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## Efficacy of coir waste compost and urea at different levels on the incidence of sheath blight of rice

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*Lentinus connatus* treated coir waste and urea at all levels significantly reduced the intensity of sheath blight, when compared with *Pleurotus sajor-caju*. The treatments coir waste compost (*L. connatus*) at 18.5 t + urea at 60 kg N/ha and composted coir waste (*L. connatus*) at 15.5 t/ha + urea at 60 kg N / ha were found superior and significantly reduced the intensity of sheath blight (3.00 and 3.52), compared to the existing fertilizer recommendation of 12.5t composted + 120 kg N/ha, where maximum disease intensity of sheath blight (9.75). The similar trend was also observed with *P. sajor - caju*. The treatments were significantly reduced the disease intensity of sheath blight (5.60 and 6.20) caused by *R. solani*.

**Key words:** *Lentinus connatus*, *Pleurotus sajor-caju*, coir waste, urea, phosphorus, potassium, *Rhizoctonia solani*

### Introduction

In India, vast quantities of renewable agro and agro-industrial wastes are generated every year. More than half of the total produce from the land remains unused as wastes (Zadrazil, 1984). The abundant availability of these crop residues, the problems associated with its disposal, the associated environmental pollution problem and the physio-chemical characteristics of these materials attracted the attention of technologists in finding productive use of these crop residues. The current boom in inorganic fertilizer prices and low availability of organic manures, limit the use of these viable source of nutrients in agriculture. There have been many reports of studies on the bioconversion of lignocellulosic materials into a potential biomanure (Anderson, *et al.*, 1971; Zadrazil, 1975; Beg, *et al.*, 1986). Efficient degradation of complex lignocellulosic wastes by *Pleurotus* spp. largely depends upon the synergistic action of extracellular enzymes like cellulases and lignases. These enzymes

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have been reported to narrow down the C:N ratio in various organic residues, indicating the better rate of lignocellulosic degradation (Sheeba, *et al.*, 1999; Singh and Griensven, 2000). Hence, soil application of such a degraded crop residues improves the nutritional status of the soil and suppresses soil borne pathogens (Rajan, 1980; Sheela, 1992). In a search for an efficient biodegrader for the production of high quality biomanure, the present study was undertaken to probe the potentially of a new mushroom fungus viz., *Lentinus connatus* Berk., isolated from the dead woods of cashew (Lakshmanan, 2002) on comparison with existing biodegrader.

## Materials and methods

### *Preparation of substrates for composting*

The substrates viz., paddy straw, sugarcane trash and sugarcane bagasse were chopped off 5 to 10 cm length. The substrate coir waste was used without chopping. They were solar dried for 5 - 6h. Enough water was added to make it sufficiently moist (40 - 50%). The moisture held in substrate was calculated by gravity method (Piper, 1966).

### *Method of composting*

Heap method of composting described by Manickam *et al.* (1980) was followed. For composting 20 kg of moist substrate, 20 g fungal culture (*L. connatus* / *P. sajor caju*) and 100 g urea were used. Two kg of substrate was spread uniformly (75 x 45 cm) in a shaded place and 4 g of fungal culture (*L. connatus* / *P. sajor caju*) was sprinkled over it. This was to be alternated with 2 kg of substrate and 20 g of urea. The alternate layers of substrate + culture and substrate + urea were stacked upto the height of 1m. Substrate only with *L. connatus* / *P. sajor- caju* were also maintained for comparison .The heap was allowed to degrade for a month. For each substrate/Commonly grown rice cultivar ADT - 36, was sown in peat trays (10x20x40 cm). Four weeks after germination, the seedlings were transplanted to 10 cm dia earthen clay pots filled with 4 kg of clay soil at 3 seedlings per pot. Before transplanting, 50% of the total inorganic nitrogen and 100% of the total P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>O and coir waste composted by *L. connatus* / *P. sajor-caju*, were applied at basal separately. On 45<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> day after transplanting, the remaining 50% of total inorganic nitrogen was applied in two split doses. Three replicated pots for each fertilizer dose / composted coir waste (*L. connatus* / *P. sajor-caju*), were maintained in a randomized complete block design. Treatments were performed a ratio of fertilizer dose (ha) as compost:N:P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>:K<sub>2</sub>O as follows:- T1= 12.5 t : compost :120 kg : 38 kg : 38 kg, T2= 12.5t:90 kg:38 kg:38 kg, T3= 12.5 t: 60 kg:38

kg:38 kg,T4= 15.5 t : 90 kg:38 kg:38 kg, T5=15.5 t:60 kg:38 kg:38 kg, T6= 18.5 t: 90 kg: 38 kg : 38 kg , and T7= 18.5 t:60kg:38 kg:38 kg.

### ***Artificial inoculation and preparation of inoculum***

A rice grain mixture (cv.ADT 36) consisting of 2/3 filled grains and 1/3 chaffy grains and weighing 30 g in a 100 ml Erlenmeyer flask, after overnight presoaking in fresh water. After autoclave sterilization at 151b pressure for 2 h, the flask was inoculated with a 9 mm disc of 10-day-old PDA culture of *Rhizoctonia solani*. They were incubated at 25 ±3°C for 15 days and then used for inoculation (Amin *et al.*, 1974).

