

EFFECT OF BORON, BERRY THINNING, GIRDLING AND GA₃ ON YIELD AND FRUIT QUALITY OF RUBY SEEDLESS GRAPES

Shaheen, M.A.*; Sahar M. Abdel Wahab* and Ansam S. Abd El-Rahman**

* Pomology Dept., Fac. Agric., Cairo Univ. Egypt.

**Hort. Res. Instit., Agric. Res. Center, Giza, Egypt.

ABSTRACT

This work was conducted during two successive seasons of 2004 & 2005 on ten-years-old Ruby Seedless grapevines grown in a sandy soil at El-Khatatba, Menoufiya governorate. The aim of this investigation was to study the influence of some treatments as spraying of boron at 0.2% (as Borax) at 75% bloom, GA₃ at 20 ppm when berry diameter reached 2-3mm, berry thinning by retention of five-shoulders at the base of the cluster with the alternative removal of the branches and removing the terminal third of the cluster at 2-3 mm berry diameter and girdling of trunk by removing a narrow ring of the bark (2-3mm) at 2-3 mm berry diameter on cluster quality, increasing yield and minimizing number of shot berries in "Ruby Seedless" clusters.. The used treatments were solitarily, double, triple and tetra combinations compared with the control treatment.

Results showed that combination treatment of boron + girdling + GA₃ positively increased yield / vine and cluster weight. While, the increase in cluster width, decrease in shot berries and berry physical characteristics were also increased especially when tetra combination treatment boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ was applied. The lowest acidity % and the highest TSS% and anthocyanine content were found in treated "Ruby Seedless" grapevines with single thinning treatment.

INTRODUCTION

"Ruby Seedless" grapevine also called "King Ruby" is a hybrid of "Emperor" and "Provano 75" (Olmo *et al.*, 1981). "Ruby Seedless" is a late maturing cultivar, medium berry size, oval berries, red to purple colour, very susceptible to powdery mildew and bunch rot, ripens in mid to late August (Harry *et al.*, 1991). Shot berries are one of the main problems in this cultivar (El-Shobaky *et al.*, 2001). Boron plays an important major role in flowering and fruiting process, however, boron deficiency does not help in the pollen germination on the stigma and pollen tube growth down to the ovary which was reflected failures in fertilization and shot berries formation (Gartol 1974; El-Shobaky *et al.*, 2001 and El Gendy *et al.*, 2006). In addition, boron encourages both cell division and cell enlargement (Nijjar, 1985). Christensen *et al.*, (1978) reported that the shot berries phenomenon is correlated with low boron level.

Thinning, which is a common practice carried out by table grape growers led to the reduction of the yield as to be within the limits of the normal load with a high quality (Echenique *et al.*, 1998; Fayek *et al.*, 2003; Abd El-Hameed and Abo El-Ez 2004; Omran *et al.*, 2004 and Abd El-Wahab, 2006).

Girdling or ringing has been used commercially to increase the accumulation of carbohydrates in the parts above the wounds. After fruit set,

girdling has a positive effect on berry weight and size, bunch weight and yield (Fayek *et al.*, 2003; Abd El-Hameed and Abo El-Ez, 2004; Omar and Girgis, 2005 and Abd El-Wahab 2006).

Gibberellic acid (GA₃) is used extensively to increase berry size of *Vitis vinifera* seedless table grapes. Gibberellins primarily affect growth by controlling cell elongation and division, which is reflected on yield and its components and fruit quality of various grape cultivars (Omar and El-Morsy 2000 and Omar and Girgis, 2005).

The goal of this study is to detect the effect of foliar applications of boron, manual thinning, girdling and GA₃ alone or in combinations on shot berries, yield and quality characteristics of Ruby Seedless grapes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This investigation was conducted in two successive seasons (2004 & 2005) in a private vineyard located at El-Khatatba, Menoufiya governorate, on mature Ruby Seedless grapevines. The vines were ten-years-old, spaced 1.75 X 2.5 meters apart and irrigated by the drip irrigation system, bilateral cordon trained with spur pruning and trellised with "Y" shape system. The vines were pruned during the third week of January with bud load 40 buds/vine. One hundred and forty four uniform Ruby Seedless grapevines were chosen (16 treatments x 3 replicates x 3 vines / replicate).

