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## CONTENTS

### ***In this Issue***

i-ii

### ***Review***

- Phytoremediation of indoor air pollutants: Harnessing the potential of plants beyond aesthetics** 131-143  
Shalini Jhanji and U.K.Dhatt

### ***Research Articles***

- Response of fruit yield and quality to foliar application of micro-nutrients in lemon [*Citrus limon* (L.) Burm.] cv. Assam lemon** 144-151  
Sheikh K.H.A., Singh B., Haokip S.W., Shankar K., Debbarma R.
- Studies on high density planting and nutrient requirement of banana in different states of India** 152-163  
Debnath Sanjit Bauri F.K., Swain S., Patel A.N., Patel A.R., Shaikh N.B., Bhalerao V.P., Baruah K., Manju P.R., Suma A., Menon R., Gutam S. and P. Patil
- Mineral nutrient composition in leaf and root tissues of fifteen polyembryonic mango genotypes grown under varying levels of salinity** 164-176  
Nimbolkar P.K., Kurian R.M., Varalakshmi L.R., Upreti K.K., Laxman R.H. and D. Kalaivanan
- Optimization of GA3 concentration for improved bunch and berry quality in grape cv. Crimson Seedless (*Vitis vinifera* L)** 177-184  
Satisha J., Kumar Sampath P. and Upreti K.K.
- RGAP molecular marker for resistance against yellow mosaic disease in ridge gourd [*Luffa acutangula* (L.) Roxb.]** 185-192  
Kaur M., Varalakshmi B., Kumar M., Lakshmana Reddy D.C., Mahesha B. and Pitchaimuthu M.
- Genetic divergence study in bitter melon (*Momordica charantia* L.)** 193-198  
Nithinkumar K.R., Kumar J.S.A., Varalakshmi B, Mushrif S.K., Ramachandra R.K. , Prashanth S.J.
- Combining ability studies to develop superior hybrids in bell pepper (*Capsicum annuum* var. *grossum* L.)** 199-205  
Varsha V., Smaranika Mishra, Lingaiah H.B., Venugopalan R., Rao K.V. Kattedgoudar J. and Madhavi Reddy K.
- SSR marker development in *Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench using transcriptome sequencing and genetic diversity studies** 206-214  
Gayathri M., Pitchaimuthu M. and K.V. Ravishankar



<b>Generation mean analysis of important yield traits in Bitter gourd (<i>Momordica charantia</i>)</b>	215-221
Swamini Bhoi, Varalakshmi B., Rao E.S., Pitchaimuthu M. and Hima Bindu K.	
<b>Influence of phenophase based irrigation and fertigation schedule on vegetative performance of chrysanthemum (<i>Dendranthema grandiflora</i> Tzelev.) var. Marigold</b>	222-233
Vijayakumar S., Sujatha A. Nair, Nair A.K., Laxman R.H. and Kalaivanan D.	
<b>Performance evaluation of double type tuberose IHR-4 (IC-0633777) for flower yield, quality and biotic stress response</b>	234-240
Bharathi T.U., Meenakshi Srinivas, Umamaheswari R. and Sonavane, P.	
<b>Anti-fungal activity of <i>Trichoderma atroviride</i> against <i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>Lycopersici</i> causing wilt disease of tomato</b>	241-250
Yogalakshmi S., Thiruvudainambi S., Kalpana K., Thamizh Vendan R. and Oviya R.	
<b>Seed transmission of bean common mosaic virus-blackeye cowpea mosaic strain (BCMV-BICM) threaten cowpea seed health in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions of Ghana</b>	251-260
Adams F.K., Kumar P.L., Kwoseh C., Ogunsanya P., Akromah R. and Tetteh R.	
<b>Effect of container size and types on the root phenotypic characters of <i>Capsicum</i></b>	261-270
Raviteja M.S.V., Laxman R.H., Rashmi K., Kannan S., Namratha M.R. and Madhavi Reddy K.	
<b>Physio-morphological and mechanical properties of chillies for mechanical harvesting</b>	271-279
Yella Swami C., Senthil Kumaran G., Naik R.K., Reddy B.S. and Rathina Kumari A.C.	
<b>Assessment of soil and water quality status of rose growing areas of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in India</b>	280-286
Varalakshmi LR., Tejaswini P., Rajendiran S. and K.K. Upreti	
<b>Qualitative and organoleptic evaluation of immature cashew kernels under storage</b>	287-291
Sharon Jacob and Sobhana A.	
<b>Physical quality of coffee bean (<i>Coffea arabica</i> L.) as affected by harvesting and drying methods</b>	292-300
Chala T., Lamessa K. and Jalata Z	
<b>Vegetative vigour, yield and field tolerance to leaf rust in four F1 hybrids of coffee (<i>Coffea arabica</i> L.) in India</b>	301-308
Divya K. Das, Shivanna M.B. and Prakash N.S.	
<b>Limonene extraction from the zest of <i>Citrus sinensis</i>, <i>Citrus limon</i>, <i>Vitis vinifera</i> and evaluation of its antimicrobial activity</b>	309-314
Wani A.K., Singh R., Mir T.G. and Akhtar N.	
<b>Event Report</b>	315-318
<b>National Horticultural Fair 2021 - A Success Story</b>	
Dhananjaya M.V., Upreti K.K. and Dinesh M.R.	
<b>Subject index</b>	319-321
<b>Author index</b>	322-323

