

Testing the Acidity of Various Soil Types to Promote Healthy Plant Growth

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article history:

Published: February 2026

Keywords:

Pechay
 Plant Growth performance
 Soil Acidity
 Soil pH
 Soil Texture

ABSTRACT

Soil acidity remains a global challenge, affecting over 30% of arable land and leading to nutrient deficiencies that severely reduce crop yields. This study specifically addresses challenges as observed at the Maria Aurora National High School (MANHS) Nursery. This research aimed to systematically test the pH levels of diverse soil textures—sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty—and evaluate their specific effects on the growth performance of Pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) regarding stem length, leaf width, and plant height. The findings revealed a wide spectrum of chemical environments, ranging from strongly acidic peaty soil (pH 4.71) to alkaline chalky soil (pH 7.53), with loamy soil maintaining a near-neutral equilibrium (pH 7.01). Results indicated that peaty soil was the superior medium for overall stature, while brown soil achieved the highest stem length and leaf width. ANOVA results confirmed that soil texture and pH significantly influence plant growth, leading to the rejection of null hypotheses. The study concludes that while all tested soils supported growth, nutrient-rich mediums like peaty and brown soils are foundational for maximizing yields. These results underscore the necessity of proactive pH management, such as liming for acidic soils or applying organic amendments to alkaline types, to maintain the optimal pH range of 6.0 to 7.0 for sustainable agriculture. The study recommended the conduct of longitudinal studies that observe plant development over multiple growing seasons to account for environmental variables. Furthermore, future studies may explore the integration of organic versus inorganic soil amendments.

1. Introduction

Maria Aurora is in the province of Aurora, Philippines which serves a community where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood. It is situated in a region with diverse soil types due to its unique geography, which includes both mountainous and lowland areas. This setting makes the locale an ideal location for a study on soil acidity and its effects on plant growth. Maria Aurora National High School is committed to agricultural and scientific education, which is evident in its hands-on approach, where students are encouraged to engage with local environmental challenges. The study on the school grounds and the surrounding community cannot only provide valuable data to local farmers and gardeners but also offers students a practical, real-world application of scientific principles. This study establishes the practical and educational relevance of the research, highlighting how it aligns with the school's location and its educational mission to empower students with knowledge directly applicable to their community's needs. Soil acidity is a major global issue significantly impacting agriculture and food security, affecting over 30% of the world's arable land.

This acidity, caused by natural leaching and the use of nitrogen fertilizers, leads to nutrient deficiencies and the buildup of toxic elements like aluminum, ultimately stunting plant growth and reducing crop yields. In the Philippines, where agriculture is a cornerstone of the economy, soil acidification is a growing problem, worsened by the tropical climate and the use of inorganic fertilizers. An estimated 70% of the country's land is affected by soil degradation, leading to a decline in the productivity of staple crops. The province of Aurora, with its high rainfall and diverse terrain, serves as a compelling case study, making it highly susceptible to these effects.

Hence, the study is rooted in the practical challenges observed at Maria Aurora National High School Nursery, where poor plant health and low crop yields in the school gardens are often misdiagnosed, with the underlying issue of soil acidity being overlooked.

The main reason for this study is to scientifically determine the soil's pH level to ensure plants can properly absorb essential nutrients. The soil's pH is critical because it directly dictates the availability of nutrients; different plants thrive in specific pH ranges. By accurately measuring the pH, the research will provide the scientific basis for making informed decisions on soil amendment (e.g., adding lime or sulfur) to create an optimal growing environment. This targeted approach prevents nutrient deficiencies, promotes robust root development, and directly contributes to improving gardening outcomes and promoting

healthier plants within the school's agricultural and science programs. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader national effort in the Philippines to address soil degradation and improve food security by offering a practical, educational model.

2. Literature Review

Understanding the diverse types of soil and their impact on plant growth is vital for optimizing agricultural practices, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable ecosystems. Soil, a complex and dynamic medium, supports plant life by providing essential nutrients, water, and physical support. Different types of soil, classified based on their texture, structure, and composition, exhibit varying properties that influence plant growth.

This review aims to explore the characteristics of various soil types, including clay, silt, sand, loam, and peat soils, and their effects on plant growth, nutrient availability, and water retention. By examining the existing literature on soil science and plant physiology, this research seeks to identify the most suitable soil types for promoting healthy plant growth and informing sustainable agricultural practices. Soil pH, a measure of its acidity or alkalinity, is a critical factor influencing plant health and crop yield. It affects the availability of essential nutrients, the activity of soil microorganisms, and the toxicity of certain elements (Han et al., 2021). Plants have specific pH ranges they thrive in. For instance, acid-loving plants like blueberries prefer a pH of 4.5 to 5.5, while other crops such as alfalfa perform best in neutral to slightly alkaline soil (Harter & Naidu, 2021). Consequently, understanding and managing soil pH is crucial for sustainable agriculture and successful gardening.

2.1 Soil pH and the Management of Nutrient Deficiencies and Toxicities

Soil pH directly controls the solubility and accessibility of essential plant nutrients. For most crops, the optimal pH range for nutrient uptake is between 6.0 and 7.0 (Guo et al., 2021). In highly acidic soils (pH < 5.5), key macronutrients such as phosphorus, calcium, and magnesium become less available to plants. For instance, low pH can cause phosphorus to bind with aluminum and iron, making it unavailable for root absorption (Zhang et al., 2019). Conversely, in alkaline soils (pH > 7.5) micronutrients like iron, manganese, and zinc can become insoluble and thus deficient for plants (Sheng et al., 2020).

2.2 Mitigating Aluminum and Manganese Toxicity in Acidic Soils

A major constraint to plant growth in acidic soils is the toxicity of aluminum (Al) and manganese (Mn) (Liu et al., 2018). As soil pH drops below 5.0, normally insoluble forms of aluminum become soluble and highly toxic to plants, primarily affecting roots that absorb water and nutrients, ultimately leading to poor growth and reduced crop yields. Manganese can also become toxic at low pH, though its effects are more visible in the leaves, causing chlorosis and necrotic spots.

2.3 Integrated Strategies for Sustainable Soil pH Management

Soil acidity is a major driver of the composition and function of microbial communities (Wang et al., 2021). Highly acidic conditions can decrease overall microbial diversity and negatively affect beneficial organisms. For example, the activity of nitrogen-fixing bacteria, which are crucial for converting atmospheric nitrogen into a form plant can use, is significantly hindered in acidic soils (Li et al., 2022). A decline in these beneficial microorganisms can disrupt nutrient cycling and make plants more susceptible to diseases, thereby compromising soil health and plant vitality. Liming, the application of calcium and magnesium compounds, is the most common and effective method for neutralizing soil acidity. Liming raises the soil pH, which in their application of calcium and magnesium compounds reduces most aluminum and manganese (Rizvi et al., 2022). In addition to traditional liming, recent research has explored the use of organic amendments such as compost and manure. These amendments can buffer changes in soil pH, improve soil structure, and increase microbial activity, offering a more sustainable approach to managing soil acidity (Zhang et al., 2020).

2.4 Plant Adaptations and Drought Stress Mitigation in Acidic Soils

Plants have evolved various mechanisms to tolerate acidic soils. Some species are naturally more acid-tolerant, and recent research has focused on breeding acid-tolerant crop varieties. These plants often have physiological adaptations, such as the ability to secrete organic acids from their roots. These acids can chelate (bind with) toxic aluminum ions in the soil, preventing their uptake by the plant and protecting the root system from damage (Liu et al., 2018). Understanding these genetic and physiological mechanisms is key to developing new crops that can thrive in challenging acidic environments.

Beyond nutrient uptake, soil acidity also plays a role in a plant's ability to tolerate water stress (Luo et al., 2021). Acidic soils often have a poor structure, which can limit water infiltration and retention. Additionally, the root damage caused by aluminum toxicity reduces the root system's ability to explore the soil for water, making plants more susceptible to drought conditions. A study by Luo et al. (2021) on rice demonstrated that acidic soil stress exacerbates the negative effects of drought, highlighting the interconnectedness of these environmental factors.

2.5 The Impact of Soil pH on Enzyme Activity and Nutrient Cycling

Soil enzymes are critical for nutrient cycling and the decomposition of organic matter. Their activity is highly sensitive to soil pH. Research has shown that a decrease in soil pH can lead to a significant reduction in the activity of enzymes like urease and phosphatase, which are essential for the conversion of nitrogen and phosphorus into plant-available forms (Wang et al., 2021). This reduction in enzyme activity further contributes to nutrient limitations in acidic soils, creating a compounding negative effect on plant growth and overall soil health.

2.6 Long-term effects of fertilization on soil fertility and crop yield.

The long-term effects of unmanaged soil acidity can be severe, leading to degraded land and reduced agricultural sustainability. Repeated application of acidic fertilizers and acid rain can progressively lower soil pH, which can lead to a decline in crop yields over time. For example, a multi-year study in China found that continuous cultivation without soil pH management led to a significant decrease in soil fertility and a decline in crop productivity (Tang et al., 2020). This research highlights the need for proactive soil management to ensure the long-term viability of agricultural land.

2.7 Heavy metal contamination in agricultural soil and management strategies

The effects of soil acidity do not occur in isolation but are influenced by and interact with other environmental factors, such as heavy metal contamination and temperature. In acidic soils, the mobility of heavy metals like lead and cadmium increases, making them more bioavailable and toxic to both plants and humans (Huang et al., 2019). This creates a dual problem where plants are not only struggling with nutrient deficiencies and aluminum toxicity but also with the added stress of heavy metal absorption. Managing soil pH, therefore, is also a key strategy for mitigating heavy metal toxicity in agricultural systems.

2.8 Economic Feasibility of Soil pH Management in a School Nursery

Managing soil acidity has significant economic implications for farmers. The costs associated with living and other amendments can be high, but the long-term benefits of increased crop yields and improved soil health often outweigh the initial investment (Rizvi et al., 2022). Conversely, ignoring soil acidity can lead to substantial financial losses due to reduced crop production and the potential for crop failure. Understanding the cost-benefit analysis of soil pH management is crucial for making informed agricultural decisions and ensuring economic viability for farmers in regions with acidic soils.

2.9 Factors Influencing Soil pH

Soil pH, a measure of its acidity or alkalinity, is a critical factor influencing plant health and crop yield. It affects the availability of essential nutrients, the activity of soil microorganisms, and the toxicity of certain elements (Han et al., 2021). Plants have specific pH ranges they thrive in. For instance, acid-loving plants like blueberries prefer a pH of 4.5 to 5.5, while other crops such as alfalfa perform best in neutral to slightly alkaline soil (Harter & Naidu, 2021). Consequently, understanding and managing soil pH is crucial for sustainable agriculture and successful gardening.

