

Lignocellulosic Wastes Used for the Cultivation of *Pleurotus ostreatus* Mushrooms: Effects on Productivity

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The potential for using cotton seed hulls (CSHs) and walnut shells (WSs) as new, essential substances for substrate preparation in the cultivation of *Pleurotus ostreatus* was studied. Substrates prepared with oak sawdust alone (OS) and with mixtures of OS and CSHs and WSs in different ratios were compared, and their effects on the earliness, total time, yield, and biological efficiency (BE) were determined. The nitrogen (N) content of the substrates prepared using CSHs and WSs alone was high, so the C:N ratio of the substrates diminished as the proportions of CSHs and WSs in the mixtures were increased. The highest yields were obtained from substrates containing the maximum amount of N. The highest yield and highest biological efficiency were obtained for a mixture of 25OS:75CSHs, indicating that the yield in the substrates increased as the amount of CSHs in the mixtures increased. The morphological characteristics were influenced by the various substrates and their various ratios. The properties of mushroom cultivation in bags were related to the nitrogen content, as indicated by the C:N ratios. The results indicated that CSHs and WSs could be used as new, essential substances in the preparation of substrates for the cultivation of *Pleurotus ostreatus*.

Keywords: Mushroom; Cotton seed hulls; Walnut shells; *Pleurotus ostreatus*

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INTRODUCTION

Pleurotus spp. mushroom production has increased extensively worldwide during the last few decades (Royse 2002). Generally, the mushrooms are grown on pasteurized wheat or rice straw, and they can be cultivated on a large variety of substrates that contain lignin and cellulose (Das and Mukherjee 2007). The mushrooms are a potential source of valuable protein, and their mycelium has the ability to bioconvert various lignocellulosic materials effectively (Zadrazil and Dube 1992). The mushrooms are an easily colonizable genus that cultures on various residues as substrates. This capability is a very important property because the rapid industrialization occurring worldwide is resulting in increasing amounts of waste generation. *Pleurotus* spp. are able to help in managing lignocellulosic wastes whose disposal has become a problem (Das and Mukherjee 2007). The several million tons of agricultural wastes are being disposed of by means of incineration, land applications, and land filling. The eliminating by incineration of wastes was adversely affect the environment because of the dirty gas emission. These wastes have a biorenewable energy resource and can be turned into high-value organic biomaterials such as nutritious food (Iscia and Demirer 2007).

Cotton waste is one of the lignocellulosic wastes that results from large scale planting in countries including China, Brazil, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Australia, where it is often considered as an “energy source”. The cotton production in the 2004 to 2005 harvesting season was 116.7 and 23 million bales in the world and in the United States (Iscia and Demirer 2007), respectively. Additionally, there is over 2.25 million tons of cotton waste generated every year in United States (Holt *et al.* 2000). Walnut shell is another lignocellulosic waste to be considered here. Walnut production in 2009 was approximately 2.2 million tons in the world (Pirayesh *et al.* 2012). Walnut shell composes 67% of the total weight of the fruit body and this waste is about 1.5 million tons annually (Martinez *et al.* 2003).

Pleurotus ostreatus mushrooms can produce fruit bodies on the straws of rice, wheat, bazar, ragi, sorghum, maize, weed plants, wood (*e.g.*, poplar and oak), cotton stalks, poplar sawdust, beer grain, waste paper, and hazelnut (Wang *et al.* 2001; Yildiz *et al.* 2003; Das and Mukherjee 2007). Media made from a mixture of different portions of lignocellulosic wastes provides advantages that has affected several properties such as cultivation time, biological efficiency, firmness, yield, total number of fruiting bodies, and fruiting body average weight per bag (Ruiz-Rodriguez *et al.* 2010; Alananbeh *et al.* 2014).

The aim of the current work was to determine the effects of oak wood sawdust (OS), cottonseed hulls (CSHs), walnut shell (WSs), and their mixtures on the yield and quality of *P. ostreatus* mushrooms. In this paper, the results of an assessment of the influence of waste substrates on the earliness and morphological characteristics of *P. ostreatus* mushrooms are presented.

