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INFLUENCE OF VARYING LEVELS OF GIBBERELIC ACID (GA₃) ON GROWTH AND YIELD OF CHINA ASTER VARIETIES

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation entitled “Influence of varying levels of gibberellic acid (GA₃) on growth and yield of China aster varieties” was conducted at Department of Floriculture and Landscape Architecture, Dr. PDKV, Akola (Maharashtra, India) in Factorial Randomized Block Design (FRBD) with 24 treatment combinations and three replications. The results revealed significant differences among varieties, GA₃ levels and their interaction effects. Among the varieties, Phule Ganesh White recorded maximum plant height, number of branches per plant and highest flowers yield per plot, whereas Phule Ganesh Pink exhibited maximum plant spread. Foliar application of GA₃ significantly enhanced vegetative growth and yield parameters. GA₃ @ 250 ppm proved most effective, recording the highest plant height, number of branches, plant spread and highest flower yield per plot, it was statistically at par with 300 ppm of GA₃. The interaction effect indicated that Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 250 ppm produced maximum plant height, number of branches per plant and highest flowers yield per plot, while Phule Ganesh Pink with GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded maximum plant spread. The study concludes that variety Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 250 ppm is suitable for enhancing vegetative growth and yield parameter in China aster.

Keywords : China aster, gibberellic acid (GA₃), varietal response, Phule Ganesh White, Phule Ganesh Purple, Phule Ganesh Pink, Phule Ganesh Violet.

Introduction

China aster (*Callistephus chinensis* (L.) Nees. is one of the most important half-hardy, annual, cool-season crops. It belongs to one of the largest families of flowering plants, Asteraceae and has a diploid chromosome number of $2n = 18$. *Callistephus chinensis* is native to China and spread to Europe and other tropical countries around 1731 A.D. A single wild species, *Callistephus chinensis*, is the source of all modern asters. Within the Asteraceae family, the genus *Callistephus* is monotypic and contains only one species. The genus *Callistephus* is derived from two Greek words, *kalistos* and *stephos*, meaning “most beautiful” and “a crown,” respectively. Cassini described the China aster as *Callistephus hortensis*. It was first named by Linnaeus as *aster chinensis* and

later Nees. changed the name to *Callistephus chinensis* (Munikrishnappa *et al.*, 2014). China aster is an important component of the flower basket, particularly in domestic market. It is cultivated for production of cut flowers, loose flowers, pot plants and bedding plants in landscaping.

The increasing demand for China aster in major urban markets of India has encouraged its large-scale cultivation as a commercial annual loose and cut flower crop. In commercial floriculture, enhancement of flower yield in terms of both quality and quantity, along with regulation of plant architecture are key objectives. Excessive plant height often leads to lodging, which adversely affects flower size and yield per plant. Although yield and quality are strongly influenced by environmental conditions and genetic

makeup, the exogenous application of plant growth regulators like GA₃ plays a crucial role in modifying vegetative growth parameters such as plant height and branching, as well as yield and flower quality in China aster (Kumar *et al.*, 2015). The use of plant growth regulators has significantly transformed modern agriculture, particularly horticulture in developed nations. Their application has become an integral component of floriculture, representing one of the most important agro-technological advancements for improving floral yield and quality. Plant growth regulators are widely employed to direct plant growth

towards desirable traits and optimize commercial flower production (Sharma *et al.*, 2001).

Materials and Methods

The Investigations was conducted at Department of Floriculture and Landscaping, Dr. PDKV, Akola, with the objective to study the response of China aster varieties to different concentrations of GA₃ for growth parameters. The experiment was laid out in Factorial Randomized Block Design with three replications and twenty-four treatment combinations including control. Details are as below:

