HYDROGEL: THE WATER-SAVING SUPER SOIL

NATIONAL SCIENCE FAIR RESEARCH PLAN

LEVEL : MIDDLE LEVEL

CATEGORY : Environmental Science(MES)

SUBMITTED BY

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(GRADE : 7)

(Community Building & Academic Excellence)

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PROJECT TITLE : Hydrogel –

The Water-Saving Super Soil

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INTRODUCTION

This project explores how hydrogels, which are superabsorbent polymers, can store and slowly release water to help plants survive in dry conditions. By comparing soil with and without hydrogel, the project investigates how hydrogel affects soil moisture, plant height, and leaf growth. Results show that hydrogel-treated soil retains moisture longer, reduces the need for frequent watering, and supports better plant growth — making it an effective tool for water conservation in agriculture.

In many dry regions, water scarcity is a serious issue that affects plant growth and agriculture. Hydrogels are special materials that can absorb large amounts of water and release it slowly over time. This ability makes them ideal for soil improvement in dry areas. When mixed into soil, hydrogels act like small water reservoirs that keep roots hydrated even during droughts. The project studies how adding hydrogel to soil influences seed germination, plant growth, and moisture retention.

Can hydrogel improve soil's ability to retain water and promote better plant growth, thereby reducing the need for frequent watering in dry conditions?

If hydrogel is mixed with soil, then plants will grow better and the soil will retain moisture for a longer time compared to normal soil without hydrogel.

METHODS

Design of the Study

The study compared three groups of plant samples under similar environmental conditions: Group A: Only soil (no hydrogel); Group B: Soil mixed with hydrogel and watered daily; Group C: Soil mixed with hydrogel and watered every 3rd day.

Variables

Independent Variable: Presence of hydrogel in soil and watering frequency.

Dependent Variables: Plant height, number of leaves, seed germination time, and soil moisture.

Controlled Variables: Type of soil, type and number of seeds, pot size, amount of water initially added, temperature, and sunlight exposure.

PROCEDURE :

1. Three sets of pots were prepared (Group A, B, and C).
2. Equal quantities of soil and seeds were used in all pots.
3. Each pot received the same amount of water initially (100 mL).
4. All pots were placed under equal sunlight and temperature conditions.
5. Observations were made every 5 days, recording plant height, number of leaves, and soil moisture.
6. Results were compared after 20 days.

RESULT:

Data for the Tables

Table 1: Seed Germination (Days)

Observation Day	Group A	Group B	Group C
5	No changes	Crack seen	Crack seen
10	Crack seen	Sprouted	Sprouted
15	Sprouted	Sapling seen	Sapling seen
20	Sapling seen	Leaves seen	Leaves seen

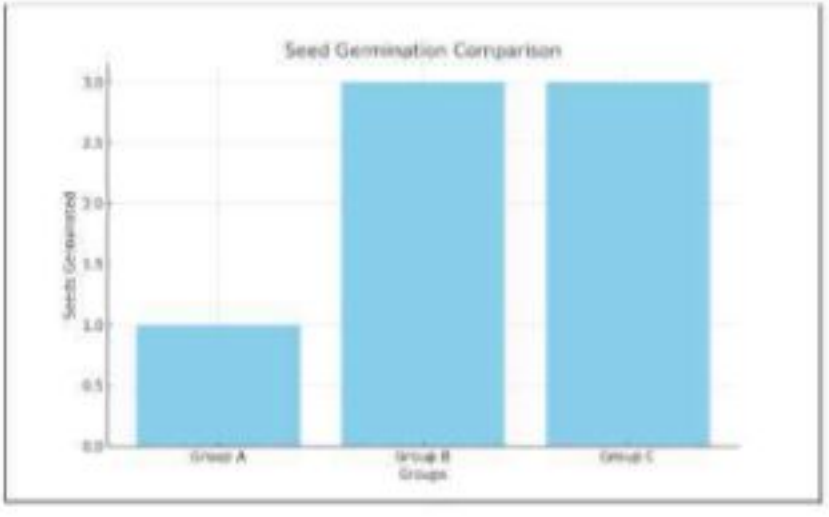


Table 2: Plant Height Comparison (cm)

