

**GENETIC PARAMETERS AND HETEROSIS IN RUBBER
(HEVEA BRASILIENSIS) MUELL. ARG. :
V. HYBRID VIGOUR FOR YIELD AND YIELD COMPONENTS
AMONG THE RRII 400 SERIES CLONES IN SMALL SCALE
EVALUATION**

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Performance of twenty three hybrid clones of rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) resultant of the cross RRII 105 x RRIC 100 was evaluated during the mature phase. The hybrid clones exhibited significant clonal variation for annual yield over seven years and for the yield components viz., total volume of latex, dry rubber content, initial rate of latex flow, plugging index, girth at opening, girth increment on tapping, number of latex vessel rows and thickness of virgin and renewed bark, indicating sufficient variability for selection. Out of the 23 hybrid clones tested, 10 showed better potential for crop improvement in rubber as evidenced by estimates of standard heterosis.

Key words: Clonal variation, Hybrid clones, Standard heterosis.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of any plant breeding programme is essentially to improve the genetic potential of the crop, particularly the productivity of a genotype. This is being achieved in several ways, the most attractive and achievable one being heterosis breeding. Heterosis has been exploited since quite long in cross-pollinated crops and cross-pollination is the rule rather than an exception in rubber. The present study deals with heterosis for yield and yield components among a set of twenty three hybrid clones of the cross RRII 105 x RRIC 100 under small-scale evaluation. Early evaluation of these clones at the immature phase had resulted in the identification of 15 clones having heterotic improvement for yield over the standard clone RRII 105 (Licy *et al.*, 1992). Further studies have also indicated the association of yield and yield attributes in these clones both in the early and mature phases (Licy, 1998; Licy *et al.*, 1993a, 1993b, 1998).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials comprised twenty-five clones of *Hevea brasiliensis* (Willd. ex Adr. de Juss.) Muell. Arg. which constituted twenty-three hybrid clones resultant of a biparental cross of RRII 105 x RRIC 100, and the two parental clones. The field experiment was laid out at the Rubber Research Institute of India, Kottayam in 1985 as a small scale evaluation trial. A randomised block design with three replications and four plants per plot was adopted with a spacing of 3.4 x 6.7 m. All cultural operations were carried out uniformly as recommended by the Rubber Board. The clones were opened for early tapping at four and a half years after field planting in order to evaluate the early performance in the immature growth phase. The trees were opened for regular tapping in 1993 following 1/2 S d/3 system. Yield was recorded as gram per tree per tap by cup coagulation method. The characters under ob-

servation included (1) annual mean dry rubber yield (g/t/t) over the first seven years of tapping, (2) volume of latex (ml/tap), (3) initial rate of latex flow, (4) dry rubber content (%), (5) plugging index over the first three years of tapping, (6) girth at opening (cm), (7) girth increment on tapping (cm) over the first 6 years of tapping, (8) number of latex vessel rows in virgin bark at opening year and during the 3rd year of tapping, (9) virgin bark thickness (mm) at opening and during the 3rd year of tapping, (10) number of latex vessel rows in renewed bark, (11) renewed bark thickness (mm) after six years renewal, and (12) wintering. Analysis of variance and heterotic values for all the characters were worked out as per the standard procedure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of variance revealed significant clonal variation for all the characters studied (Table 1). These observations suggest the presence of inherent genetic variability in the population which would enhance selection programme, wherein selection pressure can profitably be exerted on those characters. The results are in agreement with the findings of Mydin (1992) and Premakumari (1992). Ranges of variation in yield and yield components were in conformity with the result reported by Gilbert *et al.*, (1973), Nga and Subramaniam (1974), Tan *et al.*, (1975) and Licy *et al.*, (1992). Although Saraswathamma and Sethuraj (1975) have reported clonal variations for latex flow characters and yield, ranges of variation observed in the present study for bark thickness, plugging index, girth increment and DRC were low, indicating limited scope for selection based on these characters.

Heterosis for growth and dry rubber yield

Mean girth at opening of seven clones *viz.*, RRII 404, RRII 405, RRII 407, RRII 408, RRII 414, RRII 420 and RRII 429 were sig-

nificantly superior to RRII 105 (Table 1) and the clone RRII 429 exhibited maximum standard heterosis (27.99%). This result shows the effectiveness of heterosis breeding for growth improvement. Mydin *et al.*, (1990) also recorded high estimates of heterosis for juvenile girth in certain hybrid *Hevea* clones. Early vigour facilitates early tapping. High girth in some of these hybrid clones render scope for early exploitation, by a reduction of the immaturity period. The value addition in terms of improved vigour combined with good latex yield is a unique feature of these clones. Twelve clones were found to show better girth increment over six years of tapping than RRII 105 of which RRII 407 (standard heterosis of 66.39%) was found to be significantly superior to RRII 105. High girth increment on tapping is a good sign of possible yield increase on tapping.