**Original Research Paper**

## Combining ability studies to develop superior hybrids in bell pepper (*Capsicum annuum* var. *grossum* L.)

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### ABSTRACT

**General combining ability (GCA) among parents and specific combining ability (SCA) of crosses were studied to identify horticulturally superior crosses for growth, yield and component traits in bell pepper. Experimental material included 21 F<sub>1</sub> hybrids developed by crossing seven parents in half diallel mating design. Parents and crosses were planted in randomized complete block design (RCBD) during Rabi 2019 to estimate the effects of combining ability. Among parents, Arka Mohini showed good GCA effects for most of the traits (number of secondary branches, early flowering and harvesting, fruit weight and yield) whereas among crosses, Arka Mohini × CW308, Arka Mohini × California Wonder and Yolo Wonder × California Wonder were identified as potential hybrids for yield and attributing traits based on SCA effects.**

**Key words** : Bell pepper, half-diallel mating, general combining ability, hybrids, specific combining ability and yield

### INTRODUCTION

Bell pepper (*Capsicum annuum* var. *grossum*), also known as capsicum, sweet pepper or Shimla mirch is a popular vegetable worldwide for its pleasant flavour and delicate taste. Further, it is an abundant source of ascorbic acid, vitamin A and other minerals (Sharma *et al.* 2013). It belongs to the family Solanaceae and have a diploid chromosome number 2n=24. Both green as well as coloured (red and yellow) fruits of bell pepper have gained a status of high value crop in India. The demand for bell pepper in recent years has increased with the emergence of continental food industry (Sood *et al.* 2010). It always fetches premium price in the market because of its regular demand and inadequate supply owing to average productivity. The basic reason for this is lack of superior quality indigenous varieties and hybrids with high yield and tolerance to biotic as well as abiotic stresses. Indian bell pepper seed market is dominated by imported private sector hybrids and varieties, which increases the input cost for the farmers. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthen the crop improvement programme for developing new

varieties or hybrids in this crop capable of satisfying the needs of farmers as well as consumers. For development of F<sub>1</sub> hybrids, selection of parents is of utmost importance. Parents are generally selected based on their combining ability. Here, combining ability refers to the ability of lines or parents to combine well during hybridization process so that desirable genes or characters get transmitted to their progenies (Fasahat *et al.* 2016). General combining ability and specific combining ability are the two main types of combining ability. The study on general combining ability of parents and specific combining ability of the crosses helps in identification of best parents and crosses respectively. Further, the combining ability of the parents also depends upon the nature of genetic system operating in them which predicts the efficiency of selection. Keeping this in view, the objective of this investigation was to work out general combining ability (GCA) among parents and specific combining ability of crosses (SCA) to identify the promising hybrids.