### ***Method of inoculation***

Inoculation was done at active tillering phase, for *R. solani*. Rice seedlings were artificially inoculated by inserting the single rice grain culture (15 day-old), being placed inside base of the sheath enclosing culm.

### ***Disease intensity***

Individual tillers were assessed at 3 day intervals for fungal disease infection on a 0-9 scale, using Standard Evaluation System for Rice Diseases (Anon, 1981).

### ***Results***

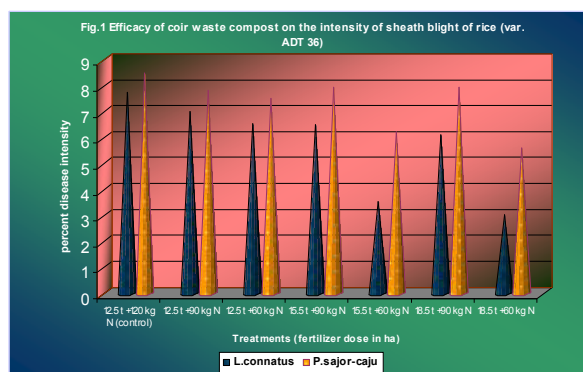
The results on the disease intensity of sheath blight due to the application of coir waste composted by *L. connatus*, *P. sajor - caju* and urea, at different levels are presented in Table 1. Among the mushroom fungi, *L. connatus* treated coir waste and urea at all levels significantly reduced the intensity of sheath blight, when compared with *P. sajor- caju*. The treatments coir waste compost (*L. connatus*) at 18.5 t + urea at 60 kg N/ha and composted coir waste (*L. connatus*) at 15.5 t/ha + urea at 60 kg N / ha were found superior and significantly reduced the intensity of sheath blight (3.00 and 3.52), compared to the existing fertilizer recommendation of 12.5t composted + 120 kg N/ha, where maximum disease intensity of 9.75 (sheath blight). The other treatments were on par with existing recommendation. The similar trend was also observed with *P. sajor - caju*. The above said best treatments also significantly reduced the disease intensity of sheath blight (5.60 and 6.20). The earlier treatments not

significantly reduced the disease intensity and on par with existing recommendation (Fig.1).

**Table 1.** Efficacy of coir waste compost on the intensity of Sheath blight of rice var. ADT 36.

S. No.	Fertilizer doses ( ha)	* <i>L. connatus</i>	* <i>P. sajor-caju</i>
		Sheath blight*	Sheath blight*
1.	1 2.5 t+ 120 kg N (control)	7.75	8.50
2.	12.5 t + 90 kg N	7.00	7.81
3.	12.5t + 60kgN	6.52	7.50
4.	15.5t + 90kgN	6.48	7.95
5.	15.5t + 60kgN	3.52	6.20
6.	18.5t + 90kgN	6.12	7.92
7.	18.5t + 60kgN	3.00	5.60
	CD (P = 0.05)	1.74	1.60

\* Disease intensity on 0-9 scale



**Fig. 1.** Efficacy of coir waste compost on the intensity of sheath blight of rice var. ADT 36.

## Discussion

It is well known that lignocellulosic crop residues are the most abundant naturally occurring polymers in the biosphere. Fungi are unique among microorganisms in that they secrete a variety of extracellular enzymes to degrade lignocellulosic materials. Decomposition of lignocellulosic residues is rated as the most important event in the carbon cycle of the earth (Bannett and Faison, 1997). Efficient degradation of lignocellulosic materials by these fungi leads to a number of great economic importance. *Pleurotus* spp. is well known white rot basidiomycotina that produces lignocellulolytic enzymes to degrade complex of lignocellulosic residues, makes their use as an alternative method and presently used to overcome and reduce environmental pollution.

### ***Coir waste compost on rice disease management***

The current inorganic fertilizer prices and low availability of organic manure like farm yard manure, poultry manure etc., and their bulky need, limit the use of these available sources of nutrients in Agriculture. Use of coir waste, which is available in huge quantities, composted with mushroom fungi have *been* reported to improve the nutritional status of the soil and reduced various plant diseases (Rajan, 1980; Theradimani and Marimuthu 1992; Sheela, 1992). Increased in rice yield and significant reduction of major disease of rice by the application of 15.5 or 18.5 t of coir compost (*L. connatus*) and urea at 60 kg N per ha, might be due to low inorganic nitrogen and high organic crop residue supplementation. Increased inorganic nitrogen appears to influence disease potential than inoculum potential and hence, high inorganic nitrogen level leads to the out break of fungal disease. Conversely, organic residues at high level decrease disease intensity, even though the population of the pathogen is very high (Nash and Synder, 1962; Huber and Watson, 1974). Moreover incorporation of coir waste composted by *L. connatus* which contained high amount of minerals might also an important role in the reduction of diseases intensity and improvement of yield (Agrios, 1997).

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