Treatment Combinations

V ₁ G ₁	Phule Ganesh Pink + Control (Water spray)	V ₃ G ₁	Phule Ganesh White + Control (Water spray)
V ₁ G ₂	Phule Ganesh Pink + 100 PPM GA ₃	V ₃ G ₂	Phule Ganesh White + 100 PPM GA ₃
V ₁ G ₃	Phule Ganesh Pink + 150 PPM GA ₃	V ₃ G ₃	Phule Ganesh White + 150 PPM GA ₃
V ₁ G ₄	Phule Ganesh Pink + 200 PPM GA ₃	V ₃ G ₄	Phule Ganesh White + 200 PPM GA ₃
V ₁ G ₅	Phule Ganesh Pink + 250 PPM GA ₃	V ₃ G ₅	Phule Ganesh White + 250 PPM GA ₃
V ₁ G ₆	Phule Ganesh Pink + 300 PPM GA ₃	V ₃ G ₆	Phule Ganesh White + 300 PPM GA ₃
V ₂ G ₁	Phule Ganesh Violet + Control (Water spray)	V ₄ G ₁	Phule Ganesh Purple + Control (Water spray)
V ₂ G ₂	Phule Ganesh Violet + 100 PPM GA ₃	V ₄ G ₂	Phule Ganesh Purple + 100 PPM GA ₃
V ₂ G ₃	Phule Ganesh Violet + 150 PPM GA ₃	V ₄ G ₃	Phule Ganesh Purple + 150 PPM GA ₃
V ₂ G ₄	Phule Ganesh Violet + 200 PPM GA ₃	V ₄ G ₄	Phule Ganesh Purple + 200 PPM GA ₃
V ₂ G ₅	Phule Ganesh Violet + 250 PPM GA ₃	V ₄ G ₅	Phule Ganesh Purple + 250 PPM GA ₃
V ₂ G ₆	Phule Ganesh Violet + 300 PPM GA ₃	V ₄ G ₆	Phule Ganesh Purple + 300 PPM GA ₃

Two foliar sprays of GA₃ were applied in respective treatments at 30 and 45 days after transplanting. The field was prepared to achieve a fine tilth by carrying out repeated ploughing operations and subsequent harrowing. The seedlings were transplanted in main field at Forty-five days with a spacing of 30 cm x 30 cm in flat bed. Fertilizer application, weeding, plant protection *etc.* were carried out as per package and as when required. Five plants were selected randomly from net plot in each treatment and tagged for the purpose of recording observations. The observations were recorded on plant height, number of branches, plant spread and flower yield per plot. The data was statistically analysed using analysis of variance.

Results and Discussion

Plant height

Effect of Varieties

The data on plant height recorded at 60 and 90 days after transplanting and is presented in Table 1. Significant differences among varieties were observed at all growth stages. Among the evaluated varieties, Phule Ganesh White recorded the maximum plant height at 60 and 90 DAT (64.62 and 84.65 cm respectively). It was significantly superior over all other varieties. The minimum plant height was recorded in Phule Ganesh Violet (48.00 and 60.81 cm

at respective stages). The observed variation in plant height among varieties may be attributed to inherent genetic differences and differential adaptability to environmental conditions. Similar varietal differences in plant height of China aster were reported by Rai and Chaudhary (2016), Naikwad *et al.* (2019), Sahu *et al.* (2023), Shete *et al.* (2023) and Bhargav *et al.* (2019).

Effect of GA₃

The data shows a significant effect of GA₃ on plant height of China aster at all stages of growth. The treatment GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded the highest plant height (63.12 and 76.84 cm respectively) at 60 and 90 DAT. Which was statistically at par with GA₃ @ 300 ppm (61.72 and 75.51 cm respectively). The control recorded the lowest plant height (46.54 and 64.03 cm respectively). The increase in plant height due to GA₃ application may be attributed to enhanced cell division and cell elongation, increased cell wall plasticity, stimulation of protein synthesis. These physiological processes promote internodal elongation, resulting in increased plant height. Similar findings were reported by Sharma and Joshi (2015), Bhandari *et al.* (2022) in China aster, Delvadia *et al.* (2009) in gaillardia and by Khangjarakpam *et al.* (2019) and Mujadidi *et al.* (2019) in marigold.

Interaction effect

The interaction of variety and GA₃ concentration significantly influenced plant height at 60 and 90 DAT. The treatment combination Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded the maximum plant height (74.21 and 93.30 cm respectively) at 60 and 90 DAT. It was at par with Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 300 ppm (71.17 cm) at 60 DAT and at 90 DAT it was statistically superior over the other varieties. It was followed by treatment combination Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 200 ppm (67.92 and 87.04 cm) at 60 and 90 DAT. While the minimum plant height (41.79 and 54.43 cm respectively) was observed under control. The variety Phule Ganesh Violet exhibited its highest plant height at GA₃ @ 300 ppm (53.33 and 66.27 cm respectively) at 60 and 90 DAT. The superior performance of Phule Ganesh White at 250 and 300 ppm GA₃ showed higher physiological efficiency and greater responsiveness to exogenous GA₃, possibly due to enhanced receptor sensitivity and better assimilate mobilization. Conversely, the comparatively lower response of Phule Ganesh Violet indicates genotypic limitations in GA₃ responsiveness.