Mean dry rubber yield data shows that 10 hybrid clones out yielded RRII 105, the check variety, which is also the female parent. Two clones *viz.*, RRII 414 (81.11 g/t/t) and RRII 429 (80.22 g/t/t) were found to be significantly superior to RRII 105 in terms of yield (Table 1). This indicates that these hybrids have got higher potential for yield than the commercially popular variety, RRII 105 which points towards future promise. The hybrid clones exhibited standard heterosis estimates varying from 0.08 to 45.61% (Table 2). Heterosis of more than 20% for yield, is considered to be adequate for commercial exploitation of crop varieties (Rai, 1979). In the present study, standard heterosis observed in clones RRII 403, RRII 407, RRII 414, RRII 417, RRII 421, RRII 422, RRII 429 and RRII 430 offer promise for further improvement.

Heterosis for physiological yield components

Nine clones *viz.*, RRII 403, RRII 404, RRII 410, RRII 414, RRII 417, RRII 422, RRII 427, RRII 429 and RRII 430 were found to exhibit positive standard heterosis rang-

Table 1. Growth and yield attributes of RR11 400 series clones along with the parents

Clones	Girth at opening (cm)	Girth increment (cm)	Dry rubber yield* (g/t/t)	Volume of latex** (ml/t/t)	Rate of flow	Plugging index	Dry rubber content (%)	Bark thickness		No. of latex vessel rows	
								In virgin bark		In virgin bark	
								at opening	at 3rd year of tapping	at opening	In renewed bark
RR11 403	54.54	10.18	71.60	199.83	28.8 0	2.63	34.00	6.17	7.50	11.50	18.25
RR11 404	58.69	11.22	66.60	199.47	32.76	2.87	31.00	6.27	7.88	8.11	14.72
RR11 405	57.54	12.11	32.90	96.83	24.28	4.67	32.07	6.40	7.79	9.83	13.83
RR11 407	56.34	20.65	68.90	173.31	22.52	2.63	28.19	6.78	8.04	7.28	15.39
RR11 408	56.84	18.08	32.90	105.74	21.61	4.46	31.60	7.29	8.67	9.78	18.05
RR11 410	53.52	16.27	55.60	188.70	44.76	3.81	32.58	6.67	7.84	8.75	19.58
RR11 411	51.38	17.20	43.80	120.43	31.59	4.92	36.74	5.97	7.28	10.50	17.05
RR11 414	57.49	17.02	81.11	280.12	43.55	2.59	30.64	7.14	8.61	11.77	21.76
RR11 415	50.39	15.96	25.90	63.65	22.40	5.03	34.68	6.26	7.18	6.74	12.05
RR11 417	54.73	10.76	71.35	209.63	40.19	3.42	34.63	6.71	8.09	13.00	20.49
RR11 418	51.30	3.84	37.80	132.30	31.21	3.70	34.21	6.84	8.00	8.00	16.00
RR11 419	51.04	13.45	24.60	91.70	15.50	3.32	27.10	6.27	7.21	5.28	9.33
RR11 420	57.24	17.42	39.00	94.49	16.19	3.26	30.63	6.02	7.29	9.28	14.16
RR11 421	50.64	5.99	70.90	173.70	32.85	2.97	36.65	6.70	8.39	13.45	20.44
RR11 422	52.40	8.71	72.52	237.49	39.47	2.82	34.27	6.89	8.18	14.62	21.66
RR11 423	50.59	14.78	51.30	138.37	31.92	3.75	33.53	6.51	7.52	7.39	15.44
RR11 424	49.59	14.11	51.50	174.90	30.58	2.88	31.06	6.50	7.57	9.84	16.55
RR11 425	52.08	11.17	52.30	183.64	32.01	2.77	28.51	6.94	8.21	6.78	17.44
RR11 426	49.68	12.98	49.50	154.77	29.96	2.92	30.02	6.38	7.58	9.39	17.22
RR11 427	52.79	6.02	56.90	222.48	35.43	2.47	29.88	7.05	8.18	8.22	16.72
RR11 428	52.40	10.70	44.40	132.97	37.74	4.02	32.60	6.25	7.40	9.62	15.77
RR11 429	62.77	14.33	80.22	237.16	31.40	2.33	28.81	6.19	7.89	12.95	22.00
RR11 430	53.42	8.44	69.22	223.84	53.00	3.90	35.26	6.63	7.92	11.73	18.32
RR11 105	49.04	12.41	55.70	185.76	45.21	3.60	33.46	7.00	8.17	10.58	15.21
RR11 100	50.78	5.88	37.60	121.40	28.54	3.59	31.15	6.26	7.11	7.80	15.55
G. Mean	53.49	12.39	53.76	165.71	32.15	3.41	32.13	6.56	7.83	9.69	16.92
CD (P= 0.05)	6.50	5.76	17.64	55.23	7.29	0.83	3.72	0.73	0.93	3.36	4.27
F ratio	2.27**	0.74*	7.38**	7.95**	12.61**	7.02**	3.97**	2.01*	1.83*	4.01*	4.13**

