The Effects of Peat and Sand Amended Spent Mushroom Compost on Growing of Tomato

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Abstract: In this study, the effects of peat and sand amended spent mushroom compost (SMC) on growing of tomato (Lycopersicon esculentum Mill. cv. H 2274.) were investigated, and 100% Peat and SMC, mixtures of SMC with 25%, 50%, 75% Peat, and 50% SMC + 25% Peat + 25% Sand and 50% Peat + 25% SMC + 25% Sand were used as growing media. Plant growing in SMC mixing with peat and sand was compared with 100 % Peat as control. 25% P + 75% SMC was ascertained the most appropriate mixture for plant growing in SMC mixtures. Shoot and root dry weights of control was found higher than other treatments. There was no statistical difference among 100% SMC, 50% Peat + 50% SMC and 75% Peat + 25% SMC whereas sand significantly negatively affected plant growth (P< 0.01).

Key Words: Spent mushroom compost, peat, sand, plant growth medium, tomato

Introduction

Turkey, especially, Mediterranean Region has a large horticultural potential because of ecological conditions. However, present production with respect to quality and income level is lower than other countries because of unsolved cultivation problems in greenhouses (Abak and Çelikel, 1994). The objective of this study was to evaluate the growing of tomato in different SMC mixtures with peat and sand.

Material and Method

SMC used in trial are consisted of decomposed wheat, horse manure, chicken manure, urea, gypsum and lime. It has known that SMC with high salt content has negatively affected on plant growing (Lemaire et al., 1985). For this reason, SMC was leached at the early of trial and electrical conductivity (EC) was decreased to 1.94 dSm-1 from 9.2 dSm-1. Coarse sand (S) and native peat (P), taken from Bolu-Yeniçağa were used in trial (Baran and Ataman, 1995).

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Tomato seeds (*Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill. cv. H2274) used in trial were rooted into a medium which contains 50 % peat + 50 % perlite and then were potted in 6.9 liter (20 cm diameter x 22 cm deep) containers. Trial was arranged separately in a randomised complete-block design with four replications of all seven treatments under greenhouse condition. SMC and peat were screened through a 6.35 mm sieve and containers filled those materials as follows:

100 % peat (Control)
50 % peat + 50 % SMC
75 % peat + 25 % SMC
25 % peat + 75 % SMC
50 % peat + 25 % SMC + 25 % sand
25 % peat + 50 % SMC + 25 % sand
100 % SMC

Initially, it was applied to each container 100 ppm N, 150 ppm P and 200 ppm K as (NH4)2SO4, triple super phosphate and K2SO4, respectively. In addition, 100 ppm N was applied to all containers after one month from putting.

All mixtures were analysed for dry bulk density, aeration capacity (AC), easily available water (EAW) and water buffering capacity (WBC) (De Boodt et al., 1973), organic matter (DIN 11542), pH and EC in saturation paste (Lucas et al., 1972). The roots were washed according to Böhm (1979) and Anova was used for assessing statistical significance. After growing periods of two months, shoot part of plants were harvested and roots were washed, and shoot and root dry weights of plants were determined.

### Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that 100 % peat, 100 % SMC and mixture of 25 % peat + 75 % SMC are appropriate for physical properties as growing media in accordance with De Boodt and Verdonck (1972). It was reported that EC of 2-4 dSm⁻¹ in saturation paste desirable range for most of the plants (Kirven, 1986). Thus, it can be considered there is no salt problem of mixtures, pH value of SMC was over 7.0 therefore mixtures with SMC were over desirable level.

As nutrient contents of media were examined there were considerable differences in mixtures especially, in potassium content. Michigan State University reported optimal values of NO₃⁻-N, P and K in saturated media extract (SME) are 100-199 ppm, 6-10 ppm and 150-249 ppm, respectively. However, optimal values for those elements are reported as 100-175 ppm, 8-14 ppm and 175-225 ppm by Ohio State University, and 80-139 ppm, 3-13 ppm and 110-179 ppm by University of Georgia (Kirven, 1986). As we compare our findings with above mentioned values, K was found insufficient in 100% Peat, otherwise 100 % SMC has much K than desirable levels. There is no data about soluble NH⁺4-N content in SME. Acceptable ammonium amount in root zone of tomato grown in Rockwool medium is lower than 9 ppm (Sonneveld, 1992).

