence of fertilizer treatments

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Plant height 1	1								
Fresh plant weight 2	0.718	1							
Dry weight of the plant 3	.881*	.953*	1						
Number of umbrellas 4	0.867	.936*	.956*	1					
Number of seeds 5	.905*	0.87	.922*	.988**	1				
Weight of 1000 seeds 6	.917*	.932*	.983**	.987**	.974**	1			
Percentage of essential 7	0.716	.993**	.935*	.948*	.890*	.933*	1		
Percentage of linalool 8	.978**	0.624	0.818	0.814	0.869	0.857	0.615	1	
Percentage of gamma-terpinene 9	.936*	0.82	.950*	0.852	0.84	.923*	0.785	.891*	1

*, ** Significant at the level of five and one percent probability

In terms of the gamma-terpinene content, the control treatment had the lowest content at 4.5%, while the other treatments yielded similar results (Table 2). Gamma-terpinene content was revealed to have significant and positive relationships with plant height, dry plant weight, weight per 1000 grains, and linalool content (Table 3), which is consistent with the results of Hassan (2015).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one can infer that the use of humic acid and chemical fertilizer together increased the quality and quantity of *Eryngium planum* product compared to the control treatment (no fertilizer). Although chemical fertilizer had a greater impact, the global approach in medicinal plant production is more inclined to improve the active ingredients in terms of quality and quantity. Healthy

nutrition of these plants through organic fertilizers such as acid humic appear to be the most consistent with the goal behind the production of medicinal herbs. Considering the irreparable damages that chemical fertilizers impose on the environment, the use of humic acid fertilizer can be a way to protect the environment and human health

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared that present study was performed in absence of any conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper was from my own master thesis.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Masoud Radmanesh conducted, planned, Analyzed the data, wrote manuscript and interpreted the results and involved in manuscript preparation. All authors read and approved the final version.

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