2.10 Managing Soil pH to Optimize Nutrient Availability

Soil acidity directly influences the availability of plant nutrients. In highly acidic soils (pH less than 5.5), key nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium become less available to plants. Conversely, acidic conditions can increase the solubility of elements like aluminum and manganese to toxic levels, which can inhibit root growth and nutrient uptake (Xu et al., 2023). Therefore, adjusting soil pH is a common practice to optimize nutrient availability. For example, adding lime to acidic soil raises the pH, making phosphorus and other nutrients more accessible to plants (Yoo et al., 2020).

2.11 Correcting Alkaline Soils

To manage soil acidity, a variety of soil amendments are used. Liming materials, such as calcium carbonate, are widely used to raise the pH of acidic soils. A study by Gichangi et al. (2020) found that applying lime significantly improved maize yield by increasing soil pH and reducing aluminum toxicity. On the other hand, acidifying agents like elemental sulfur or ammonium sulfate are applied to decrease the pH of alkaline soils, a practice important for cultivating acid-loving plants (Harter & Naidu, 2021). Recent research has also explored the use of biochar as a soil amendment. A study by Han et al. (2021) demonstrated that biochar application not only increased soil pH but also improved soil structure and water retention, providing a holistic approach to soil management.

2.12 Global Impact of Soil Acidity

Recent studies have highlighted the global challenge of soil acidity. In many tropical and subtropical regions, acidic soils are a significant constraint to food production (Gichangi et al., 2020). For example, research in China by Han et al. (2021) examined the effects of different long-term fertilization strategies on soil pH. Their findings indicated that continuous use of certain fertilizers can lead to soil acidification over time. Therefore, modern agricultural practices are increasingly focused on integrated nutrient management and the use of site-specific soil amendments to maintain optimal pH levels. This includes regular soil testing to monitor changes in pH and nutrient levels (Harter & Naidu, 2021). Ultimately, ongoing research continues to refine these methods, promoting healthy plant growth and ensuring food security in diverse climates.

2.13 Optimal pH for Plant Growth

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More recently, researchers have also explored the use of biochar as a soil amendment. A study by Han et al. (2021) demonstrated that biochar application not only increased soil pH but also improved soil structure and water retention, providing a holistic approach to soil management. In addition to this, a meta-analysis by ResearchGate (2023) confirmed a significant positive correlation between increased soil pH through amendments and higher crop yields, especially in strongly acidic soils.

2.16 Long-Term Fertilization and Soil pH

Recent studies have highlighted the global challenge of soil acidity. In many tropical and subtropical regions, acidic soils are a significant constraint to food production (Gichangi et al., 2020). For example, research in China by Han et al. (2021) examined the effects of different long-term fertilization strategies on soil pH. Their findings indicated that continuous use of certain fertilizers can lead to soil acidification overtime. Therefore, modern agricultural practices are increasingly focused on integrated nutrient management and the use of site-specific soil amendments to maintain optimal pH levels. Furthermore, a study in Ethiopia showed that moving soil pH from 5.5 to 6.5 through liming increased wheat and barley yields by 22% and 19% respectively, underscoring the direct link between pH management and crop productivity (PlosOne, 2025). This includes regular soil testing to monitor changes in pH and nutrient levels (Harter & Naidu, 2021). Ultimately, ongoing research continues to refine these methods, promoting healthy plant growth and ensuring food security in diverse climates.

2.17 Soil pH Management for Nutrient Availability

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2.21 Strategies for Managing Soil pH

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solubility of elements like aluminum and manganese to toxic levels, which can inhibit root growth and nutrient uptake (Xu et al., 2023). Therefore, adjusting soil pH is a common practice to optimize nutrient availability. For example, adding lime to acidic soil raises the pH, making phosphorus other nutrients more accessible to plants (Yoo et al., 2020). Conversely, most micronutrients apart from molybdenum, become less available as soil pH increases (Kumar, Y., & Kumari, R. 2025).

2.22 Common Soil Amendments and Their Application

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2.23 Global and Regional Impacts of Soil Acidity

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Managing soil pH is crucial for sustainable agriculture, as it directly impacts nutrient availability, microbial activity, and crop yields, ultimately ensuring food security and promoting healthy plant growth, while also mitigating the risks of soil degradation, environmental pollution, and economic losses, thereby supporting long-term agricultural productivity and ecosystem health, which is essential for feeding the world's growing population and maintaining the health of our planet.

Thus, the literature review establishes that both the type of soil (e.g., Brown soil, Sandy, chalky, sand, loamy, and peaty) and its pH level are critical factors governing plant health and crop yield, serving as the foundation for optimizing agricultural practices. Different soil types determine water retention and nutrient availability, but soil pH is the most immediate control factor, as it dictates the solubility and accessibility of essential nutrients—with an optimal range of approximately 6.0 to 7.0 for most crops. Deviations lead to major constraints: highly acidic soils (pH < 5.5) cause key nutrients like phosphorus to become unavailable and increase the toxicity of aluminum and manganese, which inhibits root growth and microbial activity; conversely, alkaline soils (pH > 7.5) lead to micronutrient deficiencies. Therefore, successful and sustainable agriculture relies on active pH management through liming to raise the pH of acidic soils, acidifying agents for alkaline soils, or the use of sustainable amendments like biochar and compost, alongside breeding acid-tolerant crop varieties, to ensure nutrient availability and mitigate toxic effects globally, ultimately safeguarding food security.

2.24 Conceptual Framework

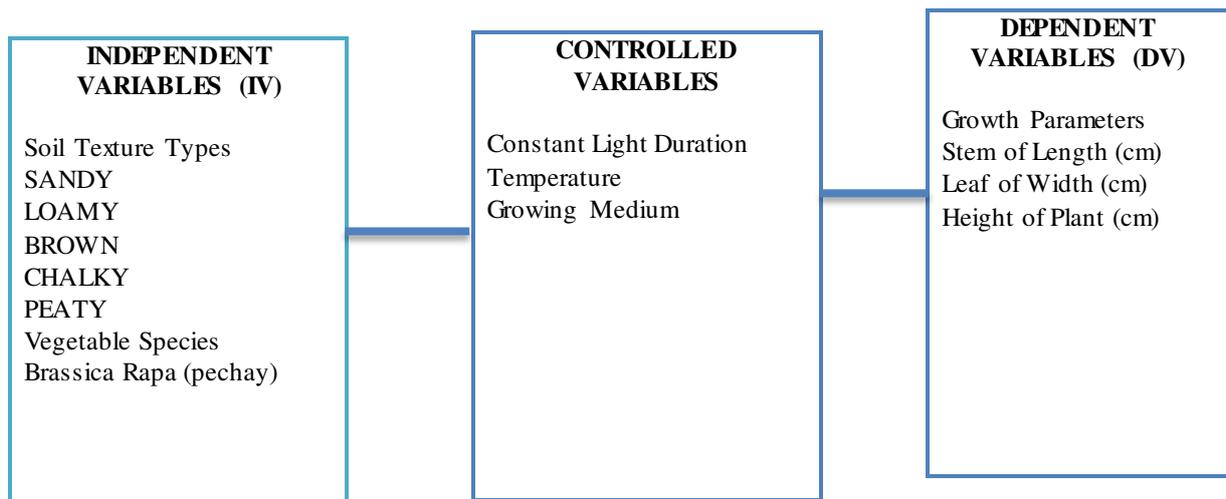


Figure 1: The paradigm of the study

The conceptual framework of this study follows an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model to systematically evaluate the relationship between soil chemistry and botanical development. The Input phase consists of independent variables, specifically the five distinct soil texture types (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty) and their inherent pH levels, alongside controlled extraneous variables like light and water. The Process involves the experimental cultivation of *Brassica rapa L.* (Pechay), where the growth is monitored through standardized agricultural practices and pH testing. Finally, the Output is defined by the measurable plant

growth performance, including stem length, leaf width, and overall plant height. This framework posits that the specific acidity or alkalinity of the soil medium acts as the primary determinant for nutrient availability, which directly dictates the physiological success of the crop.

2.25 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the growth of pechay plants using five soil texture types.

2.26 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to systematically test the acidity of the diverse soil types employed at the Maria Aurora National High School Nursery. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the pH level of soil texture types (sandy, loamy, brown soil, chalky, and peaty)?
2. What is the effect of the five distinct soil texture types (sandy, loamy, brown soil, chalky, and peaty) on the growth performance of pechay in terms of:
 - Length of stem;
 - Width of leaves; and
 - Height of plant?
3. Are there significant differences in the growth of pechay plants using five soil texture types (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, peaty)?

3 Methodology

This research methodology presents research design, materials and procedures, data collection procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This research utilized a Quantitative Experimental Research Design, which was the ideal traditional approach for testing the influence of a practice on a measured outcome. The study was divided into two parts to address the core problem: Baseline Survey of MANHS Nursery Soil. This initial phase was descriptive and non-experimental. It involved measuring the pH of the existing, diverse soil types currently in use at the Maria Aurora National High School Nursery. This provided a practical context for the community. Controlled Experimental Analysis. This was the core of the study, designed to establish a cause-and-effect relationship. The experiment systematically manipulated the independent variable (Soil Type) to determine its effect on the dependent variables (Plant Growth and Health). Environmental factors such as watering schedule, light exposure, and temperature were standardized and controlled to isolate the impact of soil type. The core of the experiment involved cultivating plant species in five distinct soil conditions: brown, sandy, loamy, chalky, and peaty.

3.2 Materials and Procedures

The researchers gathered a soil pH test kit (including a testing solution and color chart), a trowel, labeled containers, and distilled water. The experimental materials included plant pots, seeds or seedlings (like pechay), and the five distinct soil types (sandy, loamy, chalky, and peaty).

The researcher collected existing soil samples from the MANHS nursery, digging down 4 to 6 inches. Each sample was tested using the pH kit instructions, and the initial pH level was recorded. For the controlled experiment, three different plant species (tomatoes, peppers, and beans) were grown in each of the five distinct soil types (sandy, loamy, chalky, and peaty). Replication to ensure statistical rigor and reliability, the experiment used three replicates for each combination of soil type and plant species. This resulted in a total of 45 experimental units. Seedlings were planted, and the plants received consistent standardized care (watering and light) throughout the experimental period. Monitoring and adjustment based on the optimal pH range for the plant species, the pH of the experimental soils was made using amendments (sulfur for acidity, lime/wood ash for alkalinity) as needed for the controlled treatment groups.