Number of branches per plant

Effect of varieties

Significant differences in number of branches per plant were observed at 75 and 90 DAT (Table 2). Variety Phule Ganesh White (V₃) recorded maximum number of branches per plant (19.23, 24.72 respectively), which was significantly superior than rest of all the varieties and it was followed by variety Phule Ganesh Purple (16.60, 21.32 respectively) at 75 and 90 DAT. Whereas, significantly minimum number of branches per plant were recorded with the Phule Ganesh Violet (11.03, 15.12 respectively) at 75 and 90 DAT. The variation in branching may be attributed to genetic differences governing plant architecture. Similar findings were reported by Tirakannanavar *et al.* (2015), Naikwad *et al.* (2019), Munikrishnappa *et al.* (2013), Zosiamlina *et al.* (2012), Sahu *et al.* (2023), Rai and Chaudhary (2016) and Kolur *et al.* (2022).

Effect of GA₃

GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded the highest number of branches per plant 17.65 at 75 DAT and 22.61 at 90 DAT and was significantly superior to all other treatments. This was followed by treatment GA₃ @ 300 ppm, which recorded 16.43, 21.82 branches per plant respectively at 75 and 90 DAT. Whereas, the lowest number of branches per plant (11.90, 16.82) at 75 DAT and 90 DAT under the control treatment. This

is might be due to, GA₃ influence of translocation and transcription mechanism of protein biosynthesis, also stimulation of cell division and cell elongation, while increasing plasticity of cell wall and formation of energy rich phosphates resulting in an increased plant height with a greater number of productive branches. The study confirms the results of Bhandari *et al.* (2022) in China aster, Delvadia *et al.* (2009) in Gaillardia, Khangjarakpam *et al.* (2019), Mujadidi *et al.* (2019), Kumar *et al.* (2012) in Marigold.

Interaction effect

The treatment combination Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 250 ppm showed maximum number of branches per plant (22.79, 28.64 respectively) at 75 and 90 DAT, which was significantly higher than all the other treatment combinations. It was followed by the treatment Phule Ganesh White with 300 ppm of GA₃ which recorded 20.81, 27.35 branches respectively. The treatment combination Phule Ganesh Violet with GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded the least number of branches per plant (8.56, 13.01 respectively) at 75 and 90 DAT. Although Phule Ganesh Violet showed overall lower branching compared to other varieties, it exhibited its maximum response at GA₃ @ 300 ppm (12.76, 16.99 respectively) at 75 DAT and 90 DAT. Phule Ganesh Violet showed improved response at 300 ppm GA₃, indicating a requirement for higher hormonal concentration. The significant interaction confirms that GA₃ response is genotype-specific, with Phule Ganesh White showing maximum responsiveness at 250 ppm.

Plant spread at 50 % flowering

Effect of varieties

Significant variation in plant spread was observed among varieties (Table 3). Phule Ganesh Pink recorded the maximum plant spread (33.86 cm) at 50% flowering stage and it was followed by Phule Ganesh Violet (29.84 cm) and Phule Ganesh White (26.46 cm). The minimum plant spread was recorded in Phule Ganesh Purple (25.21 cm). The differences may be attributed to inherent genetic potential and adaptability. Similar findings were reported by Zosiamlina *et al.* (2012), Shete *et al.* (2023), Bhagve *et al.* (2020), Rinu *et al.* (2024), Bhargav *et al.* (2019), Rai and Chaudhary (2016) and Guddaraddi and Mishra (2021).

Effect of GA₃

GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded the maximum plant spread (32.83 cm) and it was at par with GA₃ @ 300 ppm (32.28 cm). The control treatment recorded the minimum (22.30 cm) plant spread. The increase in plant spread might be due to enhanced cell division, elongation and improved translocation of

photosynthates. The marginal reduction observed at 300 ppm indicate that higher concentrations may not proportionately enhance growth due to supra-optimal hormonal effects. These results are in conformity with the findings of Palekar *et al.* (2018), Bhandari *et al.* (2022), Kumar *et al.* (2012), Sunna *et al.* (2021), Kuri *et al.* (2018) in China aster, Khangjarakpam *et al.* (2019), Mujadidi *et al.* (2019) in Marigold. Delvadia *et al.* (2009) in Gaillardia.

Interaction effect

The treatment combination of Phule Ganesh Pink with GA₃ @ 250 ppm produced the maximum (39.60 cm) plant spread at 50% flowering, followed by variety Phule Ganesh Pink with GA₃ @ 300 (37.03 cm), while the minimum plant spread (19.89 cm) was recorded in Phule Ganesh Purple under control conditions. Phule Ganesh Violet showed better response (34.31 cm) at 300 ppm of GA₃. The superior performance of Phule Ganesh Pink at 250 ppm GA₃ indicates its higher sensitivity and better utilization of exogenously applied gibberellins, leading to maximum canopy expansion.