The treatments were as follows: five single treatments (control, boron at 0.2% (as Borax) at 75% bloom, berry thinning (Retention of five shoulders at the base of the cluster with the alternative removal of the branches and removing the terminal third of the cluster) at 2-3 mm berry diameter, girdling (by removing a narrow ring of the bark (2-3mm) entirely around the trunk) at 2-3 mm berry diameter and spraying the clusters by GA₃ at 20 ppm when berry diameter reached 2-3mm (GA₃)). Six double treatments (boron + berry thinning, boron + girdling, boron + GA₃, berry thinning + girdling, berry thinning + GA₃ and girdling + GA₃), four triple treatments (boron + berry thinning + girdling, boron + berry thinning + GA₃, boron + girdling + GA₃ and berry thinning + girdling + GA₃) and one tetra treatment (boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃).

When the check berries reached maturity stage (16-17% TSS according to Tourky *et al.*, (1995) or TSS/acid ratio reached about 22-24 according to El-Banna (1968), representative samples of 3 clusters /replicate were harvested from all considered vines to determine cluster characteristics. Berries were gathered from each cluster separately, grouped into normal and shot berries and each were counted. Normal berries were taken at random from each replicate to determine berry characteristics.

The following characteristics were determined:

1) Yield and physical characteristics of clusters:

Average yield in kg per vine was estimated at maturity stage.

Average cluster weight (g), Average cluster width (cm) and shot berries (%) was calculated by dividing number of shot berries by total number of berries per cluster.

- 2) **Physical properties of berries:** Average berry weight (g), berry size (cm³), berry dimensions (cm), berry firmness (gm/cm using Stations's instrument), and berry adherence strength (gm/cm using Stations's instrument).
- 3) **Chemical properties of berries:** Juice total soluble solids (TSS %), Juice total titratable acidity (as tartaric acid %) according to the A.O.A.C. (1970) and skin anthocyanin content (mg/100g F.W.) according to (Husia *et al.*, 1965).
 - **Statistical analysis:** The complete randomized block design was used. The statistical analysis of the present data was carried out according to Snedecor and Chocran (1972). Averages were compared using the new L.S.D. values at 5% level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) **Yield and physical characteristics of clusters:**

Yield: Data presented in Table (1) revealed that all treatments with the exception of berry thinning treatment had significantly increased the vine yield than the control in both seasons. The most pronounced increases in yield per vine were obtained with all GA₃ treatments solely or in combination with other treatments. For example, boron + girdling + GA₃ treatment gave the highest yield followed by girdling + GA₃ treatment compared with the control in both seasons.

Cluster weight: The highest cluster weight was obtained from vines treated with boron + girdling + GA₃ treatments, while thinning treatments gave the lowest cluster weight compared with the control in both seasons. Thus, the increase in vine yield was mainly due to the increase in cluster weight due to GA₃ treatment.

The obtained results are in agreement with those obtained by Omar & Girgis, (2005); Omar & El - Morsy (2000) and Omran *et al.*, (2005) who found that GA₃ treatment sprayed after fruit set significantly increased the vine yield and cluster weight. Also, El-Banna, (1981) and Rizk (1998) indicated that girdling of trunk at the fruit set stage increased yield. As for the effect of berry thinning, El-Hammady *et al.*, (2000) noticed a reduction in total yield and cluster weight.

Cluster width: Data in Table (1) also cleared that tetra combination treatment (boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃) significantly increased the cluster width compared with untreated vines in both seasons. Our results are in harmony with the findings of Pires *et al.*, (2003) which showed that GA₃ treatment increased the cluster width. Moreover, Fayek *et al.*, (2003) recorded that berry thinning and girdling of trunk at the fruit set stage increased cluster width.