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at ICAR- Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Hesaraghatta lake post, Bengaluru-89 during the year 2019-2020 for two seasons. During *Kharif*, 2019 hybrids were developed using seven diverse and elite capsicum genotypes *viz.*, Arka Mohini, Arka Gaurav, Arka Basant, Yolo Wonder, California Wonder, UHFBP-4 and CW-308. They were crossed in half diallel fashion to obtain twenty-one cross combinations/hybrids. In *Rabi*, 2020, seedlings of 7 parents and 21 crosses were transplanted in open field in randomized block design with three replications at a spacing of 60x30 cm. The standard cultural practices were followed as per the package of practices of bell pepper by Indian Institute of Horticulture Research, 2011. Observations were recorded on number of primary branches (NPB), number of secondary branches (NSB), plant height (cm) (PH), days to 50% flowering (DF), days to first harvest (DFH), fruit length in cm (FL), fruit width in cm (FW), number of lobes per fruit (NLF), pericarp thickness in cm (PT), average fruit weight in gm (AFW), number of fruits per plant (NFP), total yield per plant in gm (YP). Indostat software was used for statistical analysis of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of variance for GCA was found significant for all the traits except NPB and analysis of variance for SCA was found significant for all the traits (Table 1). With respect to GCA and SCA variance, there was predominance of SCA for all the studied traits indicating the presence of non-additive gene action which could be attributed to dominance and epistatic components like dominance x dominance and additive 'x' dominance type of interactions indicating sufficient scope for heterosis breeding. The parents and crosses were scored based on their GCA and SCA status. Significantly negative GCA and SCA was scored as "-1" and non-significant GCA and SCA was scored as "0" whereas "+1" score was given to significantly positive GCA and SCA effects. By taking these scores into consideration, parents and hybrids were classified as poor, average and good combiners (Table 2 & 3). Arka Mohini was identified as good general combiner for NSB, DF, DFH, AFW and YP. Arka Basant for PH, DFH, FL and NFP whereas, Yolo wonder for DFH and PT (Table 2).

In SCA studies, crosses based on Arka Mohini, Arka Basant and Yolo Wonder as one of the parents exhibited good combining effects. Arka Mohini x Yolo Wonder, Arka Mohini x CW308, Arka Mohini x UHFBP4, Arka Basant x California Wonder and Arka Basant x CW308, Yolo Wonder x California Wonder exhibited good SCA effects for most of the traits (Table 3). Arka Mohini based crosses showed higher yield attributed to more number of big and heavy fruits per plant. Arka Mohini x Yolo Wonder showed good SCA for traits like NPB, NSB, PT, AFW and YP; Arka Mohini x CW308 for PH, FW, NFP, AFW and YP; Arka Mohini x UHFBP4 for NSB, PT, NFP, AFW and YP whereas, Arka Basant based hybrids showed earliness along with higher yield. Arka Basant x California Wonder exhibited good SCA for PH, DF, DFH, NFP, AFW and YP; and Arka Basant x CW308 for FL, PT, NFP, AFW and YP. Yolo Wonder x California Wonder exhibited good SCA for NPB, NSB, NLF, PT, NFP, AFW and YP. The results Obtained indicates that traits like NPB, NPS, PH, DF, DFH, FW, PT, NFP, AFW and YP are governed by non-additive genes hence, highly amenable for exploitation through heterosis. Similar results were reported by Hegde (2019), Praveen *et al.* (2017) and Aditika (2018) for NPB, NSB and PH in capsicum. Kaur *et al.* (2018), Praveen *et al.* (2017) and Devi *et al.* (2018) reported non additive gene action for earliness traits in capsicum. Kamble *et al.* (2009), Hegde (2016), Praveen *et al.* (2017) and Devi *et al.* (2018) have also reported good SCA for fruit length and fruit width. Kaur *et al.* (2018), Aditika (2018) and Devi *et al.* (2018) have reported high SCA effects for pericarp thickness and average number of fruits per plant. Good SCA for average fruit weight and yield has been reported by Galal *et al.* (2018) and Aditika (2018) supporting the present investigation. Based on the general combining ability of parents and specific combining ability of crosses, only three crosses showing good SCA coupled with good or, average GCA of the parents involved in it *viz.*, Arka Mohini x CW308, Arka Mohini x Yolo Wonder and Yolo Wonder x California Wonder with GG and GA interactions (table 3) are identified for future considerations. Further studies on the heterosis of the traits in the developed crosses will be useful in identifying the best heterotic combinations among them.



