Legumes' Contribution to Increasing Soil Fertility

Kshetrimayum Manishwari Devi
Ph.D Scholar, Department of Agronomy, College of Agriculture, Central Agricultural University, Imphal.
*Corresponding Author: ahenbisanakshetri@gmail.com

Legumes are likely to play a significant role in boosting soil carbon sequestration. Beyond the importance of nitrogen fixation and high protein meals, they may also offer a number of additional significant benefits. These include positive effects on soil quality and biodiversity. Creating the function of legumes and their contribution to both the sustainable intensification of manufacturing and the livelihoods of small holder farmers in many parts of the world requires a lot of attention. In addition to being used as food and animal feed, they play a critical role in preserving soil fertility by fixing atmospheric nitrogen, improving soil structures, and providing organic matter. Additionally, it typically serves as an intercrop, protects plants, and occasionally it is because of its short life cycle, it is grown as emergency vegetation. This crop is relatively profitable from an economic standpoint because it needs little fertilizer and other inputs. By storing carbon and reducing other pollutants, it also enhances environmental quality. Additionally, some kinds of legumes have the ability to remove toxic metals and organic contaminants, making them a viable plant team.

Nitrogen fixation

Protein content is noticeably high in the tissue of legume plants and seeds. This is immediately explained by a legume's ability to meet the majority of its own nitrogen requirements thanks to symbiotic rhizobia microorganisms found in their roots. Legumes that have been exposed to the appropriate strain of rhizobia bacteria can provide up to 90% of their own nitrogen (N). Rhizobia bacteria enter the root via passing through the root hairs soon after a legume seed germinates in the presence of the soil-borne rhizobia bacterium. Infected roots enlarge, forming pale pink nodules as a result of the bacteria multiplying. The microorganisms that eat the carbohydrates produced by the above-ground plant during the process of photosynthesis subsequently use the nitrogen gas already present in the soil and air to fuel. Protein content is noticeably high in the tissue of legume plants and seeds. This is immediately explained by a legume's ability to meet the majority of its own nitrogen requirements thanks to symbiotic rhizobia microorganisms found in their roots. Legumes that have been exposed to the appropriate strain of rhizobia bacteria can provide up to 90% of their own nitrogen (N). Rhizobia bacteria enter the root via passing through the root hairs soon after a legume seed germinates in the presence of the soil-borne rhizobia bacterium. Infected roots enlarge, forming pale pink nodules as a result of the bacteria multiplying. The microorganisms that eat the carbohydrates produced by the above-ground plant during the process of photosynthesis subsequently use the nitrogen gas already present in the soil and air to fuel. The gradual breakdown of the nodules, roots, and above-ground plant leftovers in a legume crop results in the release of nitrogen. When soil microorganisms die, the extremely nitrogen-rich organic material is broken down, releasing the nitrogen into the soil. Typically, two-thirds of the nitrogen fixed by a legume crop comes in handy during the following growing season after a legume in a rotation.

Benefits of legumes for improving soil quality

Legumes have a number of benefits for soil quality, including increasing soil organic matter, enhancing soil porosity, recycling nutrients, enhancing soil structure, lowering pH levels, diversifying microscopic life forms in the soil, and reducing disease and weed problems associated with grass-type crops.

Natural dependencies of the soil

Since legumes contain a lot of protein, they are also nitrogen-rich. The nitrogen provided by legumes enables the decomposition of crop residues in the soil and their conversion to soil-constructing natural matter because most crop residues contain far more carbon than nitrogen and soil microorganisms require both.

Soil permeability

A number of legumes have robust taproots that can penetrate the soil up to 6-8 feet deep and are half an inch in diameter. Earthworms and the tunnels they make are encouraged by nitrogen-rich legume leftovers. The earthworm burrows and root pathways increase soil porosity, allowing for deeper water and air infiltration.

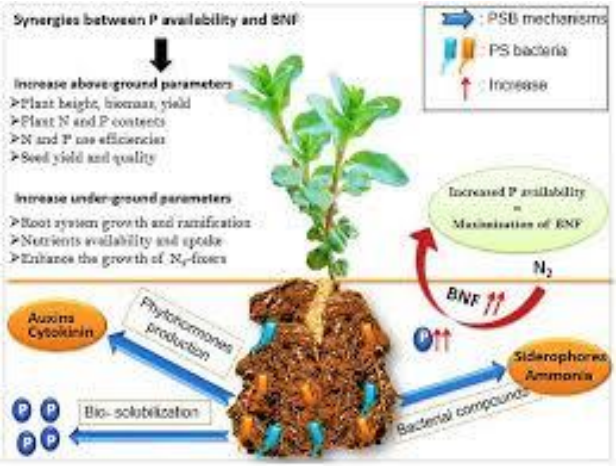
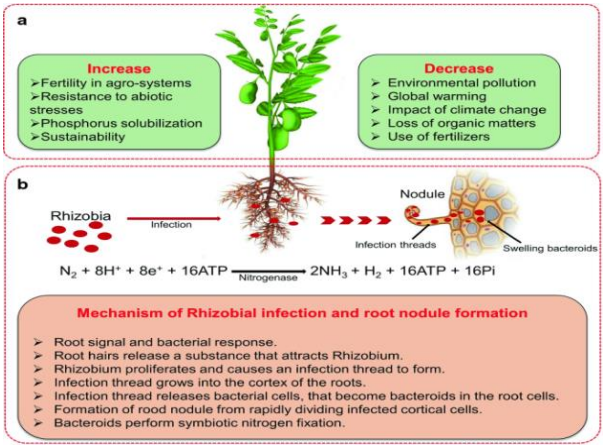


Figure 1 & 2: Biological Nitrogen - fixation

Reuse vitamins



Perennial and biennial legumes have deep roots that enable them to recycle agricultural nutrients that are found deep in the soil profile. This results in a more environmentally friendly use of used fertilizer and avoids nutrients from being wasted owing to leaching under the roots of shallower-rooted crops in the rotation.

Enhance the soil's morphology

More stable soil aggregates have been found, which is what is responsible for the benefits. Glomalin, a protein that coexists with other plants in symbiosis along legume and other plant roots, acts as a "glue" to link soil particles into solid aggregates. Since there is more pore space and tilth due to the increased aggregate stability, soil erodibility and crusting are decreased.

Reduced soil pH

The pH of the soil is ultimately lowered by inoculated, nodulated legumes because they obtain their nitrogen (N) as diatomic N from the air rather than from nitrate in the soil. In trials conducted in greenhouses, alfalfa and soybeans reduced the pH of a clay loam soil by a full pH unit. On soils with a pH that is higher than what is ideal for crop growth and development, legumes may help lower the pH and stimulate plant-soil microbial activity.

Improved soil chemistry due to the use of legume crops

The ability of soil to retain or denaturize harmful chemical compounds or other components for the agroecosystem and to give vitamins for crop growth are both related to soil's chemical qualities for sustainability. The main chemical components used to assess soil fertility are soil organic carbon concentration, pH, nutrient levels, and soil cation alternate capacity (CEC). Leguminous crops have been linked to soil chemical features, making it simple to interpret their specifics and allow for a quick improvement through N-fixation and root biomass. The pH of the soil's rhizosphere is altered by legume-based rotation. Legumes' root exudation and the alteration or release of organic acids on the epidermal cells' root surfaces can both increase the availability of P.

Conclusion

Legumes benefit the agroecosystem, agricultural productivity, soil conservation, soil biology, SOC and N stocks, soil chemical and physical properties, biological nitrogen-fixation, nitrous oxide emission, and nitrate leaching by reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.

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