Shot berries percentage: Percentages of shot berries in Ruby seedless cluster are presented in Table (1). All applied treatments reduced shot berries and improved the shape of cluster than control in both seasons of study. It is clear that boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment was the most effective compared with other treatments followed by berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment. On the other hand the highest percentage of shot berries/cluster was noticed on control clusters in the two seasons.

Table (1): Effect of different studied treatments on yield/vine and physical characteristics of Ruby Seedless grape clusters

Treatment	Yield/vine (kg)		Cluster weight (g)		Cluster width (cm)		Shot berries (%)	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
Control	25.67	26.70	807.3	839.6	21.4	22.0	14.67	15.11
Boron, 0.2% Borax	26.01	27.05	817.9	850.6	21.5	22.3	11.29	11.70
Berry thinning	19.50	20.09	613.3	631.7	21.7	22.8	7.33	7.59
Girdling	30.64	31.95	963.6	1005.0	21.8	22.8	8.33	8.73
GA3 of 20 ppm	30.16	31.46	948.5	989.3	21.8	22.7	9.61	10.01
Boron + Berry thinning	19.67	20.32	618.7	639.1	21.7	22.5	7.16	7.44
Boron + Girdling	30.84	32.25	969.9	1014.5	21.9	23.0	8.17	8.59
Boron + GA3	30.50	31.81	959.1	1000.3	21.8	22.8	8.66	9.05
Berry thinning + Girdling	24.33	25.30	765.1	795.7	22.1	23.4	4.57	4.84
Berry thinning + GA3	23.69	24.43	745.1	768.2	22.0	23.2	6.89	7.26
Girdling + GA3	31.28	32.63	983.7	1026.0	22.4	23.9	7.54	8.04
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling	24.47	25.40	769.4	798.6	22.2	23.6	3.91	4.16
Boron + Berry thinning + GA3	23.97	24.71	753.8	777.2	22.0	23.3	6.52	6.89
Boron + Girdling + GA3	31.57	32.93	992.9	1035.6	22.4	23.9	7.48	8.00
Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	25.35	26.37	797.3	829.2	22.5	24.1	3.83	4.10
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	25.57	26.80	804.2	838.4	22.6	24.2	3.34	3.58

New LSD at 5% = 6.31 6.69 198.3 216.7 0.9 1.6 3.21 3.03

Controlling shot berries % through hand thinning was reported by Khajuria and Bakhshi; (1988), El-Hammady *et al.*, (2000), Fayek *et al.*, (2003); Fadi (2004) and Abd El Baky (2004). As for the effect of boron, Christensen *et al.*, (1978); Sirakhov & Kolyankovskii (1985) and El - Shobaky *et al.*, (2001) noticed that boron spray before blooming reduced the shot berries percentage. Moreover, Zabadal & Dittmer (2000) and Josan *et al.*, (2001); Fayek *et al.*, (2003) and Abd El-Wahab (2006) found that girdling applications after fruit set reduced the shot berries percentage.

2) Physical characteristics of berries:

It was clear from Table (2) that berry weight, size, dimensions, firmness and berry adherence strength were significantly increased in all treatments except boron singly compared to untreated vines. The highest increments of physical berry characteristics were obtained in vines treated with boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment followed by berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment and boron + girdling + GA₃ treatment and girdling + GA₃ treatment and then boron + berry thinning + girdling in the tow seasons of study. Spraying the cluster with GA₃ treatment solely or in combination with the other treatment increased physical berry characteristics. The control in both seasons gave the lowest physical berry characteristics. These results are in agreement with those obtained by El-Shobaky *et al.*, (2001) and El Gendy *et al.*, (2006) on boron. Moreover, Abd El-Ghany (2001) and Omar & El-Morsy (2000) reported that GA₃ sprayed when berry size reached 6-8 mm in diameter significantly improved physical berry characteristics. Fayek *et al.*, (2003) and Abd El-Wahab (2006) recorded that thinning and girdling applications after fruit set improved the physical berry characteristics.

3) Chemical characteristics of berries:

Total soluble solids: The data regarding the effect of boron, GA₃, thinning and girdling and their combinations on TSS in the berries of Ruby Seedless cv. in both seasons are presented in Table (3). It is apparent that different treatments gave similar values of TSS to that of the control in both seasons of study. Thinning treatment gave the highest TSS content in berries compared with the control in both seasons.

