



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EFFICIENT FERTIGATION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF YIELD AND
QUALITY OF CHILLI PRODUCTION IN SOILLESS CULTURE UNDER
PROTECTED CULTIVATION***

SITI SULIZA SALAMAT

ITA 2013 10



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By

SITI SULIZA SALAMAT

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

February 2013

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Abstract of thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Agricultural Science

**EFFICIENT FERTIGATION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF YIELD AND
QUALITY OF CHILLI PRODUCTION IN SOILLESS CULTURE UNDER
PROTECTED CULTIVATION**

By

Siti Suliza Binti Salamat

February 2013

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Chilli (*Capsicum annum* L.) is an important vegetable crop in Malaysia and cultivated commercially in fertigation system. In 2011, Malaysia produced 32 780 metric tons of chillies with growing area at 2,559 ha. Nutrient and media are essential inputs that required for plant development. In fertigation system, fertilizer is supplied in nutrient solution form and been efficiently utilized. Thus, main objective of this study is to determine fertigation approaches that lead to efficiency for fertigation management. The studies were carried out on chilli plants grown under simple rain shelter structures in lowland of Malaysia. In the studied, plants were grown in three different media combinations (100% coconut coir dust (CD) as based media; 80 % CD + 20 % empty fruit bunch (EFB) compost and 70 % CD + 30% EFB as additive to the basic CD media with four different formulation. All those formulations used two different quantities of 400ml and 700ml fertilizer concentration.

This study found that Copper Formulation and 400ml concentration resulted in a higher growth and yield of chilli plants (justify results). From this study, the suitable conductivity for chilli cultivation was investigated in the following trial. The study involved the use of different electrical conductivity (EC) of Copper Formulation. In this study, plants were subjected to 1.5 and 2.0 dS/m. The experiment was conducted in a CRD with three replications. The results indicated that Cooper Formulation with EC 2.0 dS/m. In conclusion, efficient fertigation can be achieved by cultivation chilli plants in CD mixtures with 30% EFB compost with 2.0 dS/m EC of Copper Formulations. Higher growth and yield performances were attributed by utilizing additive soilless substrate resulted in better growth and yield of plant. Proper managements of electron conductivity and nutrient application are vital to achieve cost effective production.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains Pertanian

**KECEKAPAN MENGGUNAKAN SISTEM FERTIGASI DAPAT
MENINGKATKAN HASIL & KUALITI TANAMAN CILI TANPA
MENGGUNAKAN TANAH DI DALAM RUMAH HIJAU**

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Cili adalah antara tanaman sayuran yang penting di Malaysia dan ditanam secara komersil menggunakan system fertigasi. Pada tahun 2011, Malaysia dapat mengeluarkan hasil tanaman cili sebanyak 32 780 dengan keluasan tanah 2,229 hektar. Nutrien dan media adalah elemen penting untuk menanam pokok untuk penentuan hasil tanaman. Sistem pembajaan diberikan kepada tanaman dalam bentuk cecair secara cekap. Dalam pada masa yang sama lebih zat makanan dan media yang berlebihan akan menyebabkan pencemaran alam. Pemberian nutrien yang berlebihan akan mengalir ke sistem pengairan menyebabkan pencemaran berlaku dan menjadi penyebab kehadiran serangan penyakit. Walau bagaimanapun penggunaan nutrien dan media tanaman untuk pertanian adalah keperluan dalam penanaman tanaman. Pada masa yang sama berlaku pembaziran penggunaan sekap kelapa selepas penggunaannya dan menyebabkan berlakunya longgokan sekap padi. Objektif kajian ini dilaksanakan untuk memperolehi sistem penanaman terbaik berdasarkan keperluan nutrien untuk pokok dan kawalan serangga perosak untuk mengurangkan kos tanaman dalam sistem fertigasi. Kajian in Kajian penanaman cili ini dijalankan di bawah rumah teduhan yang ringkas tanah rendah di Malaysia. Kajian menggunakan seratus peratus sabut kelapa, media kedua 80 peratus sekap kelapa dan 20 peratus tandan kelapa kosong dan media ketiga 70 peratus sekam kelapa dan 30 peratus tandan kelapa kosong. Media yang digunakan pada kajian ketiga ini adalah sekam padi 100% dan sekam padi:tandan kelapa kosong 70%:30%. Pada masa yang sama menggunakan empat jenis formulasi yang berbeza iaitu Copper Formulasi, Bennoit Formulasi, Copper Modify Formulasi dan Local Formulasi menggunakan perbezaan kuantiti 400ml dan 700ml kepekatan baja.