EXPERIMENTAL

Materials

The substrates used in this study were industrial wastes. To determine which substrates and substrate ratios were suitable for the cultivation of *Pleurotus ostreatus*, various waste materials and combinations were tested. Walnut shells and oak sawdust were supplied by walnut shell growers in the vicinity of the Kahramanmaras Province in Turkey. Air-dried walnut shells were milled with a grinder. Cotton linter was obtained from an olive oil factory in the vicinity of Kahramanmaras (Dok Company). The mushroom strain used in this study was the commercial strain of *P. ostreatus*. The mycelium of *P. ostreatus* was supplied by the mushroom spawn company Agromycel (Denizli, Turkey).

Methods

Cultures were grown and maintained on antibiotic malt agar and stored in an incubator at 25 °C for three weeks. After the culture run was completed, the mycelium was added to sawdust in bottles for spawning (five months). Homogeneous substrate mixtures were obtained by mixing in the component materials based on their dry weights (Table 1).

The substrate mixtures were wetted for 3 d to increase their moisture content to suitable levels, as determined by the palm test method (Kwon and Kim 2004). The mixed substrate was put in heat-resistant polypropylene bags (40 x 60 cm) and sterilized in an autoclave at 121 °C for 90 min. After the substrate was sterilized, its moisture content, pH, and carbon (C) content were determined. The total nitrogen (N) content of the substrates

was determined *via* the Kjeldahl method, and the C:N ratios were calculated. The correction factor 4.38 was used to determine the total protein content from the total nitrogen content (Breene 1990). Later, the substrate samples were left to cool to ambient temperature and were immediately inoculated with 5% oak sawdust spawn for cultivation. The inoculated substrate was placed in polyethylene bags (1 kg of substrate per bag) and incubated at room temperature until colonization was completed. Afterwards, the samples were subjected to conditions of 25 °C and 95 to 90% relative humidity for spawn running.

Table 1. Substrates and Mixing Ratios

Substrates and Mixing Ratio	Symbol
Oak sawdust	OS
Cotton seed hull	CSH
75% oak sawdust:25% cotton seed hull	75OS:25CSH
50% oak sawdust:50% cotton seed hull	50OS:50CSH
25% oak sawdust:75% cotton seed hull	25OS:75CSH
Walnut shell	WS
75% oak sawdust:25%walnut shell	75OS:25WS
50% oak sawdust:50% walnut shell	50OS:50WS
25% oak sawdust:75% walnut shell	25OS:75WS

After the mycelium colonization was completed, the bags were exposed to conditions of 18 ± 2 °C and 80% to 90% relative humidity in a controlled room. After one flush of mushroom was harvested, the spawn run time, earliness, yield, biological efficiency, fresh weight, and physical properties (diameter of stalk, mm; length of stalk, mm; diameter of pileus, mm; thickness of pileus, mm) of the mushrooms were also determined. Mushroom yield (g) was calculated by adding the weights of the mushrooms in each of the bags and dividing by the number of bags to obtain the average weight. Biological efficiencies were defined as the percentage of the fresh weight of harvested mushrooms over the dry weight of substrate, as explained by Zervakis and Balis (1992).

In all experiments, a completely randomized design with 10 replicates per treatment was applied. The results were evaluated by analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Duncan tests to populate homogeneity groups that showed significant differences at the 95% confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The humidity and some chemical properties of the substrates, such as pH, protein, C, and N contents, and C:N ratios, are given in Table 2. Average of humidity and some chemical properties of 5 replications were calculated for each of the substrates. The highest humidity was found in CSHs, followed by 25OS:75CSH, 50OS:50CSH, and 75OS:25CSH, in that order. In addition, the protein content of the substrates prepared using mixtures of OS and WSs was lower than those of the others. The C contents of the CSHs and the mixtures of CSHs with OS were lower than those of the other substrates. The substrates prepared from OS alone contained 1.14% N, and the N content of the substrates decreased

as the OS content in the mixtures increased. The mixture of OS had the highest C:N ratio, followed by 75OS:25WS and 50OS:50WS (Table 2).