Day	Group A(cm)	Group B(cm)	Group C(cm)
1	--	-	-
5	1	2	2
10	3	9	7
15	7	14	12
20	8	15	13.5

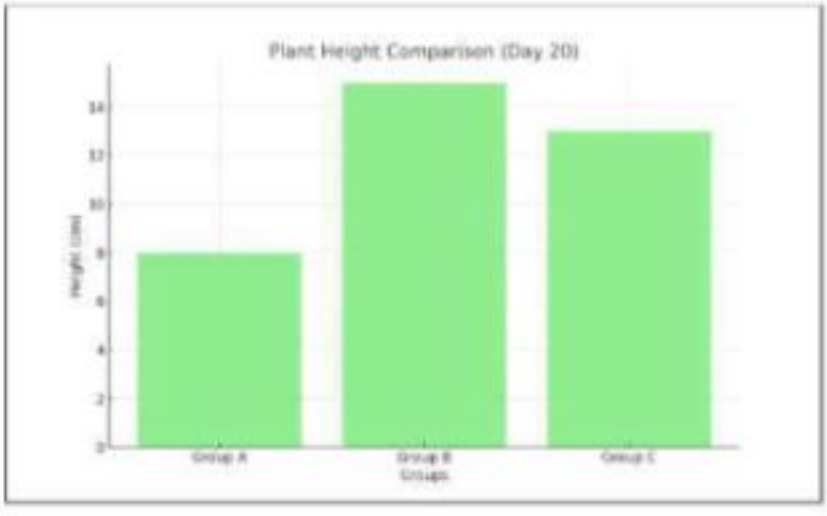
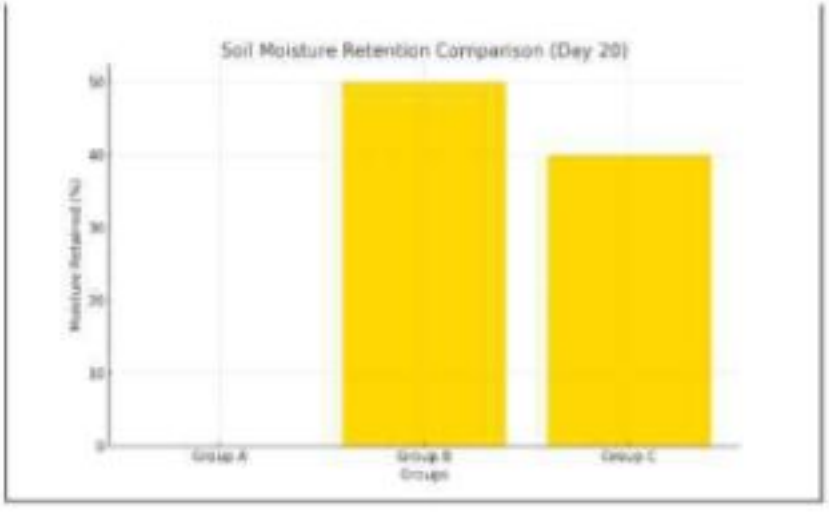


Table 3: Number of Leaves

Day	Group A	Group B	Group C
1	-	-	-
5	2	3	2
10	3	5	4
15	3	6	5
20	4	8	6

Table 4: Soil Moisture Retention (%)

Day	Group A	Group B	Group C
5	40	80	70
10	20	70	60
15	10	60	50
20	0	50	40




GROUP A


GROUP B


GROUP C

DISCUSSION

The experiment demonstrated that hydrogel significantly improves soil water retention and plant growth. Plants in hydrogel-treated soil showed faster germination, taller height, more leaves, and better health even with less watering. This proves that hydrogels reduce irrigation needs and enhance soil moisture.

Conclusion and Application

Hydrogels increase soil water retention and promote healthy plant growth while reducing the frequency of watering. This technology can be highly useful in agriculture, especially in drought-prone areas and rooftop gardens.

Future Enhancement

Future studies can focus on biodegradable hydrogels to reduce soil pollution and test different concentrations for maximum efficiency.

References

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