Kajian ini mendapati bahawa Formulasi Copper dan jumlah isipadu larutan 400ml menunjukkan perkembangan dan hasil cili yang tinggi berbanding dengan rawatan yang lain. (boleh tambah dengan menunjukkan kenapa pertumbuhan dan hasil pokok lebih tinggi cth. Media mempunyai pH dan EC yang baik dibandingkan dgn media ain atau kecekapan dari segi pengambilan nutrient). Kajian menggunakan dua elektron kekonduksian iaitu 1.5 dan 2.0. Kajian yang dibuat menggunakan

kajian secara rawak menggunakan tiga replikasi. Kajian mendapati Copper Formulasi dengan elektron kekonduksian dengan 2.0 adalah kombinasi terbaik. Kesimpulannya fertigasi cekap boleh dicapai oleh penanaman pokok cili dalam campuran CD dengan kompos kelapa sawit 30% menggunakan elektron kekonduksian 2.0 menggunakan Copper Formulasi. Pertumbuhan yang lebih tinggi dan pengeluaran hasil adalah disebabkan dengan menggunakan substrat tambahan menyebabkan pertumbuhan yang lebih baik dan hasil tumbuhan. Pengurusan yang betul kekonduksian elektron dan aplikasi nutrien adalah penting untuk mencapai pengeluaran kos efektif.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 20 February 2013 to conduct the final examination of Siti Suliza Salamat on her thesis entitled " Efficient Fertigation For Improvement Of Yield And Quality Of Chilli Production In Soilless Culture Under Protected Cultivation" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	vi
DECLARATION	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xix
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Chilli	3
2.2 Protected Environment Agriculture (PEA)	3
2.3 Soilless Culture	4
2.4 Growing Media	4
2.4.1 Coconut Coir Dust	5
2.4.2 Problem of Coconut Coir Dust	7
2.5 The Incorporation of Additive in Coconut Coir Dust Base Soilless Culture	7
2.5.1 Empty fruit bunch (EFB) Compost	7
2.5.2 Burn Rice Husk	10
2.5.3 Vermicompost	10
2.6 Nutrient Formulation	11
2.7 Concentration of Stock Solution	14
3 EFFECT OF COMPOST AS ADDITIVE MEDIA IN ON GROWTH AND YIELD OF CHILLI	
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Materials and Methods	15
3.2.1 Preparation at Planting Material	15
3.2.2 Experimental Site and Treatment	17
3.2.2.1 Location of Study	17
3.2.3 Physical and Chemical Characteristic	19
3.2.3.1 pH	19
3.2.3.2 Nutrient Analysis	19
3.2.3.2.1 Determination of Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	19
3.2.4 Dry Matter Content	19
3.2.5 Physiological Response	19
3.2.5.1 Chlorophyll Content	19
3.2.6 Growth Response	20
3.2.6.1 Plant Height	20