Acidity: Data in Table (3) also revealed that different treatments did not affect acidity%. Whereas, the thinning as single treatment gave the lowest significant acidity followed by boron + berry thinning treatment and then thinning + GA₃ treatment compared with control in both seasons.

The obtained data are in line with those obtained by Echenique *et al.*, (1998), Sanjay (1995) and Moon & lee (1996) as they reported that berry thinning increased the percentage of total soluble solids and decreased of acidity percentage of the juice.

Anthocyanine: It is evident from data in Table (3) that anthocyanine content of berry skin of Ruby Seedless grapes was not significantly affected by different treatments compared with the control in both seasons. Whereas, the relatively highest content was only recorded by thinning treatment compared with control. These results are agree with those obtained by Fayek *et al.*, (2003) and Abd El-Wahab (2006) recorded that berry thinning increased the anthocyanin content of berries skin.

Table (2): Effect of different studied treatments on physical characteristics of Ruby Seedless grape berries

Treatment	Berry weight (g)		Berry size (cm ³)		Berry length (cm)		Berry diameter (cm)		Firmness (g/cm ³)		Adherence strength (g/cm ³)	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
Control	2.96	3.04	2.79	2.87	1.86	1.92	1.80	1.66	276.6	285.1	263.1	271.0
Boron, 0.2% Borax	2.98	3.09	2.82	2.92	1.87	1.93	1.81	1.66	286.2	296.6	272.1	281.9
Berry thinning	3.07	3.18	2.91	3.01	1.88	1.95	1.81	1.66	291.3	301.8	277.0	286.9
Girdling	3.46	3.62	3.30	3.46	2.10	2.19	1.77	1.84	314.3	329.3	298.8	313.1
GA3 of 26 ppm	3.37	3.51	3.22	3.36	2.09	2.17	1.76	1.83	303.0	316.7	288.1	300.2
Boron + Berry thinning	3.09	3.21	2.93	3.04	1.89	1.96	1.82	1.67	294.6	306.1	280.1	291.0
Boron + Girdling	3.47	3.65	3.32	3.49	2.11	2.19	1.78	1.85	319.3	336.6	303.6	318.1
Boron + GA3	3.40	3.55	3.25	3.40	2.10	2.18	1.77	1.84	306.5	320.3	291.4	304.5
Berry thinning + Girdling	3.59	3.81	3.44	3.65	2.14	2.23	1.79	1.87	336.5	366.7	319.9	339.1
Berry thinning + GA3	3.52	3.71	3.37	3.55	2.13	2.22	1.78	1.85	327.0	344.7	310.9	327.7
Girdling + GA3	3.71	3.95	3.56	3.79	2.18	2.27	1.81	1.89	347.3	370.3	330.2	352.0
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling	3.63	3.86	3.48	3.70	2.14	2.23	1.79	1.87	347.1	369.0	330.0	350.8
Boron + Berry thinning + GA3	3.55	3.75	3.40	3.59	2.13	2.23	1.78	1.86	331.9	350.8	315.5	333.5
Boron + Girdling + GA3	3.72	3.98	3.58	3.83	2.18	2.28	1.82	1.90	351.3	375.5	334.0	357.0
Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	3.87	4.14	3.73	3.99	2.20	2.29	1.83	1.91	381.1	375.7	333.8	387.1
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	3.89	4.17	3.75	4.02	2.21	2.31	1.84	1.91	366.4	382.4	338.8	383.5
New LSD at 5% =	0.14	0.16	0.16	0.19	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.01	54.7	69.5	57.2	66.9

Table (3): Effect of different studied treatments on chemical characteristics of Ruby Seedless grape berries