Shoot and root dry weights of plants were given Table 2. It can be seen that the highest yield of shoot dry weight (SDW) and root dry weights (RDW) were found in 100 % peat (Control). SDW decreased with increasing levels of SMC compare with control. There was no statistically difference between 75 % peat + 25 % SMC, 50 % peat + 50 % SMC and 100 % SMC (P< 0.01). 25 % peat + 75 % SMC differed from these treatments. Sand also extremely decreased SDW in mixtures.

### Table 1. Some physical and chemical properties of mixtures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixtures</th>
<th>pH</th>
<th>EC dSm⁻¹</th>
<th>Org. Mat. %</th>
<th>NO₃⁻ ppm</th>
<th>NH₄⁺ ppm</th>
<th>P ppm</th>
<th>K ppm</th>
<th>AC v/v</th>
<th>EAW %</th>
<th>WBC g/cm³</th>
<th>Dry bulk density g/cm³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% P</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>62.07</td>
<td>193.44</td>
<td>35.64</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% P + 25% SMC</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>57.01</td>
<td>125.24</td>
<td>45.60</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% P + 50% SMC</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>52.01</td>
<td>147.52</td>
<td>37.44</td>
<td>7.16</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% P + 75% SMC</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>49.62</td>
<td>154.04</td>
<td>52.64</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>18.29</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% P + 25% SMC +25% S</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>18.19</td>
<td>111.96</td>
<td>25.92</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% P + 50% SMC +25% S</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>20.17</td>
<td>135.57</td>
<td>19.80</td>
<td>12.19</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>10.66</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.657</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% SMC</td>
<td>7.89</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>46.54</td>
<td>124.00</td>
<td>61.56</td>
<td>24.92</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Changes in shoot and root dry weights of tomato plant grown in mixtures (g/pot).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixtures</th>
<th>Shoot dry weight</th>
<th>Root dry weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% P</td>
<td>16.90 a</td>
<td>1.64 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% P + 25% SMC</td>
<td>14.92 c</td>
<td>1.02 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% P + 50% SMC</td>
<td>13.88 c</td>
<td>0.96 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% P + 75% SMC</td>
<td>18.62 b</td>
<td>1.26 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% P + 25% SMC + 25% S</td>
<td>10.05 d</td>
<td>0.57 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% P + 50% SMC + 25% S</td>
<td>8.43 d</td>
<td>0.58 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% SMC</td>
<td>14.89 c</td>
<td>0.98 b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LSD(P<0.01): 1.80 0.35
The most suitable media dealing with physical characteristics were determined as 100% Peat, 25%+75% SMC, respectively, and crop yield was in accordance with this order. Crop yield difference in 100% SMC mixture, has similar physical characteristics, may result from high potassium level in 100% SMC that can bring about inequilibrium with regard to uptake of plant nutrients in medium (Wang et al., 1984). As the rate of SMC rose, RDW has decreased in all SMC added treatments. Control values are the highest in RDW similar to SDW. There was no statistical difference among 75% peat + 25% SMC, 50% peat + 50% SMC, 25% peat + 75% SMC and 100% SMC (P< 0.01). Decreasing of RDW was found more intensively in sand added mixtures.

Maher (1988) reported that composted SMC was more effective than fresh SMC for plant growing and, he found that the best mixture was three parts peat and one part SMC. Lohr and Coffey (1987), experienced that the highest yield and quality of tomato seedlings grown in mixtures with SMC, was found in mixtures of 25% aged SMC + 50% vermiculite + 25% peat. Wang et al. (1984) reported that, yield of tomato increased with increasing rates of SMC, and salinity caused by SMC under natural condition was decreased due to leaching and nutrient uptake of plant in fine sandy loam soil. They also noted that the effect of SMC on tomato growth considerably changed with time according to weather conditions.

High ammonium level depending on the use of fresh SMC (Lohr et al., 1984b; Baran et al., 1995), and high pH may cause to weak tomato growth in media mixing with fresh SMC comparing with 100% peat in our study. In organic materials, high pH decrease, availability of some elements such as P, Mn and B (Lucas and Davis, 1961) and also high ammonium level may impede growing of plant due to either salinity effects or causing in high ammonium concentration in the root zone (Lohr and Coffey, 1987).

As a result, we can conclude that SMC can be used as plant growth medium because of its low price and high organic matter and plant nutrients content. Especially, 25%+75% SMC is the most appropriate medium among the SMC mixtures for plant growing due to its physical and chemical properties. However, It will be more suitable removing of salts by leaching and decreasing ammonium level by weathering before the use of fresh SMC as growing medium.

References
DIN, 11542. Torf für Gartenbau und Landwirtschaft.