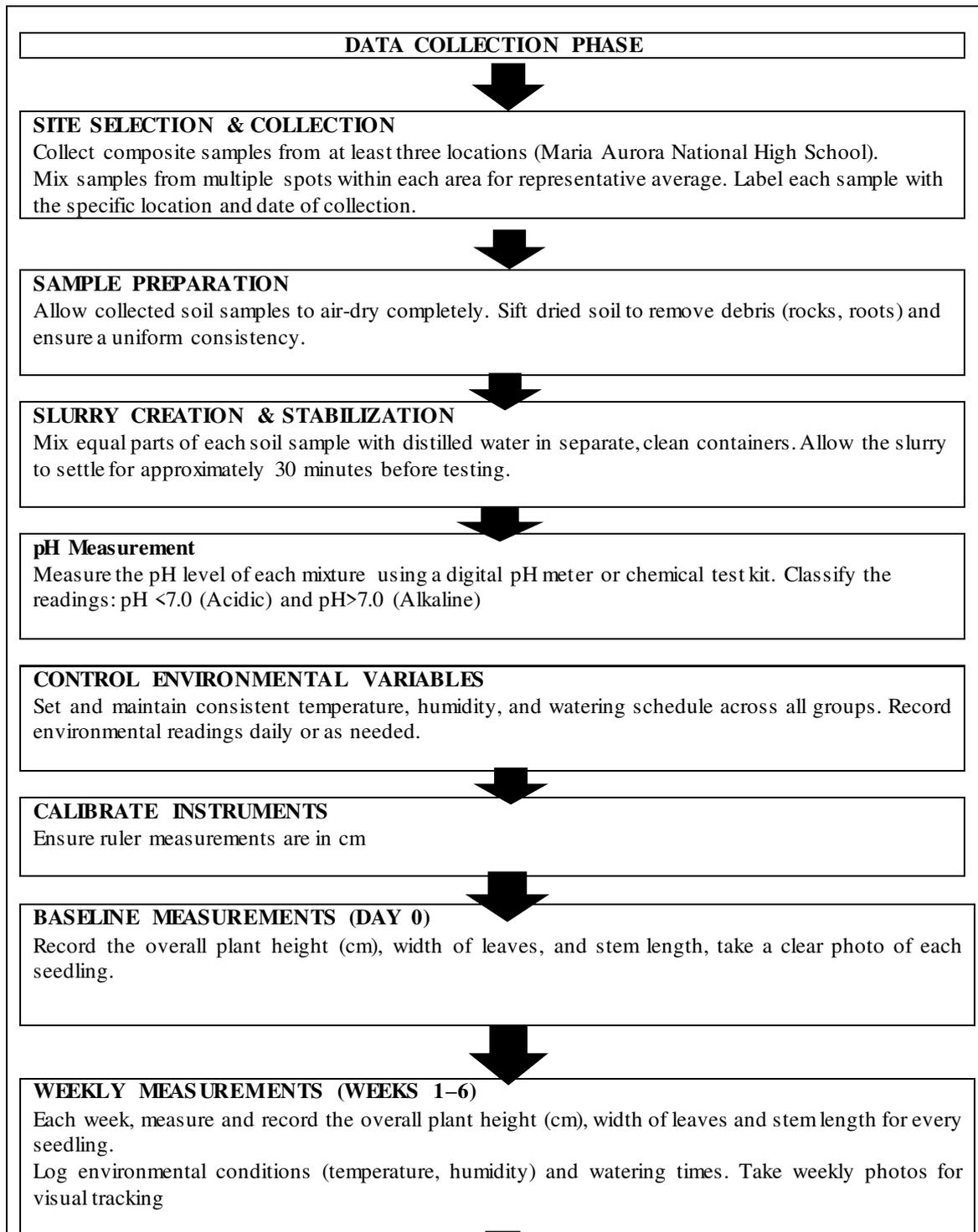
Figure 2: Soil acidity testing for healthy plant growth procedures

Phase	Activity	Description
Preparation		Acquisition of 5 soil texture types, pechay seeds, and pH testing equipments.
Baseline Survey		Systematic pH testing of loamy, brown, chalky, sandy and peaty soil.
Phase 1		Cultivation of 45 Pechay units under controlled light, water and temperature
Experimental Phase		Weekly measurement of plant height, leaf width, and temperature
Monitoring	Data Collection	Weekly measurement of plant width, and stem length over seven weeks
Conclusion	Statistical Analysis (ANOVA)	Application of ANOVA to determine significant differences in growth metrics

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

This capstone project's data collection used a quantitative approach to test how soil acidity affected healthy plant growth. To ensure accuracy, a systematic procedure was essential. First, researchers collected composite soil samples from at least three different locations on the school premises. To get a representative average, each sample was a mixture collected from multiple spots within an area, such as a garden bed, a forest floor, or a grassy lawn. Each sample was clearly labeled with its location and the date of collection. Next, the samples were prepared by allowing them to air-dry before being sifted to remove debris and create a uniform consistency.

For the pH testing, a slurry was created by mixing equal parts of each soil sample with distilled water in separate, clean containers. After the slurry settled for about 30 minutes, the pH of each mixture was measured using a digital pH meter. Finally, the data was recorded in a table, noting the sample location, date, pH reading, and any observations about the soil's texture or appearance. Ultimately, this methodical documentation of texture and appearance alongside the chemical data allows for a holistic view of the school's ecosystem. It ensures that any "soil amendments"—the substances added to improve soil quality—are based on empirical evidence rather than guesswork, maximizing the health and yield of the future garden.



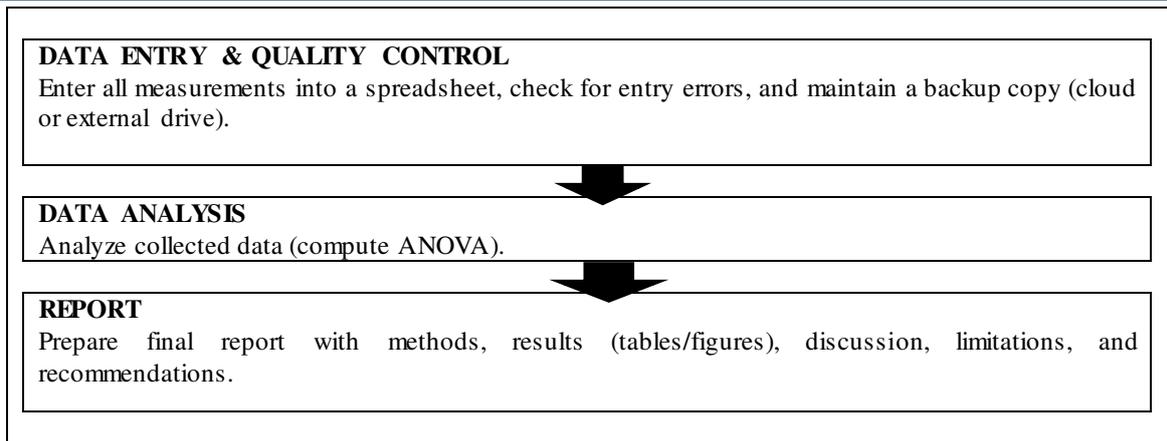


Figure 3: Flowchart of the data collection phase of a comparative study on the growth performance of different vegetables under various light colors

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis focused on the initial chemical characterization of the growth media. The pH levels of the five soil texture types (Sandy, Loamy, Brown, Chalky, and Peaty) were measured and recorded. Data cleaning involved checking for measurement consistency and addressing any missing entries. Descriptive Statistics, specifically the Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and Standard Error (SEM), were calculated to establish the baseline acidity or alkalinity of each soil type. This data was presented in a summary table to determine which soil types fall within the optimal pH range for pechay growth.

After raw measurements for Length of Stem, Width of Leaves, and Height of Plants were collected, the data underwent a cleaning process to identify and remove outliers using the Interquartile Range (IQR) rule. Descriptive Statistics (Mean, SD, and SEM) were calculated for each growth metric per soil type. To visualize the differences in growth performance, bar charts with error bars were generated, allowing for a direct comparison of how different textures like Loamy or Peaty soil affect the physical development of the plants. To determine if there is a significant relationship or difference between soil types and plant growth, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this research study on soil acidity and plant growth are crucial to ensure responsible and justifiable scientific practice. These considerations primarily revolved around four key areas: informed consent and researchers' responsibility, environmental impact and waste management, and data integrity and transparency. By addressing these factors proactively, researchers maintained the integrity of their work and contributed positively to the scientific community and the broader public. While this study did not involve human subjects directly, researchers still obtained written permission from the school administration or custodians of the Maria Aurora National High School land before collecting soil samples. This ensured that the research activities were conducted with full knowledge and approval of the relevant authorities.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Acidity Level pH of Soil Texture Types

4.1.1 Soil Texture Types.

Figure 4 presents the acidity level (pH) of five soil texture types in Maria Aurora National High School Nursery. The data reveals a significant variance in chemical composition across the samples, ranging from the strongly acidic profile of peaty soil (pH 4.71) to the alkaline nature of chalky soil (pH 7.53). While loamy soil maintains a near-perfect neutral equilibrium at pH 7.01, the most striking outlier is the Peaty texture, which exhibits a high concentration of organic acids, likely resulting in its low pH.

Conversely, the progression from Sandy (6.86) to Chalky (7.53) suggests a correlation between mineral contents specifically calcium carbonate in the chalky sample—and increased alkalinity. This distribution of pH levels is essential for agricultural assessment, as the extreme acidity found in the Peaty sample would likely require lime treatment to support standard crop growth, whereas the neutral to slightly alkaline profiles of Loamy and Brown soils provide an optimal environment for nutrient availability and microbial activity (Weil & Brady, 2017).

Integrating these soil characteristics into the Maria Aurora National High School Nursery provides a vital roadmap for sustainable plant propagation and crop management. By identifying the diverse pH profiles across the five soil types, the nursery can tailor its nursery beds to match the specific physiological needs of different seedlings. For instance, the high acidity of the Peaty soil (pH 4.71) poses a significant challenge for standard nursery crops, as it restricts phosphorus availability and increases the risk of aluminum toxicity; consequently, the school would need to implement lime applications to neutralize organic acids and improve nutrient uptake (Brady & Weil, 2017).