**Table 1. ANOVA for combining ability**

	df	NPB	NSB	PH	DF	DFH	FL	FW	NLF	PT	NFP	AFW	YP
GCA	6	0.05	0.24*	50.19*	47.62*	71.10*	1.12*	0.15*	0.08*	0.003*	1.12*	159.13*	9763.45 *
SCA	21	0.05*	0.24 *	18.01 *	27.90 *	32.65 *	1.81*	0.07*	0.05*	0.007*	1.39*	133.86*	34156.48*
Error	54	0.03	0.06	5.03	8.16	6.13	0.29	0.04	0.03	0.001	0.06	2.92	43.88

\*: Significance at p= 0.05; GCA: General combining ability, SCA: Specific combining ability, NPB: No. of primary branches, NSB: No. of secondary branches, PH: Plant height, DF: Days to 50% flowering, DFH: Days to first harvest, FL: Fruit length, FW: Fruit width, NLF: No. of lobes per fruit, PT: pericarp thickness, AFP: Average fruit per plant, AFW: Average fruit weight, YP: Yield per plant

**Table 2. Overall general combining ability (GCA) of parents for different traits**

Sl. No.	Parents	NPB	NSB	PH	DF	DFH	FL	FW	NLF	PT	NFP	AFW	YP	Total		GCA
														+ve	-ve	
1.	Arka Mohini	0	+1	-1	+1	+1	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	5	1	Good
2.	Arka Gaurav	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	+1	0	-1	-1	-1	1	4	Poor
3.	Arka Basant	0	0	+1	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	0	+1	-1	-1	4	4	Average
4.	Yolo Wonder	0	0	0	0	+1	0	0	0	+1	0	+1	0	3	0	Good
5.	California Wonder	0	0	+1	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	0	0	+1	2	2	Average
6.	UHFBP-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	3	Poor
7.	CW308	0	0	0	-1	0	0	+1	0	+1	0	0	0	2	1	Good

NPB: No. of primary branches, NSB: No. of secondary branches, PH: Plant height, DF: Days to 50% flowering, DFH: Days to first harvest, FL: Fruit length, FW: Fruit width, NLF: No. of lobes per fruit, PT: pericarp thickness, NFP: Number of fruits per plant, AFW: Average fruit weight, YP: Yield per plant

**Table 3. Overall specific combining ability (SCA) of crosses for different traits**

S.No.	Crosses	NPB	NSB	PH	DF	DFH	FL	FW	NLF	PT	NFP	AFW	YP	Total		SCA effects	
														+ve	-ve	Crosses	Parents
1.	AM x AG	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	+1	0	0	-1	1	3	P	G x P
2.	AM x AB	0	0	-1	+1	0	0	0	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	4	2	A	G x P
3.	AM x YW	+1	+1	0	-1	-1	0	0	0	+1	0	+1	+1	5	2	G	G x G
4.	AM x CW	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	4	P	G x A
5.	AM x UHF BP4	0	+1	-1	0	-1	0	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	5	2	G	G x P
6.	AM x CW308	0	0	+1	-1	-1	0	+1	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	5	3	G	G x G
7.	AG x AB	0	0	+1	0	0	0	+1	0	+1	0	-1	-1	3	2	A	P x P
8.	AG x YW	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	+1	-1	0	+1	-1	2	3	P	P x G
9.	AG x CW	0	+1	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	0	+1	+1	4	0	A	P x A
10.	AG x UHF BP4	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	+1	-1	0	+1	+1	3	2	A	P x P
11.	AG x CW308	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	0	-1	+1	2	1	A	P x G
12.	AB x YW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	-1	-1	-1	1	3	P	P x G
13.	AB x CW	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	0	-1	+1	+1	+1	7	1	G	P x A
14.	AB x UHF BP4	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	+1	-1	0	+1	-1	2	3	P	P x P
15.	AB x CW308	0	0	0	-1	-1	+1	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	5	2	G	P x G
16.	YW x CW	+1	+1	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	7	0	G	G x A
17.	YW x UHF BP4	0	0	0	0	0	+1	0	0	+1	0	-1	+1	3	1	A	G x P
18.	YW x UHFCW308	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	+1	-1	1	2	P	G x G
19.	CW x UHF BP4	0	+1	+1	-1	-1	-1	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	4	3	A	A x P
20.	CW x CW308	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+1	2	1	A	A x G
21.	UHF BP4 x CW308	0	0	0	0	0	+1	0	0	+1	0	-1	-1	2	2	A	P x G

