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EFFECT OF NITROGEN FERTILIZATION AND GROWTH REGULATORS ON DELONIX REGIA SEEDLINGS GROWN IN SANDY SOIL

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ABSTRACT: A pot experiment was carried out at the Fac. of Agric. Nursery, Minia Univ. to explore the response of *Delonix regia* seedlings to three nitrogen fertilization rates (10, 20 and 30 g/plot of ammonium sulphate (20.5 % N) and seven growth regulator treatments (0, GA₃ at 50, 100 and 150 ppm and IAA at 25, 50 and 75 ppm).

The studied vegetative growth characters (plant height, stem thickness, crown diameter, number of leaves and dry weight of leaves, stem and roots) were gradually increased parallel to the increase in N fertilization rate. A similar trend, in response to N fertilization was observed for total chlorophylls content (a + b) and nitrogen % in the leaves. Concerning growth regulators, both GA₃ and IAA effectively induced different vegetative growth traits and chemical determinations, except, for stem thickness, total chlorophylls and N % which were reduced due to GA₃. The effectiveness of either GA₃ or IAA was parallel to its concentration. The best growth of *Delonix regia* seedlings was achieved by supplying the plants with the high N fertilization rate (30 g/pot) along with either GA₃ at 150 ppm or IAA at 75 ppm.

Key words: *Delonix regia*, nitrogen fertilization, growth regulator, vegetative growth, chlorophylls content.

INTRODUCTION

Planting suitable, nice-looking, extending canopy, long-last flowering of ornamental shade trees along the roads, streets and avenues, in addition to their use in public gardens and parking lots is extensively needed. One of the most popular and widely cultivated shady and ornamental trees in Egypt is *Delonix regia* (royal poinciana). It is a rapid-growing, medium-sized deciduous tree characterized with ideal horizontal canopy branching, vegetative coverage with showy large red flowers from early summer to late autumn.

Many authors insured the role of nitrogen fertilization in augmenting the different vegetative growth aspects,

photosynthetic pigments and/or N % such as Ali et al. (2002), Ahmed et al. (2005), Booth (2008); Havilckova (2009) and Balasus et al. (2010) on poplar; Abdou and El-Sayed (2002) on Peltophorum africanum; Soliman (2005) on Khaya senegalensis; El-Morshedy (2007) on Grevillea robusta; Moustafa (2008) on Chorisia speciosa and Osman and Abo hassan (2010) on mangrove. However, that of GA₃ was reported by Ahmed (1998) on Robinia pseudoacacia; Ahmed and Aly (1998) and Mohammad (2003) on Acacia (2001) saligna; Sayed on senegalensis; Abdou (2001) on Jacaranda ovalifolia; Badran et al. (2006a and 2006b) jojoba and Ibrahim (2007)Koelreuteria paniculata. Meanwhile, that of IAA was revealed by Taha (1994) on Parkinsonia aculeata. Nanda et al. (1996) and Zaky (2003) on Hibiscus rosa-sinensis; El-Sallami and Mahrous (2000) on poinsettia; Abdou (2001) on Jacaranda ovalifolia; Badran et al. (2003) on Acacia saligna and Ibrahim (2007) on Koelreuteria paniculata.

The goal of this experiment was to determine the response of $Delonix\ regia$ seedlings, grown in sandy soil, to N fertilization rate and GA_3 and IAA concentrations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This trial was conducted at the Nursery of Fac. of Agric., Minia Univ. during 2016 and 2017 successive seasons to explore the response of *Delonix regia* seedlings to 3 nitrogen fertilization rates (10, 20 and 30 g/pot of ammonium sulphate (20.5 % N %) and seven growth regulator treatments (0, GA₃ at 50, 100 and 150 ppm and IAA at 25, 50 and 75 ppm).

One year old seedlings (average of 80 cm height and 8 mm thickness) were planted in 30 cm clay pots filled with 12 kg of sandy soil on the first week of March 2016 and 2017 for both seasons. A complete randomized block design in split plot arrangement with four replicates and five plants/replicate was followed in this trial where the three N fertilization rates represent the main plots and the seven growth regulator treatments represent the sub-plots.

Amounts of nitrogen fertilizer were divided into four equal batches and added

two months from planting date with four weeks interval. Concerning growth regulator treatments, they were foliar sprayed three months after planting date and repeated four times with three weeks interval. In addition, each plant was supplied with 10 g calcium superphosphate 15.5 % P_2O_5 and 5 g potassium sulphate 48 % K_2O , which were divided into two equal batches and added with the first and second additions of nitrogen fertilization.