On the other hand, the Chalky soil (pH 7.53) provides a naturally buffered, alkaline environment ideal for calcicole species. However, nursery managers must monitor for potential micronutrient deficiencies, such as iron chlorosis, which frequently occurs in higher pH ranges due to reduced mineral solubility (Penn & Camberato, 2019). Utilizing these data-driven interventions ensures that the nursery maximizes seedling vigor while minimizing resource waste (Fageria & Nascente, 2014).

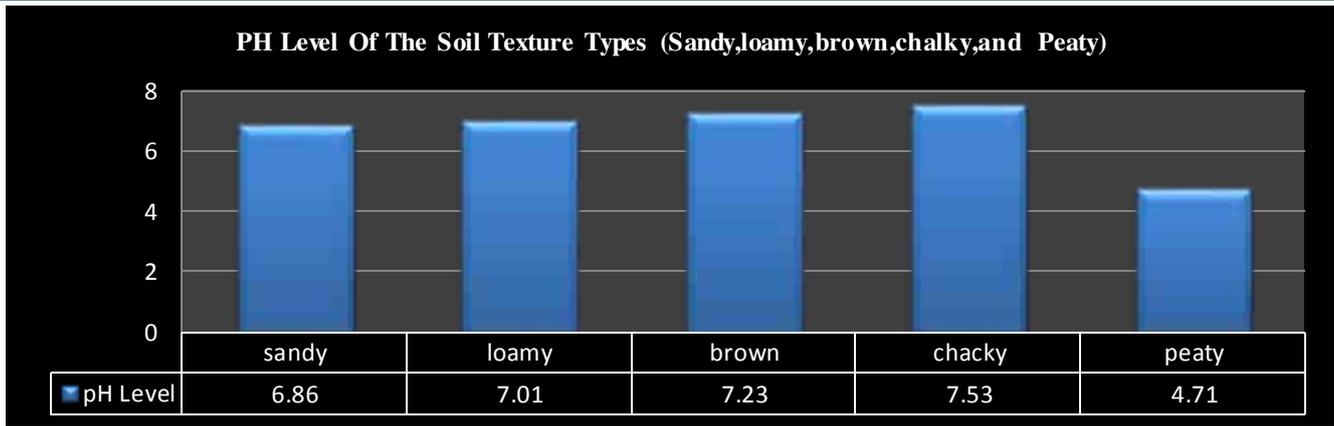


Figure 4: Acidity level (pH) of five soil texture types in terms of (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty).

Soil pH levels serve as a critical determinant for agricultural success, dictating specific management interventions and crop compatibility across different environments. For example, the high acidity of peaty soil (4.71) necessitates heavy liming to prevent aluminum toxicity and phosphorus deficiency, while the alkalinity of chalky soil (7.53) creates an iron lockdown that restricts the growth of acid-loving species. In contrast, loamy and brown soils (7.01–7.23) offer an ideal, stable foundation for immediate cultivation without chemical adjustments; however, sandy soil (6.86), despite its neutral reading, requires careful monitoring due to a low buffering capacity that allows fertilizers to trigger rapid, unstable shifts in its chemical profile.

The analysis of the five soil textures demonstrates a clear spectrum of chemical environments, ranging from strongly acidic (Peaty) to slightly alkaline (Chalky). The data confirms that soil texture is a strong indicator of its chemical behavior; while the Loamy, Sandy, and Brown samples provide a stable, neutral environment for general plant growth, the Peaty and Chalky samples represent environmental extremes. Understanding these values is vital for precision agriculture, as it allows for the strategic selection of crops and the targeted application of soil amendments to ensure optimal plant health and yield.

4.2. The effects of five distinct soil types on the growth performance of pechay in terms of:

4.2.1 Length of Stem in Sandy Soil.

Figure 5 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of length of stem using sandy soil. The result illustrates a consistent and positive upward trend in the stem length of pechay grown in sandy soil over a seven-week period. Starting at an average height of 0.82 cm in Week 1, the plants exhibited a steady growth rate, reaching 3.14 cm by week 4. There was a slight deceleration in the growth velocity between week 4 and week 5 (rising only 0.24 cm), which may indicate a temporary period of physiological adjustment or environmental fluctuation. However, growth accelerated significantly in the final two weeks, reaching a peak average height of 5.1 cm in week 7. This linear progression suggests that despite the low nutrient-retention reputation of sandy soil, the pechay plants were able to successfully establish a root system and maintain structural development throughout the study duration.

Contemporary agricultural research confirms that (*Brassica rapa L*) remains highly sensitive to the structural limitations of sandy soils, specifically their high microporosity and low bulk density. While these traits facilitate rapid root elongation, recent studies emphasize that the leaky nature of sandy substrates driven by high hydraulic conductivity results in severe nutrient volatility and moisture stress (Al-Omran et al., 2016). To combat the chronic stunting and chlorosis identified in earlier literature, modern research (2018–2024) has pivoted toward the use of biochar and superabsorbent polymers (SAPs). These amendments act as molecular sponges that artificially increase the soil’s Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) and water-holding capacity, effectively buffering the root zone against the rapid leaching of nitrates and phosphates (Zhang et al., 2019; Ostrand et al., 2020).

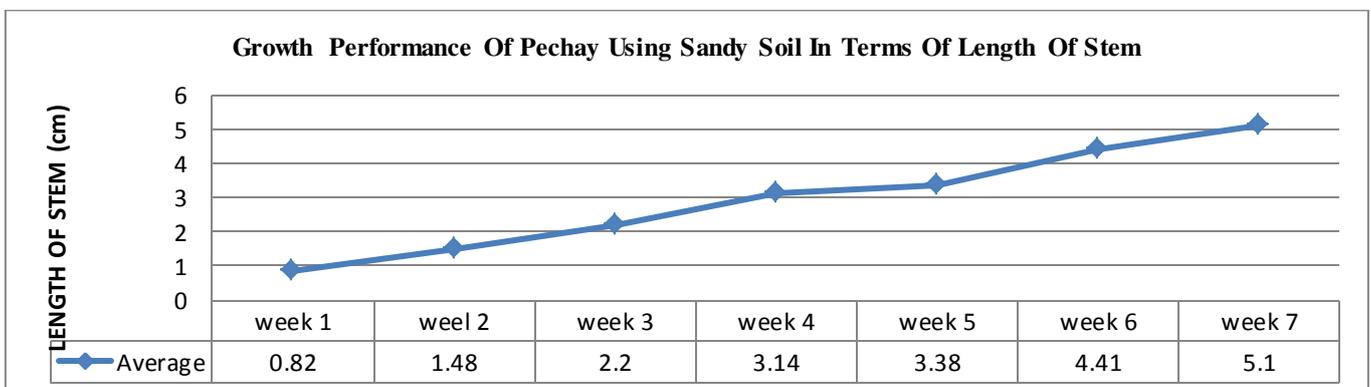


Figure 5: Growth performance of pechay using sandy soil in terms of length of stem.

The steady development of pechay in sandy media provides a critical learning pivot for organic agriculture students managing school nurseries. Since sandy soil lacks the inherent nutrient-holding capacity of more complex substrates, students must transition

from passive observation to active soil stewardship, using the nursery as a controlled environment to master the timing of organic amendments. The specific growth plateau at week 5 serves as a practical "diagnostic alarm", teaching students to anticipate crop needs through foliar feeding or side-dressing with vermi-compost before nutrient depletion stunts the plant. Ultimately, these findings imply that success in an organic nursery depends less on the initial richness of the soil and more on the student's ability to maintain a tightly regulated nutrient cycle, balancing the excellent drainage of sand with the consistent input of organic matter to prevent growth stalls.

In conclusion, the seven-week observation period confirms that sandy soil supports the continuous development of pechay stems, achieving a final average length of 5.1 cm. The absence of a growth crash or plateau indicates that the plants remained healthy and viable throughout the experiment. While sandy soil presents specific challenges regarding nutrient retention, the upward linear trend shown in the graph proves it to be a functional medium for pechay cultivation. This study provides a foundational benchmark for future comparisons, suggesting that with proper management, even soil textures typically considered poor can yield successful growth results for leafy greens.

4.2.3 Length of Stem in Loamy Soil.

Figure 6 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of length of stem using loamy soil. The results reveal a progressive increase in the stem length of pechay over a seven-week period across two different soil mediums. In Sandy soil, the plants began at 0.82 cm and reached a final height of 5.1 cm, maintaining a relatively steady linear growth despite a minor slowdown between Week 4 and Week 5. Conversely, the pechay grown in Loamy/Brown soil exhibited a stronger starting point of 1.24 cm and achieved a higher final average length of 5.62 cm. While the sandy soil showed a consistent upward trend, the loamy soil data revealed a distinct growth plateau between week 2 (2.16 cm) and week 3 (2.18 cm) before surging significantly in the latter half of the study. This comparison suggests that while both soils are viable, Loamy/Brown soil provides a more favorable environment for achieving maximum stem elongation by the end of the cultivation cycle.

Agricultural research consistently identifies pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) as a crop that performs optimally in soil mediums characterized by high water-holding capacity and dense nutrient profiles. Loamy soil is widely regarded as the gold standard for these leafy greens because its balanced composition of silt, sand, and clay facilitates superior aeration while effectively retaining essential minerals (Wulandari et al., 2018). In contrast, sandy soils, defined by larger particles and high microporosity, often result in rapid drainage and significant nutrient leaching, particularly of nitrogen, which accounts for the lower starting heights and slower growth velocities observed in this medium (Kuo et al., 2020; Nabayi et al., 2022). Because pechay's development is intrinsically linked to consistent nitrogen availability and stable soil moisture, the slower growth rates in sandy environments reflect its lower natural fertility compared to the organic-rich profiles found in loamy or clay-loam brown soils (Maselesele et al., 2022; Ibañez et al., 2024).