Comment [f1]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

3.2.7	Yield	20
3.2.8	Statistical Analysis	20
3.3	Result	21
3.3.1	Physical and Chemical Characteristic	21
3.3.1.1	pH	21
3.3.1.2	Nutrient Analysis	22
3.3.1.2.1	Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	22
3.3.2	Dry Matter Content	24
3.3.3	Physiological Response	25
3.3.3.1	Chlorophyll Content	25
3.3.4	Yield	25
3.6	Discussion	27
4	EFFECT OF DIFFERENT ADDTIVIES COCONUT COIR DUST ON THE GROWTH AND CHILLI YIELD OF CHILLI PLANTS	
4.1	Introduction	28
4.2	Materials and Methods	28
4.2.1	Preparation at Planting Material	28
4.2.2	Experimental Site and Treatment	29
4.2.3	Physical and Chemical Characteristic	29
4.2.3.1	Electrical Conductivity	29
4.2.3.2	pH	29
4.2.3.3	Moisture Content	29
4.2.3.4	Nutrient Analysis	29
4.2.3.4.1	Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	29
4.2.4	Dry Matter Content	29
4.2.5	Physiological Response	29
4.2.5.1	Chlorophyll Content	29
4.2.6	Growth Responses	30
4.2.6.1	Plant Height	30
4.2.6.2	Number of Days to Blooming and Fruiting	30
4.2.7	Yield	30
4.2.8	Statistical Analysis	30
4.3	Result	31
4.3.1	Physical and Chemical Characteristic	31
4.3.1.1	Electrical Conductivity (EC)	31
4.3.1.2	pH	31
4.3.1.3	Moisture Content	32
4.3.1.4	Nutrient Analysis	33
4.3.1.4.1	Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	33
4.3.2	Dry Matter Content	34
4.3.3	Physiological Response	35
4.3.3.1	Chlorophyll Content	35
4.3.4	Growth Response	36
4.3.4.1	Plant Height	36
4.3.4.2	Number of Days to Blooming and Flowering	37
4.3.5	Yield	38

Comment [f2]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

Comment [f3]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

Comment [f4]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

4.6 Discussion	39
5 EFFICACY OF FERTILIZER FORMULATIONS, CONCENTRATION OF STOCK SOLUTION AND MEDIA ON CHILLI	
5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Materials and Methods	41
5.2.1 Preparation at Planting Material	41
5.2.2 Experimental Site and Treatment	41
5.2.3 Physical and Chemical Determinations	42
5.2.3.1 Electrical Conductivity	42
5.2.3.2 pH	42
5.2.3.3 Moisture Content	42
5.2.3.4 Nutrient Analysis	42
5.2.3.4.1 Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	42
5.2.4 Dry Matter Content	42
5.2.5 Physiological Responses	42
5.2.5.1 Chlorophyll Content	42
5.2.6 Growth Response	42
5.2.6.1 Plant Height	42
5.2.6.2 Day of Blooming and Fruiting	42
5.2.7 Yield	43
5.2.8 Statistical Analysis	43
5.3 Result	
5.3.1 Physical and Chemical Characteristic	44
5.3.1.1 Electrical Conductivity (EC)	44
5.3.1.2 pH	45
5.3.2.3 Moisture Content	46
5.3.3.3 Nutrient Analysis	47
5.3.3.4.1 Macronutrients and Micronutrient in Media	47
5.3.2 Dry Matter Content	53
5.3.3 Physiological Response	56
5.3.3.1 Chlorophyll Content	56
5.3.4 Growth Response	57
5.3.6.1 Plant Height	57
5.3.6.2 Day of Blooming and Fruiting	58
5.3.5 Yield	59
5.4 Discussion	60
6 CHILLI GROWTH, YIELD, AND FRUIT IN RESPONSE TO GROWING MEDIA AND ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY	
6.1 Introduction	62
6.2 Materials and Methods	62
6.2.1 Preparation at Planting Material	62
6.2.2 Treatments	62
6.2.3 Physical and Chemical Characteristic	62

