EFFECTS OF NEEM SEED CAKE ON THE GROWTH AND YIELD OF OKRA
(ABELMOSCHUS ESCULENTUS (L.) MOENCH) IN ILORIN, NORTH CENTRAL
NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT
Soils of the Southern Guinea Savanna are generally inherently infertile owing to low vegetation cover, soil erosion and low organic matter content occasioned by constant bush fire. Consequently, farmers move close to streams and rivers in the dry season where okra is cultivated by irrigation. Field experiments were conducted at the Teaching and Research Farm of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria during the 2012 and 2013 cropping seasons to evaluate the effects of neem seed cake on the performance of okra. The neem seed cake was incorporated into the soil one week before planting of the okra seeds at the rate of 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 t/ha. The experiment was laid out as a randomized complete block design replicated three times. Data were collected on growth parameters (plant height, number of leaves, and number of branches) and yield parameters (fruit length and girth, number of fruits per plant, fruit weight per plant and fruit weight per hectare). The result of the experiments indicated that applying neem seed cake significantly affected the growth and yield parameters that were evaluated. Applying neem seed cake however gave the highest yield at 3t/ha. Percentage mean for the two years combined was 75.81% over the control. The results generally indicated that neem seed cake can be used when inorganic fertilizers are unavailable or beyond the reach of peasant farmers for improved crop growth and development.

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