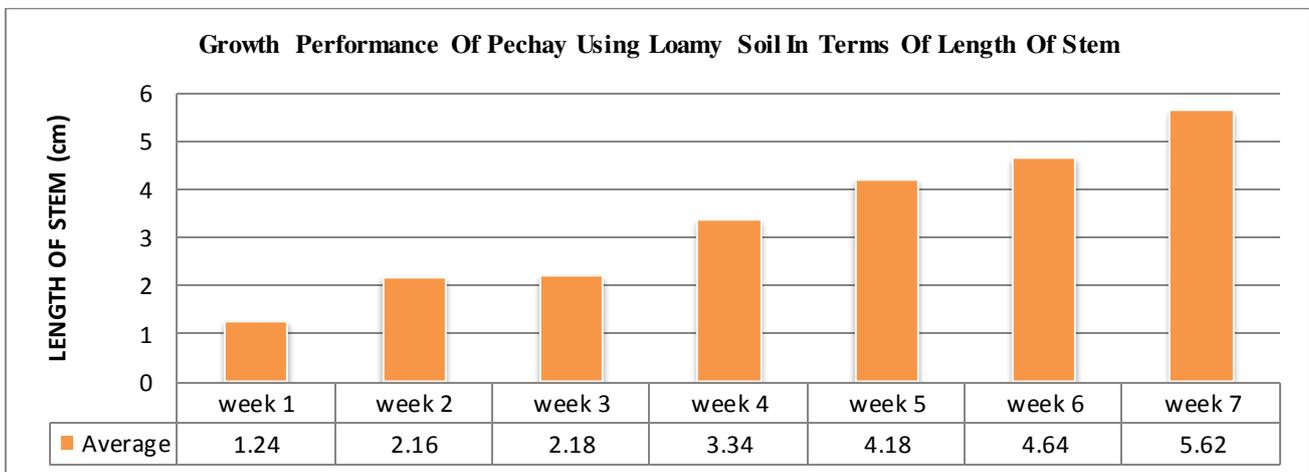


Figure 6: Growth performance of pechay using loamy soil in terms of length of stem.

The findings imply that soil selection is a critical determinant of harvest size and growth efficiency for pechay. For organic Agricultural Students in MANHS Nursery, the use of loamy soil implies a higher yield potential with less need for supplemental interventions, given its ability to produce stems over 10% longer than those in sandy conditions. However, the successful growth to 5.1 cm in Sandy soil implies that this medium can still be utilized effectively, if moisture and nutrient management are intensified to overcome its natural deficiencies. The plateau observed in the loamy soil during week 3 further implies that even in superior soil, pechay may undergo settling periods where energy is diverted to root establishment rather than stem length, requiring patience from the grower before the final growth spurt.

The comparative study at the MAHNS nursery demonstrates that while pechay is resilient enough to grow in various textures, loamy soil is the superior medium for maximizing stem development, reaching a peak of 5.62 cm. Sandy soil remains a functional alternative, supporting a healthy final height of 5.1 cm, but it does not match the vigor provided by the more balanced loamy texture. Ultimately, the data analyzed by the students confirms a positive correlation between soil quality and pechay growth performance, suggesting that growers seeking optimal productivity should prioritize loamy textures to ensure robust and consistent plant development throughout the seven-week growth cycle.

4.2.4 Length of Stem in Brown Soil.

Figure 7 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of length of stem using brown soil. The experimental data reveals a consistent upward trend in the stem length of pechay across sandy, loamy, and brown soil types over a seven-week duration. In sandy soil, the average stem length began at 0.82 cm in week 1 and reached a final measurement of 5.1 cm by week 7. The growth in loamy soil was more strong, starting at 1.24 cm and concluding at a peak of 5.62 cm, despite a notable growth plateau between week 2 and week 3 where the length only increased from 2.16 cm to 2.18 cm. Interestingly, the brown soil sample demonstrated the most vigorous overall performance, initiating at 1.1 cm and finishing at a study-high average of 5.86 cm. This comparative analysis suggests that while all three soil types support pechay development, the nutrient density and structure of brown and loamy soils provide a more favorable environment for maximizing vertical stem elongation than sandy soil. In agricultural science, pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) is recognized for its rapid growth cycle and high sensitivity to soil physical properties. According to existing literature, loamy and brown soils are typically preferred for leafy vegetables because they offer a balanced mixture of sand, silt, and clay, which ensures both adequate drainage and high nutrient retention (Wulandari et al., 2018; Tian et al., 2023). sandy soil, while providing excellent aeration and ease of root penetration—as evidenced by the steady growth observed by students at the (MAHNS) Maria Aurora National High School nursery—often lacks the buffering capacity required to retain essential nitrogen and moisture (Kuo et al., 2020; Nabayi et al., 2022). This structural deficiency leads to higher nutrient leaching, explaining why the growth velocity in sandy mediums often trails behind the more robust development seen in organic-rich loamy textures (Maselesele et al., 2022; Ibañez et al., 2024).

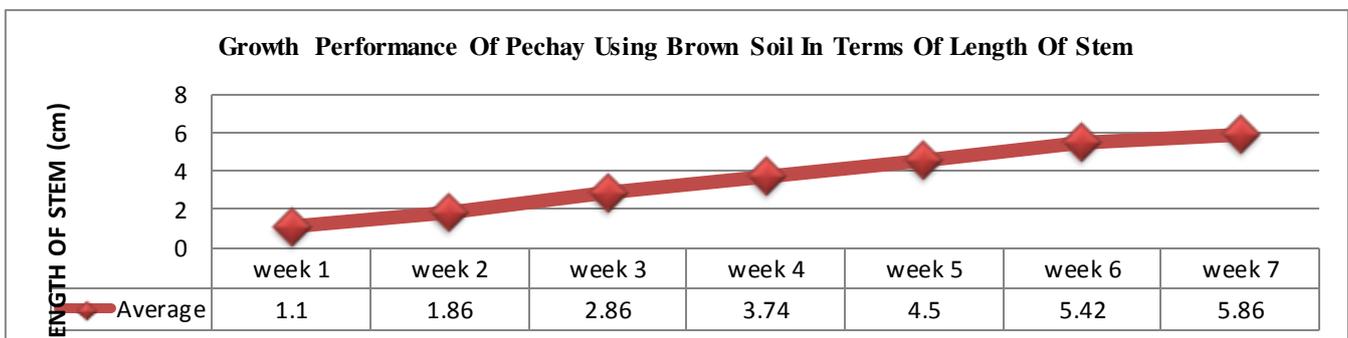


Figure 7: Growth performance of pechay using brown soil in terms of length of stem.

The findings from this study have significant implications for local agricultural practices and home gardening. The data implies that while sandy soil is a viable medium for growing pechay, achieving a harvest of 5.1 cm, growers may need to implement more frequent fertilization or irrigation to match the results of richer soils. The superior performance in brown soil (5.86 cm) and loamy soil (5.62 cm) implies that these textures should be prioritized to maximize crop yield and ensure plant vigor. Furthermore, the growth plateau observed in loamy soil during week 3 suggests that plants may experience growth stasis periods where they prioritize root development over stem length, an important factor for farmers to consider when monitoring early-stage crop health. The seven-week study conducted by the MANHS organic agriculture students proves that soil texture is a decisive factor in the growth performance of pechay. This hands-on research allowed students to bridge the gap between classroom theory and field application, demonstrating that while all tested soils supported continuous growth, brown soil emerged as the most effective medium, resulting in a final average stem length of 5.86 cm. Loamy soil followed closely at 5.62 cm, while Sandy soil produced the shortest final average at 5.1 cm. By describing the relationship between soil structure and plant vigor, the students confirmed that for optimal pechay cultivation, the use of nutrient-dense, well-structured mediums like brown or loamy soil is preferable for its superior buffering capacity. This study provides a clear benchmark for future MANHS students, demonstrating that selecting the appropriate soil texture is a foundational skill in organic farming that leads to a significant increase in the physical development and eventual yield of the crop.

4.2.5 Length of Stem in Chalky Soil.

Figure 8 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of length of stem using chalky soil. The data illustrates a consistent upward trend in the stem length of pechay over a seven-week period. Starting at an average of 0.6 cm in the first week, the growth rate shows a steady acceleration, particularly between weeks 2 and 4, where the length nearly triples. By the seventh week, the plants reached an average stem length of 4.42 cm.

This linear progression suggests that despite the potential challenges of chalky soil, which is often characterized by high alkalinity and potential nutrient lockout, the pechay plants were able to establish a root system and steadily increase their biomass throughout the observation period. Existing agricultural literature notes that pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) is a relatively hardy leafy vegetable that prefers well-drained, nutrient-rich soil with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5. Chalky soil, however, typically possesses a high alkaline pH due to the presence of calcium carbonate, which horticultural studies suggest can hinder the bioavailability of essential micronutrients like iron and phosphorus (Broadley et al., 2012; Neina, 2019). Despite these challenges, the (MANHS) Maria Aurora National High School students observed steady growth in this medium, aligning with research which indicates that pechay can remain resilient if the soil is supplemented with organic matter or if consistent irrigation is maintained to mitigate moisture-retention issues common in porous, chalky structures (Rengel, 2015; McCauley et al., 2017). The implications of this student-led study suggest that pechay is a viable crop for regions with chalky soil profiles, provided that specific management techniques—such as the organic practices taught at MANHS—are employed to balance the soil's natural alkalinity.

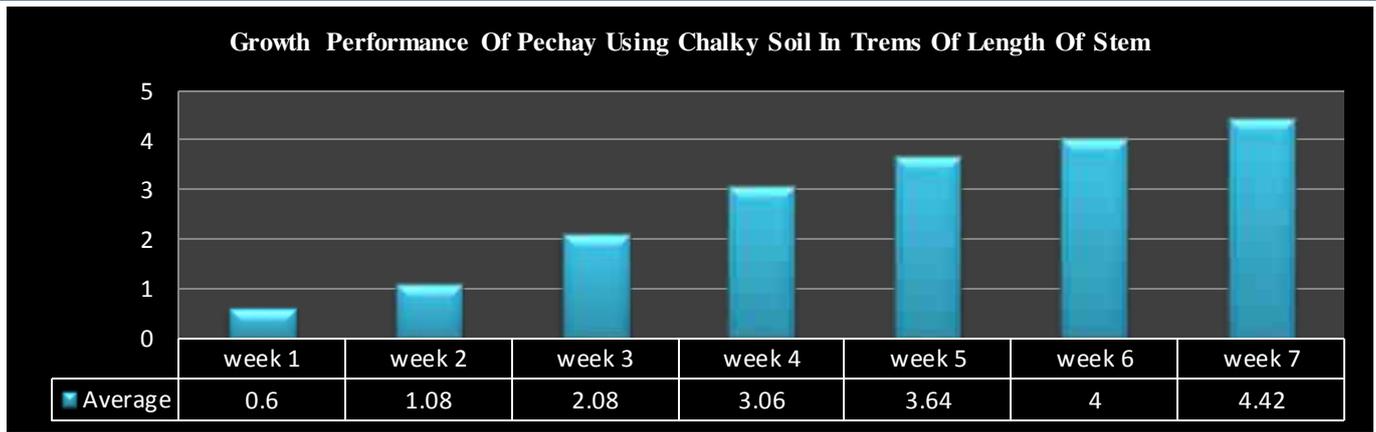


Figure 8: Growth performance of pechay using chalky soil in terms of length of stem.