Flower yield per plot

Effect of varieties

The data reveals significant differences among China aster varieties with respect to flower yield per plot (kg) presented in Table 4. Among the four varieties, V₃- Phule Ganesh White recorded the highest flower yield 5.07 kg per plot. Which was significantly superior than all other varieties? It was followed by variety V₄- Phule Ganesh Purple produce 4.20 kg flower yield per plot. Variety V₂ i.e. Phule Ganesh Violet (2.59 kg) recorded the minimum yield per plot.

The increases in flower yield per plot is might be due to the production of greater number of flowers per plant and improvement in weight and diameter of flower per plant. So, increases the yield of flowers per plot. These findings are in close conformity with earlier reports in China aster by Bhagve *et al.* (2020), Zosiamlia *et al.* (2012).

Effect of GA₃

The data reveals a significant effect of GA₃ treatments on flower yield per plot. The highest flower yield per plot was recorded with G₅ - 250 ppm of GA₃ which recorded 5.15 kg per plot. This treatment shows statistically superior than other. It was followed by treatment G₆ - 300 ppm which recorded flower yield of 4.77 kg per plot. The G₁ - control treatment recorded the lowest flower yield per plot (1.85 kg).

The increase in flower yield observed with GA₃ application, may be attributed to its ability to stimulate

cell elongation, enhance nutrient absorption, expand leaf area and facilitate efficient translocation of photosynthates towards developing floral buds. These physiological improvements collectively contributed to a higher number of flowers per plot. Similar findings have been reported by Kumar *et al.* (2015) in China aster, Delvadia *et al.* (2009) in Gaillardia, Kumar *et al.* (2020) and Mujadidi *et al.* (2019) in marigold.

Interaction effect

The data reveals a significant interaction effect between varieties and GA₃ treatments on flower yield per plot. The highest flower yield per plot 6.83 kg was obtained from Phule Ganesh White (V₃) in combination with GA₃ at 250 ppm (G₅). Which was statistically superior than other? It was followed by treatment combination Phule Ganesh White (V₃) in combination with GA₃ at 300 ppm (G₆) producing 6.28 kg flower per plot. The lowest flower yield (1.27 kg) was observed in the control treatment in variety Phule Ganesh Violet (V₂G₁). Phule Ganesh Violet (V₂) attained its maximum yield per plot at 300 ppm GA₃(G₆), recording 3.67 kg per plot, which was significantly higher than its performance at lower GA₃ concentrations.

The significant interaction between varieties and GA₃ levels resulted in enhanced flower yield per plot. The increase in flower yield due to GA₃ application may be attributed to its stimulatory effect on vegetative growth characters such as plant height, leaf area, and number of branches per plant, which ultimately improved the source-sink relationship. The improved translocation and utilization of photosynthates might have contributed to higher flower production per plot. Similar findings regarding increased flower yield with GA₃ application in China aster were also reported by Sharma and Joshi (2015).

Table 1 : Effect of China aster varieties and different concentrations of GA₃ on plant height (cm) of China aster

Plant Height (cm)		
Treat.	60 DAT	90 DAT
Factor A-Varieties		
V ₁	53.43	66.84
V ₂	48.00	60.81
V ₃	64.62	84.65
V ₄	58.98	73.32
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.
SE (m) ±	0.55	0.68
CD at 5%	1.57	2.04
Factor B -Concentration of GA ₃		
G ₁	46.54	64.03
G ₂	52.16	67.99
G ₃	55.19	70.66

G ₄	58.83	73.42
G ₅	63.12	76.84
G ₆	61.72	75.51
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.
SE (m) ±	0.68	0.79
CD at 5%	1.92	2.36
Interaction effect		
V ₁ G ₁	44.35	59.97
V ₁ G ₂	49.72	63.66
V ₁ G ₃	52.43	66.24
V ₁ G ₄	56.08	68.85
V ₁ G ₅	60.22	72.15
V ₁ G ₆	57.79	70.16
V ₂ G ₁	41.79	54.43
V ₂ G ₂	45.10	57.63
V ₂ G ₃	47.19	59.96
V ₂ G ₄	49.41	62.35
V ₂ G ₅	51.21	64.24
V ₂ G ₆	53.33	66.27
V ₃ G ₁	51.52	76.03
V ₃ G ₂	59.72	80.92
V ₃ G ₃	63.23	83.92
V ₃ G ₄	67.92	87.04
V ₃ G ₅	74.21	93.30
V ₃ G ₆	71.17	88.50
V ₄ G ₁	48.50	65.69
V ₄ G ₂	54.09	69.74
V ₄ G ₃	57.92	72.51
V ₄ G ₄	61.96	75.44
V ₄ G ₅	66.82	79.47
V ₄ G ₆	64.58	77.11
SE (m) ±	1.35	1.39
CD 5%	3.85	4.10