NPB: No. of primary branches, NSB: No. of secondary branches, PH: Plant height, DF: Days to 50% flowering, DFH: Days to first harvest, FL: Fruit length, FW: Fruit width, NLF: No. of lobes per fruit, PT: pericarp thickness, NFP: Number of fruits per plant, AFW: Average fruit weight, YP: Yield per plant, AM: Arka Mohini, AG: Arka Gaurav, AB: Arka Basant, YW: Yolo Wonder, CW: California Wonder



**Supplementary Table 1 : General combining ability effects (GCA) of parents growth and yield parameters**

Sl.No.	Parents	NPB	NSB	PH	DF	DFH	FL	FW	NLF	PT	NFP	AFW	YP
1.	Arka Mohini	0.09	0.28*	-4.72*	3.55*	2.89*	-0.25	0.05	-0.003	-0.01	0.08	8.19 *	47.37*
2.	Arka Gaurav	0.02	-0.12	0.08	-2.49*	-3.88	-0.08	0.10	0.14 *	0.01	-0.58 *	-1.86 *	-35.07*
3.	Arka Basant	-0.02	-0.007	1.87*	2.14	3.45*	0.50 *	-0.18 *	-0.14*	0.01	0.60 *	-3.78 *	-39.91*
4.	Yolo Wonder	-0.04	0.07	-1.28	-1.12	2.11*	0.27	-0.02	-0.06	0.02 *	0.002	2.38 *	3.33
5.	California Wonder	-0.09	-0.15	1.93*	0.21	-1.95	-0.57 *	-0.03	0.06	-0.03 **	0.05	-0.97	35.80*
6.	UHFBP-4	0.10	0.08	1.08	0.36	-0.92	-0.05	-0.13	0.04	-0.01	-0.19 *	-3.81 *	-12.19*
7.	CW308	-0.06	-0.17	1.03	-2.64*	-1.69	0.17	0.20 *	-0.03	0.02*	0.04	-0.15	0.67
SEm±		0.05	0.07	0.69	0.88	0.76	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.001	0.073	0.53	2.04
CD at 5%		0.12	0.19	1.69	2.16	1.87	0.41	0.14	0.12	0.01	0.18	1.29	5.00

\*: Significance at p= 0.05; NPB: No. of primary branches, NSB: No. of secondary branches, PH: Plant height, DF: Days to 50% flowering, DFH: Days to first harvest, FL: Fruit length, FW: Fruit width, NLF: No. of lobes per fruit, PT: pericarp thickness, AFP: Average fruit per plant, AFW: Average fruit weight, YP: Yield per plant