At the end of the experiment on the first week of October 2016 and 2017, data were recorded for plant height (cm), stem thickness (10 cm above soil surface), crown diameter, number of leaves/plant and dry weight of leaves, stem and roots/plant. In addition, total chlorophylls content (mg/g. f.w.) and nitrogen % in the leaves were determined according to Fadl and Seri-Eldeen (1978) and Page *et al.* (1982), respectively. Obtained data were tabulated and statistically analyzed following the L.S.D. method expressed by Little and Hill (1978).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vegetative growth characters:

The different vegetative growth traits included in the present experiment, plant height, stem thickness, crown diameter, number of leaves and dry weight of leaves, stem and roots were gradually increased parallel to the gradual increase in nitrogen fertilization rate, in both seasons as illustrated in Tables (1, 2 and 3).

Table a. Physical and chemical analysis of the used soil.

Properties	Values	Pı	3.90 0.20	
Sand (%)	91.0	P mg/100 (g)		
Silt (%)	5.8	Exchangeable K ⁺ 1		
Clay (%)	3.2		Fe	1.20
Organic matter (%)	0.08	DTPA	Cu	0.43
CaCO ₃ (%)	12.7	Ext. (ppm)	Zn	0.21
pH (1:2.5)	8.15		Mn	0.40
E.C. mmhose/cm	1.09			
Total N (%)	0.02			

Table 1. Effect of N fertilization and growth regulators on some vegetative growth traits of *Delonix regia* seedlings during 2016 and 2017 seasons.

	Nitrogen fertilization levels (g/pot) (A)							
Growth regulator treatments (B)	1 st season (2016)				2 nd season (2017)			
treatments (b)	10	20	30	Mean (B)	10	20	30	Mean (B)
			Plant	height (cm)				
Control	110.4	114.7	117.6	114.2	119.5	123.7	127.2	123.5
GA ₃ 50	120.2	125.8	130.1	125.4	132.0	134.5	141.3	135.9
GA ₃ 100	130.1	137.3	142.3	136.6	143.5	146.7	153.2	147.8
GA ₃ 150	151.8	160.1	165.1	159.0	156.3	160.6	167.5	161.5
IAA 25	115.2	120.5	123.9	119.9	122.5	129.2	133.2	128.3
IAA 50	119.0	125.4	130.3	124.9	129.1	136.4	139.0	134.8
IAA 75	123.7	130.4	133.8	129.3	136.0	143.2	145.2	141.5
Mean (A)	124.3	130.6	134.7		134.1	139.2	143.8	
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 7.8	B: 1	12.9	AB: 22.3	A: 8.8	B: 13.5		AB: 23.4
			Stem th	ickness (mm)				
Control	11.4	11.9	12.6	12.0	12.2	13.0	13.8	13.0
GA ₃ 50	10.9	11.4	11.9	11.4	11.3	11.8	12.4	11.8
GA ₃ 100	10.6	11.1	11.5	11.1	10.6	11.3	11.7	11.2
GA ₃ 150	10.0	10.5	11.3	10.6	10.3	10.7	11.4	10.8
IAA 25	11.8	12.3	12.9	12.3	13.0	14.0	14.6	13.9
IAA 50	12.3	12.8	13.4	12.8	13.5	14.6	15.5	14.5
IAA 75	12.7	13.2	13.8	13.2	14.3	15.0	15.7	15.0
Mean (A)	11.4	11.9	12.5		12.2	12.9	13.7	
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 0.8	B:	1.0	AB: 1.7	A: 0.7	B:	1.1	AB: 1.9
			Crown	diameter (m)				
Control	1.49	1.60	1.78	1.62	1.60	1.71	1.81	1.71
GA ₃ 50	1.96	2.11	2.32	2.13	2.15	2.22	2.40	2.26
GA ₃ 100	2.03	2.19	2.42	2.22	2.24	2.34	2.50	2.36
GA ₃ 150	2.15	2.31	2.60	2.35	2.35	2.39	2.60	2.45
IAA 25	1.79	1.88	1.96	1.88	1.80	1.85	2.11	1.92
IAA 50	1.86	1.90	2.08	1.95	1.90	1.96	2.20	2.02
IAA 75	2.02	2.13	2.39	1.18	2.03	2.15	2.39	2.19
Mean (A)	1.90	2.02	2.22		2.01	2.09	2.29	
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 0.12	B: 0	0.17	AB: 0.29	A: 0.10	B: 0	0.12	AB: 0.20

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Table 2. Effect of N fertilization and growth regulators on some vegetative growth traits of *Delonix regia* seedlings during 2016 and 2017 seasons.