Comment [f5]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

Comment [f6]: Should go along with physico chemical characteristics

	6.2.3.1 pH	62
	6.2.3.2 Moisture Content	63
6.2.4	Physiological Response	63
	6.2.4.1 Chlorophyll Content	63
	6.2.4.2 Photosynthesis	63
	6.2.4.3 Stomatal Conductance	63
6.2.6	Growth Response	64
	6.2.6.1 Plant Height	64
6.2.7	Yield	64
6.2.8	Statistical Analysis	64
6.3	Result	
6.3.1	Physical and Chemical Characteristic	65
	6.3.1.1 pH	65
	6.3.1.2 Moisture Content	66
6.3.2	Physiological Response	66
	6.3.2.1 Chlorophyll Content	66
	6.3.2.2 Photosynthesis	67
	6.3.2.3 Stomatal Conductance	67
6.3.4	Growth Response	68
	6.3.4.1 Plant Height	68
6.3.5	Yield	68
6.4	Discussion	69
7	CONCLUSION	71
	REFERENCES	73
	APPENDICES	78
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	99
	LIST OF PUBLICATION	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Composition of Coconut Husk	5
2.2 Chemical Composition of Coconut Husk Fiber (in Percent of Dry Weight)	6
2.3 Composition of Coconut Coir Dust	6
2.4 Composition of Palm Oil Empty Fruit Brunch	9
2.5 Nutrient Solution Formulations (NSFs) Used in the Research	12
2.6 Nutrient Solution Formulations (NSFs) Used in the Research	13
3.1 Medium Treatment Composition	18
3.2 Formulation of Copper	18
3.3 Four Different Irrigation Volume Were Applied According to Plant Stage to All Treatments	18
3.4 Effects of Different Growing Media Concentration on pH	21
3.5 Macronutrient Composition before Planting of All Medium Treatment in Percentage (%)	23
3.6 Macronutrient Composition after Planting of All Medium Treatment in Percentage (%)	23
3.7 Vegetative Growth Parameter of Chilli (<i>Capsicum Annum</i> Var. Kulai F1) As Influenced By Different Growing Media. For Parameter, Values Followed By the Different Letter Are Significantly Different	24
3.8 The Effect of Media Treatment on Chlorophyll Content of Chilli Grown Under Soilless Culture	28
4.1 Effects of Different Media EC (dS/m)	31
4.2 Effects of Different Media Volume on pH	31
4.3 Effects of Media on Moisture Content	32
4.4 Effects of Media on N, P, K, Ca, Mg, Mn and Zn %/g Dry Weight	33

4.5	Effects of Media on Leaf Dry Weight (g/plant), Stem Dry Weight (g/plant), Root Dry Weight (g/plant) and Root/shoot ratio	34
4.6	Yield of Chilli (g/plant)	38
5.1	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on EC (dS/m)	44
5.2	Treatments on pH and EC (dS/m)	45
5.3	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on Moisture Content	46
5.4	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On N (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	47
5.5	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On P (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	48
5.6	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Mg (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	52
5.7	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Mn (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	52
5.8	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Zn (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	53
5.9	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Stem Dry Weight (g/plant)	55
5.10	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Chlorophyll Content	56
5.11	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Plant Height (day/plant)	57
5.12	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Plant Blooming (day/plant)	58
5.13	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Plant Fruiting (day/plant)	58
5.14	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media On Yield (day/plant)	59

6.1	Effects of Different Media and EC on pH before	65
6.2	Effects of Different Media and EC on Moisture Content	66
6.3	Stomatal Conductance ($s\ cm^{-1}$) in Different Media and EC	67
6.4	Plant Height in Different Media	68
6.5	Yield in Different Media	68



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
3.1	<i>Capsicum annum</i> F1 Seeds Variety Kulai F1	15
3.2	Germination was done Under Protected Area.	16
3.3	Seedling of <i>Capsicum annum</i> Variety Kulai F1 after 4 Weeks of Germination	16
3.4	Seedling were transferred into Polybag Containing a Mixture of Coconut Coir Dust with EFB Compost	16
3.5	Simple Rain Shelter used to minimize the Impact of Rain Drop	17
3.6	The effect of medium treatment on total yield	25
3.7	Total Yield Effect of Treatment for M1 (100% CD), M2 (80% CD: 20% EFB) and M3 (70% CD: 30% EFB)	26
4.1	Effects of Media on Chlorophyll Content	35
4.2	Effects of Media volumes on Plant Height	36
4.3	Effects of on Day of Blooming and Fruiting (day/plant)	37
4.4	Effects of Media, on Yield (g/plant)	38
5.1	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on K (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	49
5.2	Effect on Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on Ca (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	50
5.3	Interaction on Local Formulation, Concentration and Media on Ca (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	51
5.4	Interaction on Copper Modify Formulation, Concentration and Media on Ca (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	51
5.5	Effects of Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on Leaf Dry Weight (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	54
5.6	Interaction on Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on Leaf Dry Weight (g/plant) Dry Weight on Leaf	54