* mean over 7 years

** mean over 3 years

Table 2. Estimates of standard heterosis for growth and yield attributes of RR11 400 series clones

Clones	Girth at opening (cm)	Girth increment (cm)	Dry rubber yield*** (g/t/t)	Volume of latex † (ml/t/t)	Rate of flow	Plugging index	Dry rubber content (%)	Bark thickness			No. of latex vessel rows		
								In virgin bark		In renewed bark	In virgin bark		In renewed bark
								at opening	at tapping		at opening	at tapping	
RR11 403	11.22	-17.96	28.55	7.57	-36.72	-26.94**	1.61	-11.85	-8.20	-0.87	8.69	19.98	-30.34
RR11 404	19.68 **	-9.58	19.56	7.38	-28.02	-20.27*	-7.35	-10.42	-3.55	-13.13	-23.35	-3.22	-9.44
RR11 405	17.33 **	-2.42	-40.93	-47.87	-46.65	29.72	-4.15	-8.57	-4.66	-8.88	-7.08	-9.07	-30.08
RR11 407	14.89 *	66.39 *	23.69	-6.70	-50.51	-26.94**	-15.75	-3.14	-1.59	3.13	-31.19	1.18	-13.67
RR11 408	15.91 *	45.68	-40.93	-43.08	-52.52	23.88	-5.56	4.14	6.12	11.5	-7.56	18.67	-11.40
RR11 410	9.14	31.10	-0.01	1.58	-1.65	5.83	-2.63	-4.71	-4.04	6.75	-17.29	28.73 *	-10.32
RR11 411	4.77	38.59	-21.36	-35.16	-30.59	36.67	9.80	-14.71	-10.89	-8.38	-0.75	12.09	-14.29
RR11 414	17.23 *	37.15	45.61**	50.79**	-4.31	-28.05**	-8.43	2.00	5.39	-1.88	11.24	43.06 **	2.32
RR11 415	2.75	28.61	-53.50	-65.74	-50.78	39.72	3.65	-10.57	-12.12	-15.77	-36.29	-20.78	-51.03
RR11 417	11.6	-13.2	28.09	12.85	-11.69	-5.00	3.49	-4.14	-2.08	4.25	22.87	34.71 *	-2.32
RR11 418	4.61	-69.05	-32.13	-28.78	-31.42	2.78	2.24	-2.28	-2.08	-7.25	-24.39	5.19	-32.25
RR11 419	4.08	8.38	-55.83	-50.63	-65.94	-7.78	-19.01	-10.42	-11.75	-13.5	-50.09	-38.66	-53.86
RR11 420	16.72 *	40.37	-29.98	-49.13	-64.43	-9.44	-8.46	-14.00	-10.77	-8.88	-12.28	-6.90	-17.75
RR11 421	3.26	-51.73	27.28	-6.49	-27.82	-17.50	9.53	-4.28	2.69	-5.63	27.13	34.39 *	-17.19
RR11 422	6.85	-29.81	30.19	27.85	-13.27	-21.67*	2.42	-1.57	0.12	-4.13	38.18 *	42.41 **	33.44 **
RR11 423	3.16	19.09	-7.89	-25.51	-29.86	4.17	0.21	-7.00	-7.96	-3.75	-12.29	1.51	-27.61
RR11 424	1.12	13.69	-7.54	-5.85	-32.81	-20.00	-6.24	-7.14	-5.14	-5.25	-6.99	8.81	-13.98
RR11 425	6.19	-9.99	-6.10	-1.14	-29.66	-23.06*	-14.79	-0.85	4.89	-4.63	-35.92	14.66	-20.89
RR11 426	1.31	0.05	-11.13	-16.68	-34.17	-18.89	-10.28	-8.85	-7.22	-8.38	-11.25	13.21	-15.43
RR11 427	7.65	-51.49	0.08	19.77	-22.15	-31.39**	-10.69	-0.71	1.22	-8.28	-22.31	9.93	-27.71
RR11 428	2.18	-13.78	-20.28	-28.42	-17.07	11.67	-2.57	-10.71	-9.42	-10.25	-9.07	3.68	-24.05
RR11 429	27.99 **	15.47	44.02**	27.67	-31.00	-35.28**	-13.89	-11.57	-3.43	-4.00	22.40	44.64 **	11.66
RR11 430	8.93	-31.99	24.27	20.49	16.46*	8.33	5.38	-5.28	-3.06	-7.75	10.86	20.45	-38.96
CD (P=0.05)	6.50	5.76	17.64	55.23	7.29	0.83	3.72	0.73	0.93	1.04	3.36	4.27	3.99
CD (P=0.01)	8.67	8.97	23.39	73.63	9.72	1.11	4.96	0.97	1.24	1.39	4.46	5.70	5.32