-	Nitrogen fertilization levels (g/pot) (A)								
Growth regulator treatments (B)	1 st season (2016)				2 nd season (2017)				
treatments (b)	10	20	30	Mean (B)	10	20	30	Mean (B)	
		Nu	mber of l	eaves/plant	(g)				
Control	60.4	64.1	66.3	63.6	66.0	69.3	72.5	69.3	
GA ₃ 50	70.1	76.2	80.4	75.6	75.3	80.3	85.4	80.3	
GA ₃ 100	80.2	88.6	92.2	87.0	86.3	93.2	98.5	92.7	
GA ₃ 150	100.8	110.5	114.0	108.4	104.4	110.2	115.4	110.0	
IAA 25	86.4	90.8	94.7	90.6	92.3	97.3	98.6	96.1	
IAA 50	90.1	94.5	100.6	95.1	94.3	98.6	100.7	97.9	
IAA 75	94.9	100.3	104.8	100.0	97.6	102.4	105.3	101.8	
Mean (A)	83.3	89.3	93.3		88.0	93.1	96.7		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 4.8	B: 7.	7	AB: 13.3	A: 4.8	В	: 8.8	AB: 15.2	
		Lea	ves dry v	veight/plant	(g)				
Control	57.8	62.0	63.7	61.2	60.2	63.4	68.0	63.8	
GA ₃ 50	59.6	64.2	67.3	63.7	66.6	68.3	71.3	68.7	
GA ₃ 100	65.2	70.7	73.3	69.7	73.2	78.0	78.7	76.6	
GA ₃ 150	70.1	76.7	78.5	75.1	80.6	84.0	84.1	82.9	
IAA 25	72.6	76.4	79.1	76.1	75.3	80.5	81.7	79.2	
IAA 50	75.7	79.5	83.9	79.7	76.8	82.0	85.4	81.4	
IAA 75	78.4	85.0	85.6	83.0	79.7	85.8	88.0	84.5	
Mean (A)	68.5	73.5	75.9		73.2	77.4	79.6		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 4.0	B: 6.	3	AB: 10.8	A: 4.1	В	: 6.1	AB: 10.5	
		St	em dry w	eight/plant ((g)				
Control	22.3	26.8	28.4	25.8	22.7	28.3	31.5	27.5	
GA ₃ 50	25.1	30.1	32.4	29.2	26.7	31.7	34.4	31.0	
GA ₃ 100	27.2	31.7	32.9	30.6	31.7	34.6	37.1	34.4	
GA ₃ 150	30.5	34.7	36.1	33.8	32.3	36.9	39.9	36.4	
IAA 25	27.4	32.7	33.5	31.2	29.1	35.0	35.5	33.2	
IAA 50	30.6	33.4	34.8	32.9	31.8	35.7	37.1	34.9	
IAA 75	31.1	35.7	37.2	34.7	32.1	36.1	38.4	35.8	
Mean (A)	27.7	32.2	33.6		29.5	34.0	36.3		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 3.0	B: 4.	6	AB: 8.0	A: 3.1	В	: 4.1	AB: 7.1	

Table 3. Effect of N fertilization and growth regulators on roots dry weight/plant, total chlorophylls content and leaves nitrogen percentage of *Delonix regia* seedlings during 2016 and 2017 seasons.