Treatment	TSS (%)		Acidity (%)		Anthocyanin (mg/100g F.W.)	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
Control	18.1	16.4	0.54	0.56	38.1	40.3
Boron, 0.2% Borax	18.0	16.2	0.54	0.57	37.8	39.7
Berry thinning	16.7	17.1	0.47	0.50	43.5	45.7
Girdling	15.7	16.0	0.55	0.59	34.8	37.0
GA3 of 20 ppm	15.9	16.1	0.55	0.57	35.4	37.5
Boron + Berry thinning	16.6	16.9	0.48	0.50	42.9	45.0
Boron + Girdling	15.7	15.9	0.56	0.59	34.7	36.8
Boron + GA3	15.8	16.1	0.55	0.58	35.1	37.3
Berry thinning + Girdling	16.4	16.6	0.50	0.53	40.5	42.6
Berry thinning + GA3	16.6	16.8	0.49	0.51	41.3	43.5
Girdling + GA3	15.5	15.7	0.57	0.60	32.9	35.0
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling	16.3	16.6	0.50	0.54	40.1	42.3
Boron + Berry thinning + GA3	16.5	16.8	0.50	0.52	40.7	42.9
Boron + Girdling + GA3	15.4	15.6	0.58	0.61	32.3	34.9
Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	16.3	16.5	0.51	0.54	38.7	40.8
Boron + Berry thinning + Girdling + GA3	16.2	16.5	0.52	0.55	38.4	40.6
New LSD at 5% =	0.6	0.7	0.05	0.06	5.4	5.2

From the above results it could be concluded that the best results with regard to yield and cluster weight of Ruby Seedless grapes were observed owing to boron + girdling + GA₃ treatment while the most significant treatment was boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment for cluster width. In addition, to avoid the incidence of shot berries disorder, the most effective treatment was boron + berry thinning + girdling + GA₃ treatment. Also, the same treatment gave the highest berry weight, berry size berry dimensions, berry firmness and berry adherence strength. Moreover, the thinning treatment was the most effective in reducing juice acidity and increasing TSS and anthocyanine content of berries skin for Ruby Seedless grapes.

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تأثير البورون والخف والتحلقي وحمض الجبريليك على المحصول وصفات الجودة لثمار العنب الروبي سيدلس

محمد عبد الجواد شاهين*، سحر محمد عبدالوهاب* وأنسام سامى عبد الرحمن**
قسم بساتين الفاكهة - كلية الزراعة - جامعة القاهرة - مصر*
**معهد بحوث البساتين - مركز البحوث الزراعية بالجيزة - مصر

أجرى هذا البحث خلال موسمي ٢٠٠٤ & ٢٠٠٥ على كرمات عنب روبي سيدلس عمر ١٠ سنوات منزرعة في ارض رملية بالخطاطبة - محافظة المنوفية لدراسة تأثير بعض المعاملات وهى الرش بالبورون بتركيز ٢٠٠٠، % عند ٧٥% تزهير، الرش بحمض الجبريليك بتركيز ٢٠ جزء فى المليون عندما يكون متوسط قطر الحبة ٢-٣ مم، الخف لىتنوى للحبات بترك الخمسة أكتاف الأولى وإزالة التفرعات الجانبية الأخرى بالتبادل ثم إزالة الثلث الطرفى من العنقود عندما يكون متوسط قطر الحبة ٢-٣ مم وتحلبيق الجذع بازالة حلقة بعرض ٢-٣ مم عندما يكون متوسط قطر الحبة ٢-٣ مم على صفات الثمار و زيادة المحصول والحد من حدوث ظاهرة حبات الحصرم. وقد استخدمت المعاملات منفردة أو فى تراكيب زوجية أو ثلاثية أو رباعية مقارنة بمعاملة الكنترول (كرمات غير معاملة).

أظهرت النتائج حدوث زيادة واضحة على كمية المحصول للكرمة ووزن العنقود عند استخدام البورون وحمض الجبريليك والتحلبيق كما زاد عرض العنقود وقلت ظاهرة حبات الحصرم وتحسنت الصفات الطبيعية للحبات بالمعاملة الرباعية بالبورون وحمض الجبريليك والخف والتحلبيق، بينما أنت معاملة الخف منفردة الى خفض نسبة الحموضة ورفع نسبة المواد الصلبة الذائبة ومحتوى الانثوسيانين فى قشرة الثمار.