ESTIMATES OF HERITABILITY FOR ENHANCED STORAGE SHELF LIFE AND EARLY MATURITY IN ONIONS (*Allium cepa* L.)

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Abstract

Thirty-seven Onion (*Allium cepa* L.) genotypes comprising of twelve parents (12) and twenty-five hybrids were evaluated at the *Fadama* Teaching and Research farm of the Department of Crop Science D, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto during the 2015/2016 dry season. The objective of the study was to estimate heritability, phenotypic coefficient of variation, genotypic coefficient variation and error coefficient of variation. The treatments were laid out in a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with three replications. After harvesting, the genotypes were stored for five months under farmers practice. The analysis of the results indicated significant ($P < 0.05$) difference between the genotypes with respect to plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf area, leaf area index, percentage bolting, days to maturity, bulb diameter, bulb height, average bulb weight, fresh bulb yield, cured bulb yield, and percentage loss after five months of storage. High phenotypic and genotypic coefficients of variation were observed, however cured bulb weight the highest values for both phenotypic (176.57 %) and genotypic coefficients of variation (167.67 %) followed by percentage bolting of 65.51 and 56.58 % respectively. Days to maturity and plant height on the other hand recorded the lowest phenotypic coefficient of variation of (11.64 and 12.79 % respectively) as well as genotypic coefficient of variation of (11.43 and 9.18 % respectively). Percentage loss had the highest heritability (98.01%) while leaf area index had the lowest heritability of 14.11%. At the end of the research it was concluded that all the characters were highly heritable with the exception of leaf area index.

INTRODUCTION

Onion *(Allium cepa* L.) belongs to the family Alliaceae, other members include shallot *(A. cepa* L. var. *aggregation G.* Don.), common garlic *(A. sativum* L.), leek *(A. ampeloprasum* L. var. *porrum* L.) and chive *(A. schoenoprasum* L.) (Griffiths *et al.,* 2002). It originated from tropical central or western Asia and has been cultivated for a long period of time (Lonzotti, 2006). The cultivated onion is grown under a wide range of climates from temperate to tropical, it is the most important member of the family Alliaceae with monocotyledonous and cross pollinating behaviuor. It has diploid chromosome number 16 ($2n = 16$) (Khokhar, 2014). Onion is a biennial vegetable crop, its economic yield is bulb. Bulb formation is

complicated and environmental factors such day length, temperature, moisture, soil type, fertilization, pests and diseases affect its yield. Onion cultivars do not always perform in the same way year in year out and environmental factors strongly affect the development of onion cultivars (Seyede *et al.,* 2013). The total world production of onions in 2013 was 4,281,501 tons, out of which 648,247 tons were obtained from Africa, 267,164 tons from West Africa and 235,000 tons from Nigeria. These tonnage were obtained from 230,180 ha, 46,469 ha. 16,221 ha and 14,000 ha with average yield of 18,600.8 kg/ha globally, 13,950.1 kg/ha in West Africa, 16,470.3 kg/ha and 16,785.7 kg/ha for Nigeria (FAOSTAT, 2013). Onion is valued for its distinct pungent flavour and its essential ingredients cuisine. It is consumed round the year by all the sections of people through-out the world due to its healing properties in case of cardiac diseases, rheumatism, cancer, digestive disorders, blood sugar and prolong cough (Singh *et al.,* 2013). Onions are used both as foods and as seasoning; the immature bulbs are eaten raw or cooked and eaten as vegetable (Abubakar and Ado, 2013). Onion contains a phytochemical called Quercetin, which is effective in reducing cardiovascular diseases (Smith, 2003). Heritability is defined as the proportion of the observed total variability that is genetic, its estimates from variance component gives more useful information of genetic variation from the total phenotypic differences on individuals or families (Abubakar *et al.,* 2016). The objective of the study was to estimate heritability for enhanced storage shelf life and earliness in Onions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was conducted at *Fadama* Teaching and Research farm of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (Lat 13º 06′ 28″ N and Long 05º 12′ 46″ E) during the 2015/2016 onion season (October 2015 – April 2016). The climate is semiarid with a zone of savannah-type vegetation as part of the sub-Saharan Sudan belt of West Africa. falls in Sudan Savanna agro-ecological zone. The rainfall starts mostly in June and ends in

October with a mean annual rainfall of about 350 - 700 mm. The temperature of Sokoto ranges from 40 to 15℃ (Arnborg, 1988).