	Nitrogen fertilization levels (g/pot) (A)								
Growth regulator treatments (B)	1 st season (2016)				2 nd season (2017)				
a cathents (D)	10	20	30	Mean (B)	10	20	30	Mean (B)	
		Ro	ots dry w	eight/plant (g)				
Control	109	115	119	114	118	123	128	123	
GA ₃ 50	116	127	131	125	134	140	144	139	
GA ₃ 100	129	134	136	133	140	146	152	146	
GA ₃ 150	137	139	140	141	145	152	158	152	
IAA 25	138	141	144	141	147	152	156	152	
IAA 50	141	144	146	144	151	161	162	158	
IAA 75	146	151	152	150	154	168	170	164	
Mean (A)	131	136	138		142	149	153		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 6	B: 1	3	AB: 23	A: 9	В	: 14	AB: 25	
	To	otal chloro	phylls co	ntent (a + b)	(mg/g f.w.	.)			
Control	2.94	3.35	3.73	3.34	3.02	3.18	3.37	3.19	
GA ₃ 50	2.91	3.21	3.57	3.23	2.99	3.11	3.22	3.11	
GA ₃ 100	2.78	3.06	3.41	3.08	2.96	3.06	3.12	3.04	
GA ₃ 150	2.53	2.81	3.08	2.80	2.92	2.97	3.02	2.97	
IAA 25	3.04	3.47	3.85	3.45	3.05	3.21	3.31	3.19	
IAA 50	3.14	3.58	4.04	3.57	3.09	3.27	3.37	3.24	
IAA 75	3.25	3.70	4.16	3.70	3.12	3.35	3.45	3.31	
Mean (A)	2.94	3.31	3.69		3.01	3.16	3.27		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 0.21	B: 0.2	26	AB: 0.45	A: 0.13	B:	0.18	AB: 0.31	
		Lea	aves nitro	gen percenta	ige				
Control	2.73	2.86	2.92	2.84	2.23	2.26	2.31	2.27	
GA ₃ 50	2.64	2.84	2.89	2.79	2.11	2.22	2.26	2.20	
GA ₃ 100	2.58	2.73	2.81	2.71	1.99	2.05	2.14	2.06	
GA ₃ 150	2.41	2.71	2.78	2.63	1.73	1.88	2.05	1.89	
IAA 25	2.78	2.89	2.94	2.87	2.31	2.42	2.47	2.40	
IAA 50	2.81	2.90	2.96	2.89	2.38	2.50	2.56	2.48	
IAA 75	2.86	2.93	2.98	2.92	2.43	2.55	2.60	2.53	
Mean (A)	2.69	2.84	2.90		2.17	2.27	2.34		
L.S.D. at 5 %	A: 0.15	B: 0.	17	AB: N.S.	A: 0.11	B:	0.13	AB: N.S.	

Moreover, the high fertilization rate (30 g/pot) gave the significantly highest values than the low one (10 g/pot), for all seven examined parameters. In agreement with these results were the findings of Ali *et al.* (2002), Ahmed *et al.* (2005), Booth (2008), Havilackova (2009), Balasus *et al.* (2010) on poplar; Abdou and El-Sayed (2002) on *Peltophorum africanum*; Soliman (2005) on *Khaya senegalensis*; El-Morshedy (2007) on *Grevillea robusta* and Moustafa (2008) on *Chorisia speciosa*.

Concerning growth regulators, all of the prementioned growth traits, except for stem thickness were gradually increased due the gradual increase in the concentration of either GA₃ or IAA in comparison with control treatment in the two seasons, (Tables 1, 2 and 3). Significant differences were obtained with the high concentration (150 ppm for GA₃ and 75 ppm for IAA) giving the best results. Stem diameter, on the other hand, was reduced by GA₃ but increased by IAA. In accordance with these findings regarding GA₃ were those reported by Ahmed (1998); Ahmed and Aly (1998), Sayed (2001), Abdou (2001), Badran et al. (2006a) and Ibrahim (2007) on Robinia pseudoacacia, Acacia saligna; Khaya senegalensis, Jacaranda ovalifolia, jojoba and Koelreuteria paniculata, respectively. The role of IAA in enhancing the different vegetative growth characters was revealed by Nanda et al. (1996) and Zaky (2003) on Hibiscuss rosa-sinensis. El-Sallami and Mahrous (2000) on poinsettia, Abdou (2001) on Jacaranda ovalifolia, Badran et al. (2003) on Acacia saligna and Ibrahim (2007) on Koelreuteria paniculata.

The interaction between N fertilization and growth regulator treatments was significant for all seven growth characters, with the best overall results being obtained due to the high N rate (30 g/pot) in combination with either the high GA₃ or IAA concentration (150 or 75, respectively) as shown in Tables (1, 2 and 3).