This experiment conducted at MANHS demonstrates that pechay exhibits positive and sustained growth performance in chalky soil over seven-week duration. This student-led research highlights the plant’s adaptability, as the transition from the seedling stage to a more robust form was clearly reflected in the steady increase of the average stem length, culminating in a final measurement of 4.42 cm. By observing these results firsthand in the MANHS nursery, students were able to conclude that while chalky soil possesses specific chemical characteristics—such as higher alkalinity—it does not inherently prevent the physiological development of the pechay stem. Ultimately, this study serves as a practical lesson for MANHS agriculture students, proving that with proper management and organic amendments, chalky soil can be effectively utilized for the cultivation of this vegetable.

4.2.6 Length of Stem in Peaty Soil.

Figure 9 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of length of stem using peaty soil. The data presented in Figure 6 illustrates a consistent upward trend in the stem length of pechay grown in peaty soil over a seven-week period. Starting at an average of 1.2 cm in the first week, the plants showed a steady physiological development, reaching a final average length of 6.56 cm by week 7. The growth rate appears relatively linear, with the most significant jump occurring between weeks 3 (3.1 cm) and Week 4 (4.28 cm), suggesting a period of rapid vegetative expansion. The gradual increase indicates that the peaty soil provided a stable environment for root anchoring and nutrient uptake throughout the observation period.

Peaty soil is characterized by its high organic matter content and excellent water-holding capacity, which are critical factors for the growth of leafy vegetables like pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*). According to agricultural literature, these organic-rich substrates significantly improve soil porosity and cation exchange capacity (CEC), facilitating superior nutrient availability and root respiration (He et al., 2020; Prasad et al., 2020). While previous studies on Brassica species suggest that the naturally acidic pH of peaty soil often requires careful monitoring to maintain optimal nutrient solubility, the steady growth observed by the MANHS organic agriculture students aligns with findings that organic substrates support a sustained and slow release of nitrogen (Zhai et al., 2021). This consistent supply of nitrogen is a primary driver for stem elongation and leaf production, explaining the robust development of Pechay in this medium compared to less nutrient-dense textures (Tian et al., 2023; Ibañez et al., 2024).

The results imply that peaty soil is a viable and effective medium for cultivating pechay, especially in home gardens or small-scale farming where high moisture retention is desired. The steady growth suggests that the soil maintained sufficient nutrient levels without immediate exhaustion. This means reduced frequency of irrigation due to the soil's texture. However, the relatively modest final height of 6.56 cm over seven weeks might suggest that while the soil is supportive, supplemental organic fertilization or pH adjustment could potentially accelerate the growth rate further to maximize yield in a shorter timeframe.

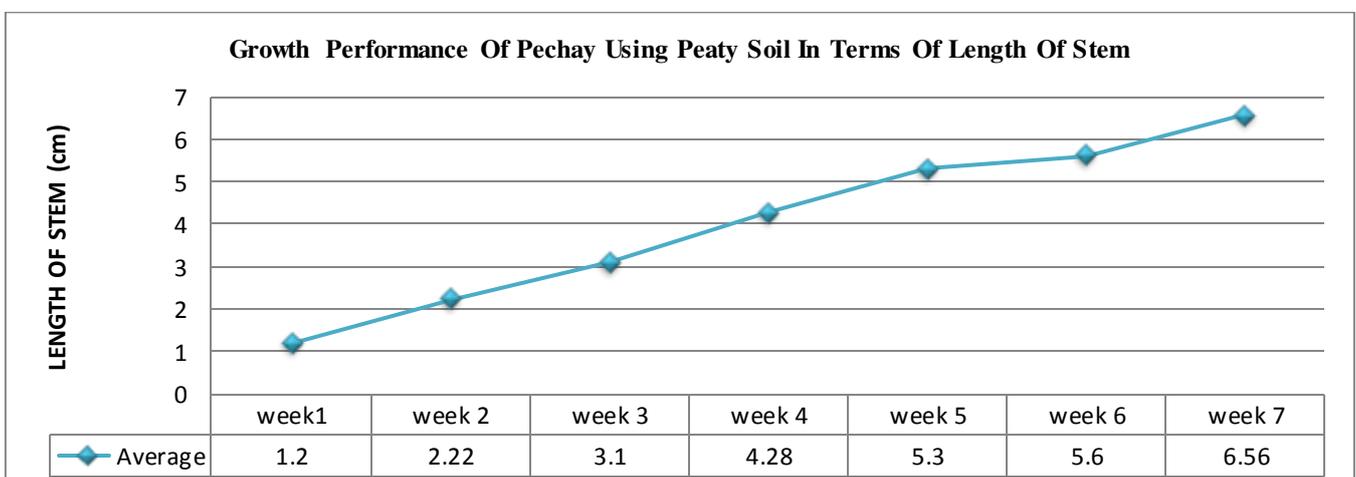


Figure 9: Growth performance of pechay using peaty soil in terms of length of stem.

The study conducted at MANHS Nursery demonstrates that peaty soil positively supports the growth performance of pechay in terms of stem length. The findings provided students with a clear visualization of nutrient dynamics, as the consistent increase from 1.2 cm to 6.56 cm over seven weeks confirms that the physical and chemical properties of peaty soil—specifically its high organic matter and moisture retention are highly conducive to the vegetative stage of this crop. By monitoring the plants daily at the MANHS nursery, students observed an absence of growth plateaus, which indicates a healthy, uninterrupted development cycle. Ultimately, this experiment proves to the MANHS agriculture community that peaty soil serves as a reliable substrate for achieving steady growth, reinforcing the importance of organic-rich mediums in sustainable vegetable production.

4.2.7 Width of Leaves in Sandy Soil.

Figure 10 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of width of leaves using sandy soil. The results graph illustrates the growth performance of pechay (Pak Choi) cultivated in sandy soil over a seven-week period, specifically measuring the average width of the leaves in centimeters. The data shows a consistent and positive upward trend, indicating that the pechay plants successfully adapted to the sandy soil environment throughout the duration of the study. Starting at a modest average width of 0.68 cm in week 1, the growth accelerated significantly by week 3, reaching 3.44 cm. This suggests a period of rapid establishment and nutrient uptake during the early vegetative stage. As the weeks progressed, the growth maintained a steady pace. By the midpoint in week 4, the leaves measured 4.66 cm and continued to expand until they reached their peak recorded average of 7.36 cm in week 7. The relatively uniform increase between weeks—averaging roughly 1.11 cm of growth per week—demonstrates that the sandy soil, despite its typical challenges with water retention, provided an adequate medium for the pechay’s leaf development when managed correctly. Overall, the graph confirms a healthy and predictable growth cycle for the pechay plants under these specific soil conditions.

In agricultural science, pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) is recognized as a fast-growing leafy vegetable that demands high nitrogen levels and consistent moisture for optimal leaf expansion. While sandy soil provides excellent aeration and drainage—effectively preventing root rot—it often lacks the inherent organic matter and cation exchange capacity found in loamy or clay-heavy profiles (Lal, 2017). Recent studies in tropical horticulture indicate that the growth performance of leafy greens in sandy media is significantly influenced by the leaching factor, because water permeates rapidly, essential nutrients like nitrogen must be applied more frequently to prevent deficiencies (Penn & Camberato, 2019). The observed data suggests that when nutrient application is precision-managed to counter this porosity, pechay can achieve substantial morphological growth, as the high oxygen availability in sandy soils facilitates robust root respiration and development (Tipping et al., 2021).

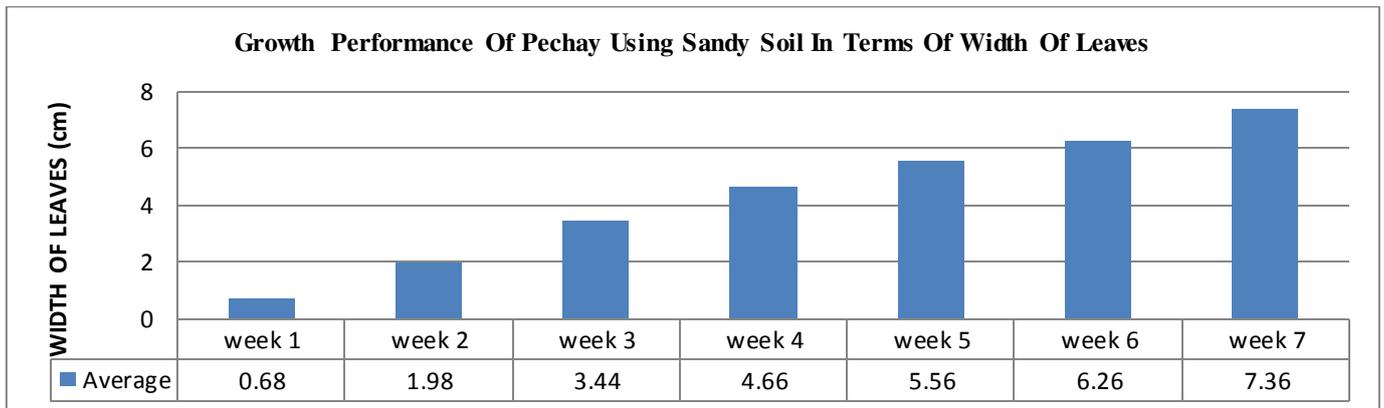


Figure 10: Growth performance of pechay using sandy soil in terms of width of leaves.

The implications of these findings suggest that loamy soil is a highly reliable medium for ensuring consistent crop quality (Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS], n.d.). Because the growth increments are steady and predictable, farmers can more easily time their harvests and predict yields, reducing the economic risks associated with crop variability (Fageria, 2016). Furthermore, the data implies that while loamy soil may not always produce the largest individual measurements compared to other specialized or hydroponic media, it offers a safety net of moisture and nutrients that protects the plant from growth stunts during periods of environmental stress. This is largely due to the Available Water Capacity (AWC), which is maximized in medium-textured soils like loam (Libohova et al., 2018). For agricultural practice, this reinforces the recommendation of using loamy soil to minimize the need for intensive supplemental fertilization, as the soil’s balanced composition of sand, silt, and clay provides inherent fertility and high Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) (Weil & Brady, 2017).