Table 2. Average Humidity and some Chemical Properties of the Substrates Prepared from OS, CSHs, and WSs Alone and their Mixtures with OS at Various Ratios

Substrates	Humidity (%)	pH	Protein (%)	C (%)	N (%)	C/N ratio
OS	64.86	7.75	4.99	41.86	1.14	36.78
CSH	65.82	7.1	9.11	40.22	2.08	19.37
75OS:25CSH	65.10	6.42	6.00	41.45	1.37	30.21
50OS:50CSH	65.34	6.33	7.05	41.04	1.61	25.54
25OS:75CSH	65.58	7.41	8.06	40.63	1.84	22.06
WS	50.10	6.21	6.44	43.17	1.47	29.37
75OS:25WS	61.17	7.24	5.34	42.19	1.22	34.55
50OS:50WS	57.48	6.73	5.69	42.52	1.30	32.60
25OS:75WS	53.79	6.69	6.09	42.84	1.39	30.89

The effects of the morphological and chemical properties of the substrates on the characteristics of *Pleurotus ostreatus* mushroom production, particularly mycelium running, yield, and BE, have been examined in recent studies (Yildiz *et al.* 2003; Das and Mukherjee 2007). In the present study, the humidity in the mixtures of OS with CSHs was higher than that in the mixtures of OS with WSs. This is because CSHs have greater water holding capacity than WSs (Mohamed 1993; Ayrilmiş *et al.* 2013). Moisture content is a very important factor affecting the cultivation of *P. ostreatus* mushrooms because it influences yield and mushroom production (Wang *et al.* 2001). In earlier studies, the moisture content of the substrates was adjusted to 43% to 75% (Wang *et al.* 2001; Hernandez *et al.* 2003). In this study, the moisture content of the substrates was, essentially, within the same range. *Pleurotus ostreatus* mushrooms were produced in a pH range between 6.21 and 7.75, similar to pH ranges used by Yildiz *et al.* (2003). The C:N ratios increased when the amount of OS increased in the mixtures of OS with CSHs and WSs (Table 2). The C:N ratio depended on the sources of both the C and the N. The high N contents positively affected yield and productivity. According to Rizki and Tamai (2011), the N content affected spawn running time, primordial initiation, and biological efficiency. The low C:N ratios of the substrates increased yield and BE such as CSH and 25OS:75CSH in substrates. In this study, the best results were obtained at C:N ratios of 19.00 and 22.00. Other studies also have reported a positive correlation between growth and low substrate C:N ratios (Philippoussis *et al.* 2001; Stamets 2005; Narain *et al.* 2008).

Mushrooms were harvested from the substrate obtained with one flush. Earliness and total time were affected by the substrate mixtures ($p < 0.01$). Earliness was shorter in CSH and WS substrates, and the earliness (d) in the substrates increased as the amount of OS in the mixtures was increased. The maximum total time was obtained from the OS mixtures, and the total time in the substrates increased as the amount of OS in the mixtures was increased. Yield was affected by the substrate mixtures ($p < 0.01$), varying between 13.41 and 113.16 g/kg substrate.

The highest yield was achieved with the mixture of 25OS:75CSH. The yields from 75OS:25WS, 50OS:50WS, and 25OS:75WS were lower. BE varied significantly, as indicated by its values of 2.52% in 25OS:75WS and 36.87% in 25OS:75CSH (Table 3).

Table 3. Earliness, Total Time, Yield, and Biological Efficiency (be) of the Substrates Prepared by OS, CSHs, and WSs Alone and their Mixtures with OS in Different Ratios

Symbol	Earliness (days)	Total time (spawn run time and earliness)	Yield (g/kg substrate)	BE (%)
OS	111.23d**	211.23f**	41.45a**	11.80ab**
CSH	58.26b	121.26c	87.03b	25.46bc
75OS:25CSH	111.5d	187.50e	32.10a	11.65ab
50OS:50CSH	101.89d	177.89e	34.14a	11.91ab
25OS:75CSH	72.63bc	148.63d	113.16b	36.87c
WS	27.68a	53.68a	40.77a	7.73a
75OS:25WS	97.00d	173.00e	28.67a	6.14a
50OS:50WS	79.00c	151.00d	16.92a	4.40a
25OS:75WS	28.00a	98.00b	13.41a	2.52a

**Significant at 0.01 level in ANOVA; mean values with the same lower-case letters are not significantly different according to Duncan's mean separation test.