* Significant at P≤0.05

** Significant at P≤0.01

*** mean over 7 years

† mean over 3 years

ing from 1.58 to 50.79% for volume of latex (Table 2). Heterosis for latex volume of *Hevea* clones has been reported earlier (Licy, 1998). Only one clone RR II 414, having a heterosis of 50.79% was found to be significantly superior to RR II 105. Very high estimates of heterosis for latex yield of *Hevea* was observed by Olapade (1988) which is supportive of the results obtained in the present study.

Only one clone i.e., RR II 430 exhibited superiority over RR II 105 (with a heterosis of 16.46%) for initial rate of latex flow. With respect to dry rubber content, none of the clones were significantly superior to RR II 105 and the hybrid vigour for this trait was not significant. Plugging index values for many of the hybrid clones were found to be comparable to that of the parents. Eight clones exhibited significant negative heterosis for plugging index.

Heterosis for structural attributes

The bark thickness of none of the hybrid clones showed any significant improvement over RR II 105 and heterosis for this trait was relatively low in the case of both virgin and renewed bark (Tables 1 & 2). The number of latex vessel rows at the time of opening for tapping was higher in seven clones viz., RR II 403, RR II 414, RR II 415, RR II 417, RR II 421, RR II 422, RR II 429 and RR II 430 than that for the standard clone RR II 105. Only one clone (RR II 422) showed significant superiority over RR II 105 (Table 1). For number of latex vessel rows in virgin bark in the third year of tapping, 18 clones exhibited positive standard heterosis ranging from 1.18 to 44.64%. Among these, six clones RR II 410, RR II 414, RR II 417, RR II 421, RR II 422 and RR II 429 were significantly superior to RR II 105 and the clone RR II 429 exhibited maximum standard heterosis (Table 2). For the same trait with respect to the renewed bark (after six years bark renewal), standard heterosis showed a range from 2.32 to 33.44% (Table 2). Number of latex vessel rows is a

clonal character (Bobilioff, 1923; Sanderson and Sutcliffe, 1929 and Vischer, 1921, 1922) and frequency of laticifer differentiation is genetically controlled. The above results suggest the immense potentiality of these clones for crop improvement in rubber, especially for using as parents in breeding programmes aimed at component level improvement of characters.

The rubber tree is deciduous and wintering takes place during the period December to February in South India. Wintering observations of the ten promising selections revealed that in four selections (RR II 407, RR II 414, RR II 421 and RR II 422) leaf shedding was completed before the end of December (early wintering) and in six selections (RR II 403, RR II 410, RR II 417, RR II 427, RR II 429 and RR II 430) leaf shedding was completed only by the end of January (late wintering).

Examination of heterotic response for yield and its components in general revealed that majority of the hybrids displaying significant hybrid vigour for yield also possessed marked heterotic advantages in one or more components. According to Graffius (1959) there cannot be any gene system for yield *per se* and yield is an end product of multiple interactions between the yield components. This would mean that heterosis for yield is the reflection of heterosis for one or more of the individual yield components as observed in the present investigation. Present study indicates that all the 23 hybrid clones possess greater potential either in terms of yield or in terms of any of the yield components. It provides scope for using these clones as parents for component wise breeding objectives.

The realization of good estimates of heterosis for yield and yield attributes in the clonal materials used for the present study shows that the cross RR II 105 x RR IC 100 could be better exploited for yield improvement in rubber (Licy *et al.* 1992, 1993a and

1993b). The parents have been identified as genetically distant, the genetic distance being 0.614 as evidenced by the studies using random amplified polymorphic DNA markers (Varghese *et al.*, 1996). Judging from the results discussed, a good number of the hybrid clones (RRII 403, RRII 407, RRII 410, RRII 414, RRII 417, RRII 421, RRII 422, RRII 427, RRII 429 and RRII 430) which were identified

as either on par with or superior to RRII 105 in performance, seem to offer better potential towards improving the productivity of rubber.

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