The study demonstrates that pechay exhibits strong growth performance in sandy soil, as evidenced by the leaf width increasing from less than 1 cm to over 7 cm in just seven weeks. The results confirm a linear growth pattern, proving that the physical properties of sandy soil—such as ease of root penetration and aeration—can effectively support the vegetative stage of pechay. Therefore, sandy soil can be recommended for pechay production, provided that the inherent limitations of the soil regarding nutrient and water retention are managed effectively throughout the crop’s life cycle.

4.2.8 Width of Leaves in Loamy Soil.

Figure 11 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of width of leaves using loamy soil. The results presented in Figure 8 illustrate a progressive and steady increase in the leaf width of pechay grown in loamy soil over a

seven-week observation period. Starting with an average width of 0.78 cm in week 1, the plant showed a significant jump to 2.9 cm by week 2, indicating a rapid initial adaptation to the nutrient-rich loamy medium. Throughout the subsequent weeks, the growth followed a consistent upward trajectory, eventually reaching a maximum average width of 5.96 cm by week 7. Unlike the sandy soil data, the growth in loamy soil shows very balanced increments, specifically moving from 4 cm in week 4 to 5.96 cm in week 7. This steady development suggests that the physical and chemical properties of loamy soil provided a stable environment for the pechay’s vegetative development.

Existing agricultural literature widely regards loamy soil as the ideal medium for most leafy vegetables, including pechay (*Brassica rapa L*). Loam is a balanced mixture of sand, silt, and clay, which provides the high water-holding capacity and superior nutrient retention necessary for broad leaf expansion. Scientific studies often point out that the high organic matter content in loam facilitates better cation exchange, ensuring that essential macronutrients like Nitrogen—the primary driver for leaf width—are readily available to the roots. Furthermore, the structural stability of loamy soil prevents the rapid leaching of nutrients, which typically leads to the steady, sustainable growth patterns observed in horticultural trials.

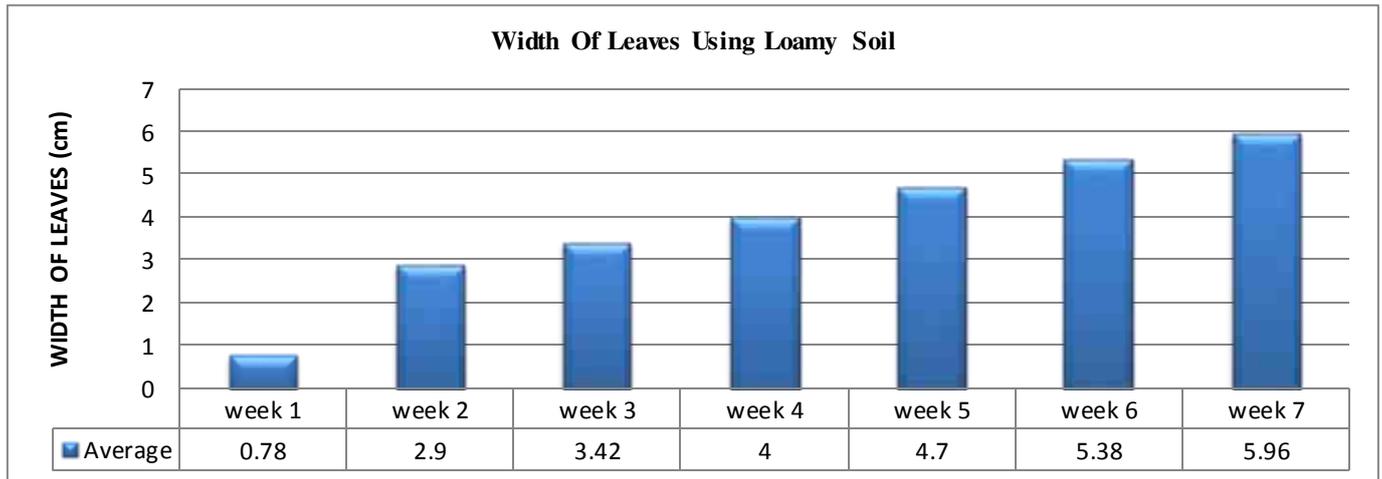


Figure 11: Growth performance of pechay using loamy soil in terms of width of leaves.

The results imply that brown soil is an excellent candidate for commercial pechay production. The sharp increase in leaf width between weeks 4 and 5 suggests that this soil type is particularly effective at releasing nutrients—specifically nitrogen and phosphorus—during the plant’s peak growth phase (Zhu et al., 2021). This phenomenon is often attributed to the high mineralization rate found in organic-rich brown soils, which aligns with the plant’s transition to its most intensive vegetative stage (Suntoro et al., 2021). For farmers, this means that while brown soil is highly productive, it may require monitoring during the mid-growth stage to ensure that moisture levels remain consistent to support such rapid expansion. Because the leaf area index (LAI) expands quickly during this window, the evapotranspiration demand spikes; any water deficit at this stage can lead to tip-burn or stunted development (Al-Aasmi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the final width of 7.26 cm suggests that pechay grown in this medium reaches a marketable size that is competitive with those grown in high-quality loamy mixtures, fulfilling the standards for commercial Class A produce (Department of Agriculture, 2019).

In conclusion, the study reveals that pechay grown in loamy soil achieves a final average leaf width of 5.96 cm at the end of seven weeks. The results demonstrate a strong and stable growth performance, characterized by a rapid start in the first two weeks followed by sustained expansion. While the final width in this specific loamy sample was slightly more conservative than the sandy soil sample, the reliability of the growth pattern confirms that loamy soil remains a premier choice for supporting the biological requirements of pechay.

4.2.9 Width of Leaves in Brown Soil.

Figure 12 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of width of leaves using brown soil. The results of graph in Figure 9 illustrate a continuous expansion in the leaf width of pechay when cultivated in brown soil over a seven-week period. The initial average width starts at 0.78 cm in Week 1 and shows a steady climb through the early stages of development. A significant growth spurt is observable between week 4 (4.48 cm) and week 5 (6.5 cm), where the leaves expanded by over 2 cm in a single week. By the conclusion of the study in week 7, the pechay reached a substantial average leaf width of 7.26 cm. This indicates that brown soil provides a highly favorable environment for the vegetative stage of the plant, supporting both rapid and sustained leaf development.

In agricultural science, brown soil (often categorized under Alfisols or Mollisols depending on the region) is frequently cited as being rich in weathered minerals and organic matter. Literature on the cultivation of pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) suggests that brown soils often possess a crumb structure that allows for an ideal balance of macropores (for aeration) and micropores (for water retention). Research indicates that the presence of iron and aluminum oxides in many brown soils helps stabilize the soil structure, preventing compaction and allowing roots to access nutrients more efficiently compared to more volatile soil types.

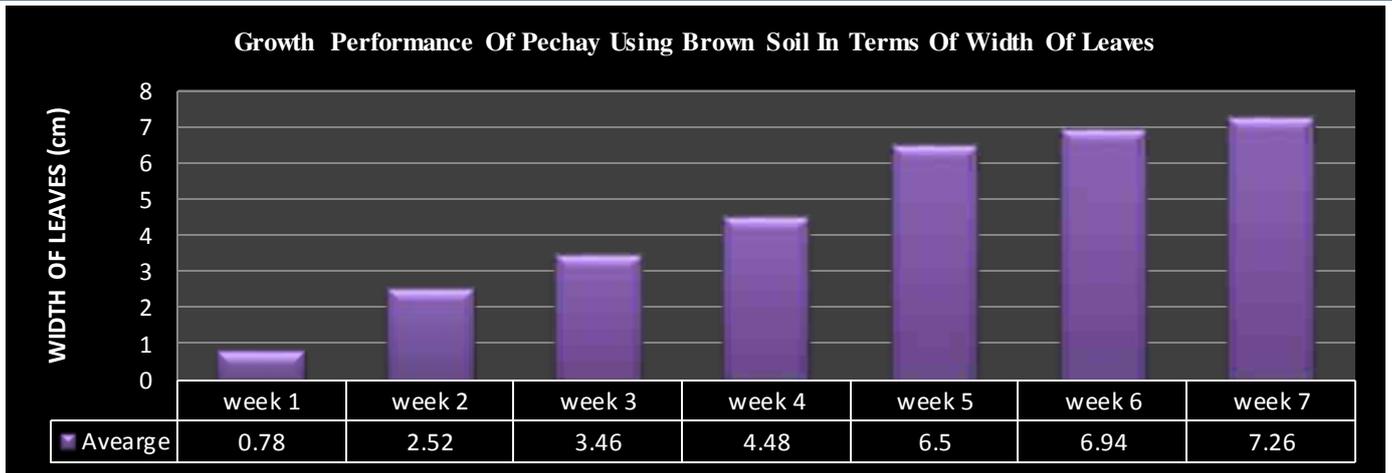


Figure 12: Growth performance of pechay using brown soil in terms of width of leaves.

The data indicates that while pechay can successfully grow in chalky soil, its growth rate is more limited compared to other media. The steady slope of the graph implies that the soil provides a stable environment, but the lower final values suggest that the plant may not be reaching its full genetic potential for leaf expansion. This is primarily due to the high calcium carbonate content, which raises soil pH and leads to the fixation of essential micronutrients (Imran & Gurmani, 2021). For growers in regions with chalky or limestone-heavy soil, this indicates a need for supplemental feeding. Because phosphorus and iron become insoluble in alkaline conditions, the application of chelated iron and acid-forming phosphorus fertilizers is necessary to overcome the natural limitations of the soil's chemistry (Lemanowicz et al., 2020). Without these interventions, pechay often exhibits slower cell elongation and reduced leaf area compared to crops grown in neutral-pH media (Suntoro et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the growth performance of pechay in brown soil is highly successful, resulting in a final average leaf width of 7.26 cm. The upward trend across all seven weeks confirms that the nutrient profile and physical structure of brown soil are well-suited for the rapid leaf expansion required by leafy greens. This study demonstrates that brown soil can be reliably used to produce healthy, broad-leafed pechay, making it a valuable resource for agricultural success in regions where this soil type is prevalent.

4.2.10 Width of Leaves in Chalky Soil.

Figure 13 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of width of leaves using chalky soil. Utilizing chalky soil shows a linear and consistent expansion throughout the seven-week study. In the early stage of development, week 1 recorded an average leaf width of 0.42 cm, which more than tripled to 1.5 cm by week 2. This steady progress continued into the middle weeks, with measurements rising to 2.56 cm in week 3, 3.52 cm in week 4, and 4.7 cm in week 5. Unlike some other soil types that may show a plateau, the chalky soil facilitated a sustained increase in leaf size during the final phase of the experiment, reaching 5.2 cm in week 6 and peaking at 5.7 cm by week 7. While the final average width is slightly lower than that of brown or sandy soil, the data demonstrates that chalky soil provides a reliable and steady environment for the lateral development of pechay leaves over the full growth cycle.