5.7	Effects on Fertilizer Formulation, Concentration and Media on Root Dry Weight (%/g) Dry Weight on Leaf	55
6.1	Interaction on Different Media and EC on pH after pH	65
6.2	Interaction on Different Media and EC on Chlorophyll Content	66
6.3	Photosynthesis ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$) in Different Media and EC	67
6.4	Effects of media and electrical conductivity on yield (g/plant)	70



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CD	Coconut Coir Dust
BRH	Burnt Rice Husk
VERMI	Vermicompost
EFB	Empty Fruit Bunches
CRD	Complete Randomized Design
DAT	Days after Transplanting
EC	Electrical Conductivity
SAS	Statistical Analysis System
TPU	Taman Pertanian Universiti

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chilli is one of the most important vegetables in Malaysia. In recent years, the Malaysian production of vegetables especially chilli using greenhouses has experiencing accelerated growth. In 2011, production area of chilli reached up to 2,933 ha and the production of chilli reached around 32 780 tones which are 2, 559 tones higher than the production in 2010 (Anonymous, 2011). The attraction and demand for chilli have dramatically increased and showed major economic significance which is shown as it is getting higher year by year in the Malaysia.

Most of the greenhouses are soilless culture with automatic control of freshwater, fertilizers, soilless media and climate systems. The direct delivery of fertilizers through drip irrigation to demands the use of soluble fertilizers and pumping and injection systems to introduce the fertilizers directly into the irrigation system. Fertigation allows an accurate and uniform application of nutrients to the wet area, where the active roots are concentrated. Water and fertilizer are critical input in soilless culture. The advantage fertigation provides an excellent opportunity to maximize yield and efficiency use fertilizer in the same times minimizing fertilizer application and save cost to grower on the fertilizer invested. Advantage of fertigation are amount, timing and concentration of fertilizer applied are easily controlled. Every grower need supply both input everyday to the plants through irrigation system for plant get enough nutrient (Ismail, 2000). Flexibility, cost effectiveness, and the potential for improved seasonal fertilizer application efficiency are advantages of fertigation over traditional fertilizer application methods. However increasing price of fertilizer very year, will promote greater problem to grower because of high cost of chilli production.

Soilless medium is commonly used in horticulture for growing seedling, plant propagation and production of vegetables because of capacity to hold water. The common substrates used are coconut coir dust due to high physical and chemical stability chemical. There has been an increasing usage of coconut coir dust as growing media for cultivation of high value vegetable in Malaysia as soilless culture media. Grower are increasingly growing vegetables and crop in soilless growing medium which have great advantage of enabling grower to control the root environment more precisely and economically than in soil. Soilless substrate has lack of the microbial diversity and biological “buffering” that found in natural soil bag. Crop production in soilless culture systems requires an adequate supply of all the elements essential for plant growth very well.

Fertigation is assisted with irrigation with fertilizer that dissolved in the water at concentration which (Leith and Oki, 2008). In order to sustain and better crop performance and yield plant need high and appropriate supplying of macro and micro-nutrient. Fertilizer is well known as the highest variable costs item in the crop production budget. However, when increase global fertilizer price is raised and fluctuated, it will promote greater problem to the grower and affect the chilli production. Besides the fluctuation of fertilizer price, another problem needs to be overcome is poor management of fertilizer and water by grower.

The main objective of the present study is to establish efficient fertigation for production of chilli in coconut coir dust soilless culture. To achieve efficient fertigation, the study had also established the following specific objectives;

- to characterize the effect different of media mixture
- to determine the effect of different nutrient formulation
- to determine the optimum Electron Conductivity (EC) levels



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