The earliness days of WSs and the mixtures of WSs with OS were less than those of the CSHs and the mixtures of CSHs with OS substrates. In addition, the earliness and total time in the substrates increased as the amount of OS in the mixtures was increased. Other studies also have indicated that high extractives content in substrates limits the growth of microorganisms (Mahesh and Satish 2008; Mutai *et al.* 2009), and the oak sawdust (OS) that was used contained a high amount of extractives (Szczechowski *et al.* 2007).

The highest yield was observed for the mixture of 25OS:75CSH. The yield in the substrates increased as the amount of CSHs in the mixtures increased because of the larger water content of the CSHs (Mohamed 1993). Also, Ayrilmiş *et al.* (2013) observed that the yield in the substrates decreased as the amount of WSs in the mixtures increased because the WSs had less water absorption capacity. The biological efficiency directly affected the yield. Several substrates were used to cultivate *Pleurotus* spp., and the BE values varied from 17% to 79% (Dhanda *et al.* 1996; Wang *et al.* 2001, Rizki and Tamai 2011).

Table 4 shows the fresh weight, diameters of stalk and pileus, lengths of stalk, and thickness of pileus. The fresh weight, length of stalk, and diameter of pileus were affected by the substrate mixtures ($p < 0.01$), but the diameters of stalk and thickness of pileus were not affected by the substrate mixtures. The highest fresh weight was obtained from the mixture of 23.87 g in 75OS:25CSH. The maximum diameter of stalk and length of stalk were observed for the CSHs. The largest diameter of pileus (102.98 mm) was observed from the mixture of 75OS:25CSH, and the best thickness of pileus (18.48 mm) was obtained from the mixture of 25OS:75CSH.

Table 4. Fresh Weight and Morphological Characteristics of *Pleurotus ostreatus* on Selected Substrates

Symbol	Fresh weight (g)	Diameter of stalk (mm)	Length of stalk (mm)	Diameter of pileus (mm)	Thickness of pileus (mm)
OS	18.86bc**	14.18a ^{ns}	39.82ab**	87.52cd**	9.85a ^{ns}
CSH	12.94abc	72.35a	54.13c	78.49bc	6.19a
75OS:25CSH	23.87c	15.78a	44.26abc	102.98d	9.93a
50OS:50CSH	18.84bc	13.07a	32.37a	83.90c	9.60a
25OS:75CSH	17.07bc	10.93a	52.42bc	84.98cd	18.48a
WS	11.41ab	8.76a	41.92abc	60.09a	7.20a
75OS:25WS	5.61a	8.17a	36.96a	62.07ab	5.44a
50OS:50WS	16.06abc	12.03a	41.55abc	84.66cd	8.54a
25OS:75WS	13.41abc	10.58a	51.45bc	81.53c	7.79a

**Significant at 0.01 level and ^{ns} Non-significant level in ANOVA, and mean values with the same lower-case letters are not significantly different according to Duncan's mean separation test.

The mixtures of OS with CSHs and OS alone in the substrates had greater fresh weight than the WSs in the substrates and their mixtures. In other words, yield depended on the water-holding capacity of the substrates. Most of the mixtures of OS with CSHs and CSH alone in the substrates were found to have better morphological properties than the mixtures of OS with WSs and WSs alone. In this study, some results (such as stalk length, pileus diameter) were in agreement with those reported in another study (Oseni *et al.* 2012). Onyango *et al.* (2011) indicated that large mushrooms were expected to be of good quality and have high production rates, but another study considered this only a slight advantage because such mushrooms tend to break during wrapping (Shen and Royse 2001).

The present investigation indicates that the substrates and mixing ratios affected earliness, yield, biological efficiency, fresh weight, and morphological properties of mushroom. Some mixings provide advantages, for example, a mixture of 25OS:75CSH increased yield and biological efficiency and mixtures of 75OS:25CSH improved fresh weight of *Pleurotus ostreatus* mushrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The results of the present study support the efficient production of *Pleurotus ostreatus* mushrooms on substrates that are mixtures of CSHs and WSs. In addition, these substrates can be used as alternatives to wood.
2. Utilizing these waste products as substrates for the production of mushrooms would reduce the adverse environmental effects of these waste products.
3. An economical strategy for converting waste products into a nutritious food source is represented in this study.

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