The experimentconsists of 12 parents (Table 1) and 25 hybrids (Table 2) making 37 Onion genotypes. Seeds of the genotypes were raised in the nursery where the soil was thoroughly mixed with farm yard manure at the rate of 5.5 t/ha. A sunken bed of 3.5m × 3m was constructed, divided into 37 segments and irrigated for two days. seeds of the genotypes were broadcasted in each segment and covered with millet stalk. The bed was irrigated daily and the stalks removed gradually after one week. The seedlings were then watered in the evening daily for ten days, then at three days' interval. The seedlings were allowed to grow for seven weeks and then transplanted. The land of the study experimental area was cleared off vegetation, ploughed and harrowed. the physical and chemical properties of the site was also determined before planting (Table 3).

Table 1: List of parents and their designations

S/N	Parent	Designation	S/N	Parent	Designation
1	Koriya Tounfafi Niger Republic	A	7	Yar Wurno	G
2	Yar Aka Aliero	B	8	Jar Albasa Illela	H
3	Yaska	C	9	Yar Tungar Tudu	I
4	Tasa	D	10	Jar Albasa Gwaranyo	J
5	Marsa	E	11	Kiba Gwaranyo	K
6	Yar Gigane	F	12	Yar Dawakin Kudu	L

S/N= Serial Number

Table 2: List of 25 hybrids

S/N	Gen	S/N	Gen
1	A× C	14	D × H
2	A × F	15	D × J
3	A× L	16	E × F
4	B × E	17	E × H
5	B × K	18	E × I
6	C × E	19	E × K
7	C × F	20	F × J
8	C × G	21	F × L
9	C × H	22	G × K
10	C × I	23	G × L
11	C × J	24	H × L
12	C × K	25	K × L
13	D × G		

S/N= Serial Number and Gen= Genotype

Table 3: Physical and chemical properties of soil of the experimental site at kwalkwalawa village sokoto

Parameters	0 – 15cm	15 – 30cm
Particle size distribution		
Sand (g/kg)	704	351
Silt (g/kg)	292	398
Clay (g/kg)	4	251
Ph	4.5	5.4
Organic carbon (g/kg)	10.6	10.2
Organic matter (g/kg)	18.3	17.6
Nitrogen (g/kg)	0.84	0.42
Phosphorous (g/kg)	1.04	0.94
Calcium (mol/kg)	0.50	0.35
Magnesium (mol/kg)	0.20	0.15
Potassium (mol/kg)	1.03	0.97
Sodium (mol/kg)	1.00	0.87
CEC (mol/kg)	6.36	5.06

The seedlings were laid out in a randomized complete block design with one row per treatment replicated three time. N.P.K15:15:15 was applied at 30kg N/ha, 30kg P_2O_5/ha and 30 kg K_2O/ha as a basal application and subsequently top dressed with 30 kg N/ha using urea at 3 WAT. Seedlings were planted at a spacing of 15cm × 20cm. Irrigation was at two days after planting and thereafter at five days' interval. The first and second weeding were done at 4^{th} and 8^{th} week after transplanting (WAT). Data was collected on plant height (cm), number

of leaves/plant, leaf area (cm_2), leaf area index, bolting percentage (%), days to maturity, bulb diameter (cm), bulb height (cm), fresh bulb weight (t/ha), cured bulb weight (t/ha) and percentage loss. After harvesting the cured bulbs were stored for five months, between the months of April and August. The climate is semiarid with a zone of savannah-type vegetation as part of the sub-Saharan Sudan belt of West Africa. falls in Sudan Savanna agro-ecological zone. Data collected ware analyzed using Genstat 17th edition.