Table 2 : Effect of varieties and different concentrations of GA₃ on number of branches per plant of China aster

Factor A-Varieties		
	75th DAT	90th DAT
V ₁	13.08	18.80
V ₂	11.03	15.12
V ₃	19.23	24.72
V ₄	16.60	21.32
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.
SE (m) ±	0.23	0.23
CD at 5%	0.64	0.65
Factor B - Concentrations of GA₃		
G ₁	11.90	16.82
G ₂	13.81	18.57
G ₃	14.65	19.52
G ₄	15.46	20.67
G ₅	17.65	22.61
G ₆	16.43	21.82
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.
SE (m) ±	0.28	0.28
CD at 5%	0.79	0.80
Interaction effect		

V ₁ G ₁	10.91	16.30
V ₁ G ₂	12.02	17.58
V ₁ G ₃	12.72	18.48
V ₁ G ₄	13.69	19.35
V ₁ G ₅	14.78	21.08
V ₁ G ₆	14.34	20.03
V ₂ G ₁	8.56	13.01
V ₂ G ₂	9.99	14.20
V ₂ G ₃	10.73	14.53
V ₂ G ₄	11.70	15.66
V ₂ G ₅	12.43	16.31
V ₂ G ₆	12.76	16.99
V ₃ G ₁	14.81	20.12
V ₃ G ₂	18.05	22.72
V ₃ G ₃	19.15	24.03
V ₃ G ₄	19.78	25.46
V ₃ G ₅	22.79	28.64
V ₃ G ₆	20.81	27.35
V ₄ G ₁	13.33	17.83
V ₄ G ₂	15.18	19.78
V ₄ G ₃	15.98	21.02
V ₄ G ₄	16.64	22.23
V ₄ G ₅	20.62	24.42
V ₄ G ₆	17.82	22.66
SE (m) ±	0.55	0.56
CD at 5%	1.57	1.60

Table 3 : Effect of varieties and different concentrations of GA₃ on plant spread at 50 % flowering of China aster

Plant Spread at 50 % flowering (cm)					
Varieties					
Treat.	V₁	V₂	V₃	V₄	Mean
G ₁	25.36	23.39	20.57	19.89	22.30
G ₂	30.93	27.69	24.42	23.31	26.59
G ₃	33.86	29.70	26.05	24.73	28.59
G ₄	36.38	31.42	27.82	26.20	30.46
G ₅	39.60	32.50	30.35	28.88	32.83
G ₆	37.03	34.31	29.55	28.23	32.28
Mean	33.86	29.84	26.46	25.21	
	(V)	(G)	(V X G)		
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.		
S.E (m)±	0.29	0.35	0.70		
CD at 5 %	0.82	1.00	1.99		

Table 4 : Effect of varieties and different concentrations of GA₃ on flowers yield per plot.

flowers yield per plot kg)					
Varieties					
Treat.	V₁	V₂	V₃	V₄	Mean
G ₁	1.63	1.27	2.42	2.11	1.85
G ₂	2.76	2.07	4.52	3.79	3.28
G ₃	3.28	2.41	4.82	4.09	3.65

G₄	3.69	2.79	5.57	4.52	4.14
G₅	4.83	3.31	6.83	5.65	5.15
G₆	4.09	3.67	6.28	5.06	4.77
Mean	3.38	2.59	5.07	4.20	
	(V)	(G)	(V X G)		
'F' test	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.		
S.E (m)±	0.07	0.09	0.08		
CD at 5 %	0.21	0.26	0.53		

Conclusion

From the findings of present investigation, maximum growth of China aster plant viz, plant height, number of branches per plant and maximum yield per plot of China aster was observed in variety Phule Ganesh White, whereas Phule Ganesh Pink exhibited maximum plant spread. Foliar application of GA₃ significantly enhanced vegetative growth parameters and yield parameter, GA₃ @ 250 ppm showed most effective, recording the highest plant height, number of branches, plant spread and highest flowers yield per plot. The interaction effect indicated that Phule Ganesh White with GA₃ @ 250 ppm produced maximum plant height, number of branches per plant and highest flower yield per plot, while Phule Ganesh Pink with GA₃ @ 250 ppm recorded maximum plant spread. Thus, the treatment combination *Phule Ganesh White with 250 ppm GA₃* was found to be most suitable for enhancing the vegetative parameters as well as yield of China aster.

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