Supplementary Table2 : Specific combining ability effects (SCA) for crosses

Sl.No.	Crosses	NPB	NSB	PH	DF	DFH	FL	FW	NLF	PT	NFP	AFW	YP
1.	AM <sub>X</sub> AG	-0.12	0.28	-2.48	-6.23*	-4.71*	0.41	0.11	0.03	0.10*	-0.13	0.43	-47.83*
2.	AM <sub>X</sub> AB	0.19	0.34	-5.23*	7.14*	0.95	-0.36	0.08	0.05	-0.03*	1.06*	9.75*	223.50*
3.	AM <sub>X</sub> YW	0.38*	0.49*	-1.08	-7.27*	-5.05*	-0.10	0.07	0.004	0.06*	0.53	5.89*	115.16*
4.	AM <sub>X</sub> CW	-0.23	-0.55*	-2.29	3.07	2.36	0.28	-0.02	-0.08	-0.02	-1.18*	-4.46*	-202.04*
5.	AM <sub>X</sub> UHFBP4	0.24	0.76*	-4.20*	-3.08	-4.01*	0.23	0.13	0.17	0.06*	1.33*	7.79*	150.59*
6.	AM <sub>X</sub> CW308	0.13	-0.22	9.61*	-5.08*	-6.57*	0.18	0.41*	0.004	-0.05*	1.16*	8.72*	202.99*
7.	AG <sub>X</sub> AB	0.07	-0.09	5.86*	-3.15	-3.27	-0.14	0.41*	0.007	0.07*	-0.11	-11.32*	-159.49*
8.	AG <sub>X</sub> YW	0.18	-0.38	-3.16	-1.57	-5.27*	0.44	-0.049	0.36*	-0.06*	0.12	5.72*	-30.76*
9.	AG <sub>X</sub> CW	-0.03	0.72*	3.56	3.10	-1.86	-0.16	-0.02	0.007	0.13*	0.44	0.94*	117.23*
10.	AG <sub>X</sub> UHFBP4	0.04	-0.51*	1.51	-3.04	-1.89	0.08	0.08	0.32*	-0.03*	0.52	16.84*	182.83*
11.	AG <sub>X</sub> CW308	0.16	0.30	0.83	3.29	3.55	-0.23	0.18	-0.11	0.07*	0.76	-8.12*	85.39*
12.	AB <sub>X</sub> YW	0.23	0.39	3.29	-2.53	-3.93	-0.96	0.03	-0.22	0.07*	-0.96*	-8.23*	-107.83*
13.	AB <sub>X</sub> CW	0.19	-0.12	3.64*	7.81*	8.14*	1.91*	0.10	-0.07	-0.10*	1.29*	2.02*	135.08*
14.	AB <sub>X</sub> UHFBP4	-0.05	-0.15	-1.31	8.99*	3.77	-0.73	-0.11	0.31*	-0.14*	-0.46	3.52*	-59.20*
15.	AB <sub>X</sub> CW308	-0.19	-0.32	-1.06	-4.68*	-8.45*	3.08*	0.09	-0.06	0.09*	2.31*	21.28*	286.86*
16.	YW <sub>X</sub> CW	0.36*	0.50*	0.062	-3.60	-0.86	-0.30	0.33	0.28*	0.06*	1.93*	14.99*	211.16*
17.	YW <sub>X</sub> UHFBP4	-0.16	0.07	0.78	2.92	2.77	3.36*	0.24	0.13	0.09*	-0.56	-13.91*	133.23*
18.	YW <sub>X</sub> CW308	-0.24	-0.24	1.69	1.92	-3.79	-1.14*	0.12	-0.07	0.002	-0.22	7.60*	-42.61*
19.	CW <sub>X</sub> UHFBP4	-0.006	0.73*	7.90*	-4.75*	-4.82*	-0.74*	0.02	-0.16	0.01	0.63	12.22*	137.06*
20.	CW <sub>X</sub> CW308	0.02	0.32	-4.98*	-1.08	-1.38	0.13	0.02	0.18	-0.02	-0.63	3.93*	34.75*
21.	UHFBP4 <sub>X</sub> CW308	0.087	-0.38	-1.26	-1.23	-2.75	1.14*	0.10	0.13	0.08*	-0.53	-9.21*	-78.02*
	<b>SEM±</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.19</b>	<b>1.71</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>1.89</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.12</b>
	<b>CD at 5%</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.25</b>

\*: Significance at p= 0.05; NPB: No. of primary branches, NSB: No. of secondary branches, PH: Plant height, DF: Days to 50% flowering, DFH: Days to first harvest, FL: Fruit length, FW: Fruit width, NLF: No. of lobes per fruit, PT: pericarp thickness, AFP: Average fruit weight, YP: Yield per plant; AM: Arka Mohini, AG: Arka Gourav, AB: Arka Basant, YW: Yolo Wonder, CW: California Wonder

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