Chemical composition:

Total chlorophylls content and nitrogen % in the leaves were promoted upward by the gradual increase in N fertilization rate with the high rate (30 g/pot) giving the highest values, in both seasons, which were significantly better than the low rate, (Table, 3). Similar results were given by Abdou and El-Sayed (2002), Soliman (2005), Morshedy (2007), Moustafa (2008) and Osman and Abohassan (2010)on africanum, Peltophorum Khaya senegalensis, Grevillea robusta, Chorisia mangrove respectively, speciosa and concerning chlorophylls content. However, Ali et al. (2002), Ahmed et al. (2005) and Balasus et al. (2010) on popular; Soliman (2005) on Khaya senegalensis and Moustafa (2008) on Chorisia speciosa insured the role of N fertilization in increasing leaves N %.

(3) Table illustrates that both chlorophylls content and nitrogen % were decreased by GA₃ but increased by IAA application. Such reduction and promotion was gradual parallel to the increase in the concentration of either growth regulator in the two seasons. Different authors such as Ahmed (1998) on Robinia pseudoacacia; Ahmed and Aly (1998) and Mohammed (2003) on Acacia saligna; Badran et al. (2006b) on jojoba and Ibrahim (2007) on Koelreuteria paniculata pointed out that chlorophylls content and N % were decreased due to GA₃ application. Our results concerning the promotive influence of IAA on chlorophylls and N % were in agreement with those of Taha (1994), Abdou (2001), Zaky (2003), Badran et al. (2003) and Ibrahim (2007) on Parkinsonia aculeate, Jacaranda ovalifolia, Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, Acacia saligna and Koelreuteria paniculata, respectively.

The interaction between N fertilization and growth regulator treatments was significant for leaves N % in both seasons with the best results being obtained due to the high N rate in combination with the high IAA concentration as shown in Table (3).

The role of nitrogen fertilization in different stimulating the aspects of vegetative growth and chemical constituents are due to its essentiality as a constituent of the protoplasm. More available nitrogen supply would allow the meristematic system to be more active, consequently, stimulating plant height and diameter and increasing fresh and dry weights of leaves, stem and roots, (Devlin, 1975). Concerning GA3 and IAA, both are among the naturally occurring plant growth hormones as Weier et al. (1974) demonstrated that gibberellins control stem elongation through effects on both cell division and cell elongation in the subapical region. They also promote the synthesis of special enzymes, induce flowering and overcome dormancy. Kramer and Kozlowski (1960) mentioned that indole acetic acid causes elongation of shoot cells, stimulates cambial activity, causes initiation of root primordia and formation of callus tissues.

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تأثير التسميد النتروجينى ومنظمات النمو على شتلات البوانسيانا النامية في الأراضي الرملية

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تم إجراء تجربة أصص بغرض التعرف على إستجابة شتلات البوانسيانا لثلاثة معدلات من التسميد النتروجيني (١٠، ٢٠ جرام سلفات الأمونيوم للأصص) وسبعة معاملات لمنظمات النمو (كنترول وحمض جبريليك بتركيزات ٥٠، ٢٠، ٢٠ جزء في المليون وإندول حامض الخليك بتركيزات ٢٥، ٥٠، ٢٥ جزء في المليون).

حدثت زيادة تدريجية في الصفات الخضرية تحت الدراسة وهي طول النبات وسمك الساق وقطر التاج وعدد الأوراق والوزن الجاف للأوراق والساق والجذور تبعا للزيادة في معدل التسميد النتروجيني وقد وجد نفس الإتجاه كإستجابة للتسميد النتروجيني فيما يختص بالكلوروفيلات الكلية ونسبة النتروجين في الأوراق. وفيما يتعلق بمنظمات النمو فقد حدثت زيادة في كل الصفات الخضرية والتقديرات الكيماوية نتيجو استعمال حامض الجبريليك واندول حامض الخليك ، فيما عدا صفة سمك الساق ومجموع الكلوروفيلات ونسبة النتروجين والتي إنخفضت نتيجت إستعمال حامض الجبريليك. ولقد لوحظ أن كفاءة كل من منظمي النمو كانت تزداد بإزدياد التركيز. ولقد تم الوصول الفضل نمو من شتلات البوانسيانا نتيجة إمداد تلك الشتلات بالمعدل العالي من التسميد النتروجيني (٣٠ جرام/للإصيص) مع إستعمال حاض الجبريليك بتركيز ١٥٠ جزء/مليون أو إندول حامض الخليك بتركيز ٥٠ جزء/مليون.