Broad sense heritability was estimated using the formulae described by Fehr (1987).

$h^2 = \frac{\delta_g^2}{\delta_{ph}^2}$ x 100

$GCV = \frac{\delta_g^2}{x} \times 100$

$PCV = \frac{\delta_{ph}^2}{x} \times 100$

$ECV = PCV - GCV \times 100$

Where:

GCV = Genotypic coefficient of variation

PCV = Phenotypic coefficient of variation

ECV= Error coefficient of variation

δ_g^2 = Genotypic coefficient of variation

δ_{ph}^2 = Phenotypic variance

x = Grand mean

RESULTS

The highest phenotypic variance and genotypic variances were observed in leaf area (880.1667 and 453.7000 respectively) followed by Bolting percentage (258.46 and 192.7733). High phenotypic and genotypic coefficients of variation were observed. However, cured bulb weight had the highest values for both phenotypic (176.57 %) and genotypic (167.67 %) coefficients of variation followed by percentage bolting having 65.51 and 56.58 % respectively. Days to maturity and plant height on the other hand recorded the lowest phenotypic coefficient of variation of (11.64 and 12.79 % respectively) as well as genotypic coefficient of variation of (11.43 and 9.18 % respectively) (Table 4). The highest broad sense heritability was observed in percentage loss (98.01%) followed by days to maturity with 96.39%. leaf area index on the other hand had the lowest heritability of 14.11% (Table 4).

Table 4: Phenotypic Variance, Genotypic Variance, Broad Sense Heritability, Phenotypic Coefficient of Variation, Genotypic Coefficient of Variation and Error Coefficient of Variation estimates for growth and yield characters

Traits	PVR	GVR	PCV (%)	GCV (%)	ECV (%)	BSH (%)
Plant Height	39.6767	20.4500	12.79	9.18	3.61	51.54
Leave Number	4.8947	2.6440	21.19	15.58	5.62	54.02
Leaf Area	880.1667	453.7000	23.45	16.84	6.61	51.55
Leaf Area Index	0.8810	0.1243	48.89	18.37	30.52	14.11
Bolting Percentage	258.4600	192.7733	65.51	56.58	8.93	74.59
Days to Maturity	173.3947	167.1420	11.64	11.43	0.21	96.39
Bulb Diameter	1.2080	0.6790	16.39	12.29	4.10	56.21
Bulb Length	1.2074	0.7172	19.48	15.02	4.47	59.40
Cured Bulb Weight	99.1767	89.4300	176.57	167.67	8.90	90.17
Average Bulb Weight	0.0039	0.0035	40.85	38.57	2.29	89.12
Yield	108.5300	96.7167	40.85	38.57	2.29	89.12
Percentage Loss	181.3013	177.6953	30.12	29.82	0.30	98.01

Note: PVR = Phenotypic variance, GVR = Genotypic variance, PCV = Phenotypic Coefficient of variance, GCV = Genotypic coefficient of variance, ECV = Error coefficient of variance and BSH = Broad sense heritability.

DISCUSSION

High heritability (Broad sense) estimates for traits such as percentage loss, fresh bulb weight, average bulb weight, cured bulb weight, days to maturity and bulb length indicated that they can easily be selected for, which enhances the possibility of their breeding.

According to Puri *et al*. (1982), if estimate of broad-sense heritability of a particular trait is high, it indicates that environmental conditions have little impact on the phenotypic differences observed in the population. Those traits that had low heritability would not respond to selection easily, Obilana and Fakorede (1986) reported that, if a character is influenced by environment, its heritability would be low in a population. Therefore, the low heritability observed in leaf area index indicates that the characters is highly influenced by the environment.

CONCLUSION

All the characters can easily be selected for cultivar development program with the exception of leaf area index. Therefore, the results of these experiment indicated that the parents used in this experiment can be used in Onion breeding programs, that involves improvement of any of the characters considered, more especially, storability (percentage loss) and earliness (days to maturity).

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