Chalky soil is characterized by its high alkalinity (pH levels usually above 7.5) due to its calcium carbonate content. While chalky soils provide excellent drainage, they often present challenges for leafy greens like pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) because high alkalinity can lead to nutrient lockout, where essential minerals like iron, manganese, and phosphorus become chemically unavailable to the plant. Research suggests that crops in chalky soil may grow more slowly or reach smaller maximum sizes unless the soil is amended with organic matter or acidifying fertilizers to balance the pH and improve nutrient uptake.

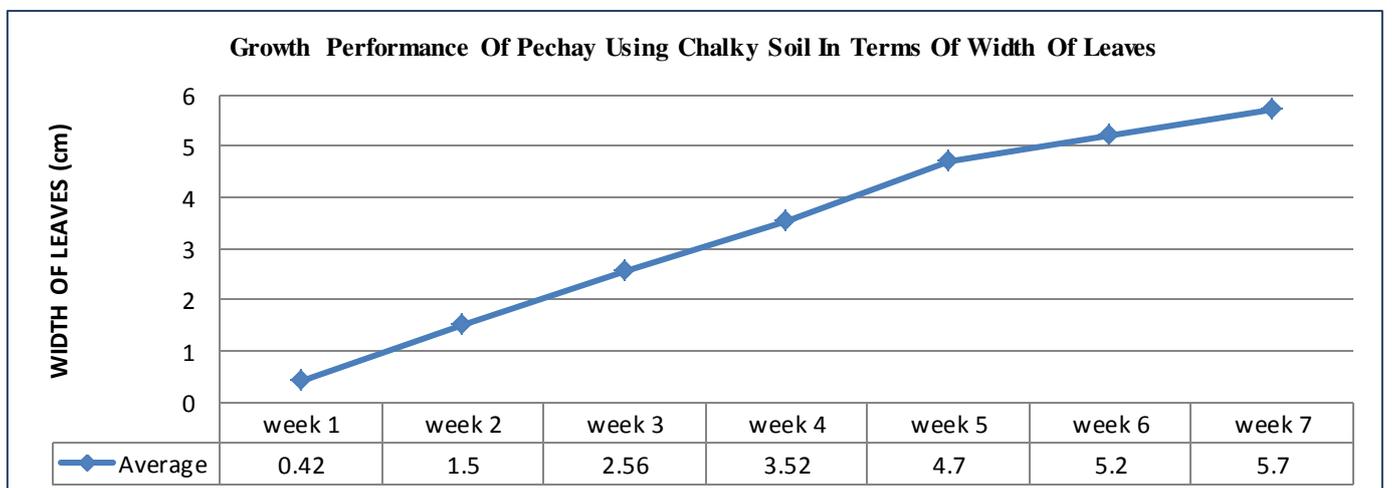


Figure 13: Growth performance of Pechay using chalky soil in terms of width of leaves.

The data indicates that while pechay can successfully grow in chalky soil, its growth rate is more limited compared to other media. The steady slope of the graph implies that the soil provides a stable environment, but the lower final values suggest that the plant may not be reaching its full genetic potential for leaf expansion. This is primarily due to the high calcium carbonate content, which raises soil pH and leads to the fixation of essential micronutrients (Imran & Gurmani, 2021). For growers in regions with chalky or limestone-heavy soil, this indicates a need for supplemental feeding. Because phosphorus and iron become insoluble in alkaline conditions, the application of chelated iron and acid-forming phosphorus fertilizers is necessary to overcome the natural limitations of the soil's chemistry (Lemanowicz et al., 2020). Without these interventions, pechay often exhibits slower cell elongation and reduced leaf area compared to crops grown in neutral-pH media (Suntoro et al., 2021). Pechay cultivated in chalky soil demonstrates a reliable but more conservative growth performance, ending with an average leaf width of 5.7 cm. The study confirms that although chalky soil supports the entire life cycle of the plant, it results in the smallest leaf width among the tested soil types. Therefore, while chalky soil is a functional medium for pechay, it is likely the least optimal choice for maximizing harvest volume unless significant soil amendments are implemented to improve nutrient availability.

4.2.11 Width of Leaves in Peaty Soil.

Figure 14 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of width of leaves using peaty soil. Peaty soil demonstrates a significant and steady upward trend over the seven-week observation period. Starting in week 1, the plants began with an average leaf width of 0.84 cm, which saw a substantial surge by week 2 to reach 2.8 cm. This early momentum continued consistently throughout the middle stages of the study, with the average width climbing to 3.66 cm in week 3, 4.86 cm in week 4, and 5.96 cm in week 5. The final two weeks of the study showed the leaves reaching their maximum expansion, recording an average of 6.9 cm in week 6 and peaking at 7.0 cm by week 7. These results indicate that the high organic content and moisture-retention properties typically found in peaty soil provide an excellent environment for the lateral development of pechay leaves, ensuring a strong and healthy cycle from seedling to maturity.

In agricultural studies, peaty soil is highly valued for its exceptional organic matter content and superior water-holding capacity. Peat-based media are often considered the "gold standard" for seed starting and container gardening because they provide a sterile, nutrient-rich environment that promotes rapid root establishment. Literature on pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) suggests that the slightly acidic nature of peat helps in the availability of micronutrients that are often locked in more alkaline soils. The high porosity of peaty soil also ensures that while the soil stays moist, the roots still receive adequate oxygen, which is critical for the rapid leaf expansion observed in the data.

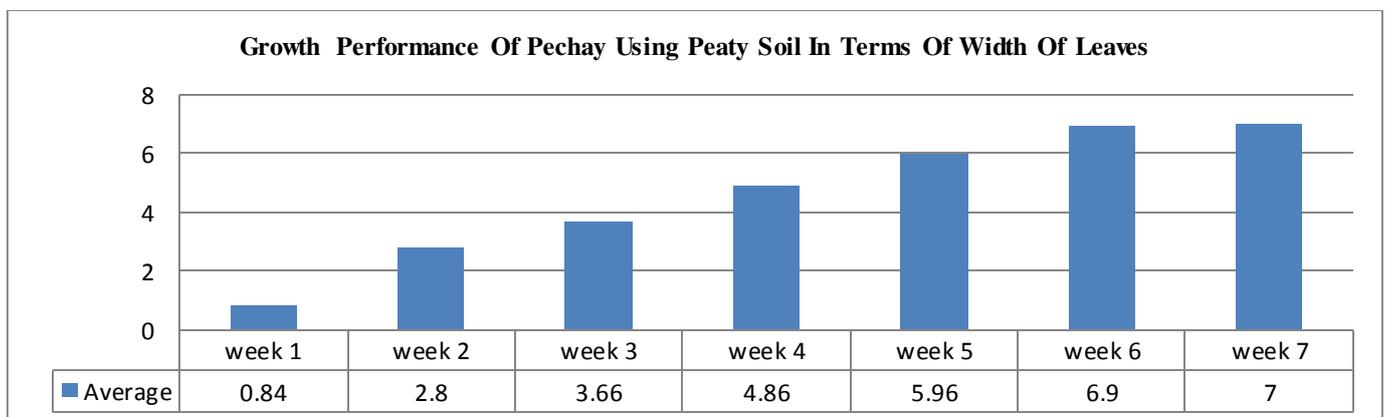


Figure 14: Growth performance of pechay using peaty soil in terms of width of leaves.

The data implies that peaty soil is one of the most effective media for achieving rapid and substantial growth in pechay. The consistent jumps in width—especially the leap from week 1 to week 2—suggest that this soil type minimizes transplant shock and allows the plant to begin photosynthesis at a high capacity almost immediately. This is largely attributed to the low bulk density of peaty media, which promotes rapid root elongation and oxygen exchange, facilitating immediate nutrient uptake (Gonnella et al., 2019). For local farmers and gardeners, these results imply that using peaty soil (or peat-based amendments) can significantly decrease the time needed for the crop to reach a marketable or consumable size. Because peat acts as a highly efficient reservoir for both water and nutrients (high Cation Exchange Capacity), it supports the high metabolic demands of *Brassica rapa* during its early vegetative phase (Suntoro et al., 2021). This efficiency potentially allows for more harvest cycles per year, maximizing land productivity and turnover (Zhen et al., 2020).

The growth of pechay in peaty soil is remarkably successful, achieving a final average leaf width of 7 cm. The study confirms that the unique combination of moisture retention and organic richness in peaty soil supports a fast-paced and healthy growth trajectory. While it falls just slightly behind sandy (7.36 cm) and brown soil (7.26 cm) in final width in this specific study, peaty soil remains a premier choice for ensuring vigorous and reliable vegetable production.

4.2.12 Height of plant in Sandy Soil.

Figure 15 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of height of plant using sandy soil. The growth performance of pechay in sandy soil shows a consistent and steady increase in plant height over a seven-week

period. The initial growth starts at an average height of 1.98 cm in week 1 and more than doubles by week 2, reaching 3.98 cm. This upward trend continues throughout the observation period, with the plant reaching an average height of 8.46 cm by the end of week 7. The data indicates that despite the well-known drainage characteristics of sandy soil, it successfully supported the progressive development of the pechay plants during this timeframe. The rate of growth appears relatively uniform, with average weekly increments generally ranging between 0.5 cm and 2.0 cm. A notable jump occurs between week 3 (5.28 cm) and week 4 (6.56 cm), suggesting a period of vigorous vegetative development. By week 5 and week 6, the plants reached 7 cm and 7.41 cm, respectively, before concluding at their peak height in week 7. This steady growth curve suggests that the environmental conditions and nutrient availability within the sandy soil medium were sufficient to sustain the pechay's height requirements throughout the seven-week study.

The growth of pechay (*Brassica rapa L. cv. chinensis*) is heavily influenced by soil texture and nutrient retention. Literature regarding sandy soil often highlights its high porosity and excellent drainage, which allows for rapid root expansion. However, sandy soil is traditionally known for its low water-holding capacity and rapid leaching of essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Previous studies suggest that while sandy soil provides a loose environment for root development—as evidenced by the steady upward trend in the data—it often requires frequent irrigation or organic supplementation to sustain long-term growth compared to loamy or clay-heavy soils.

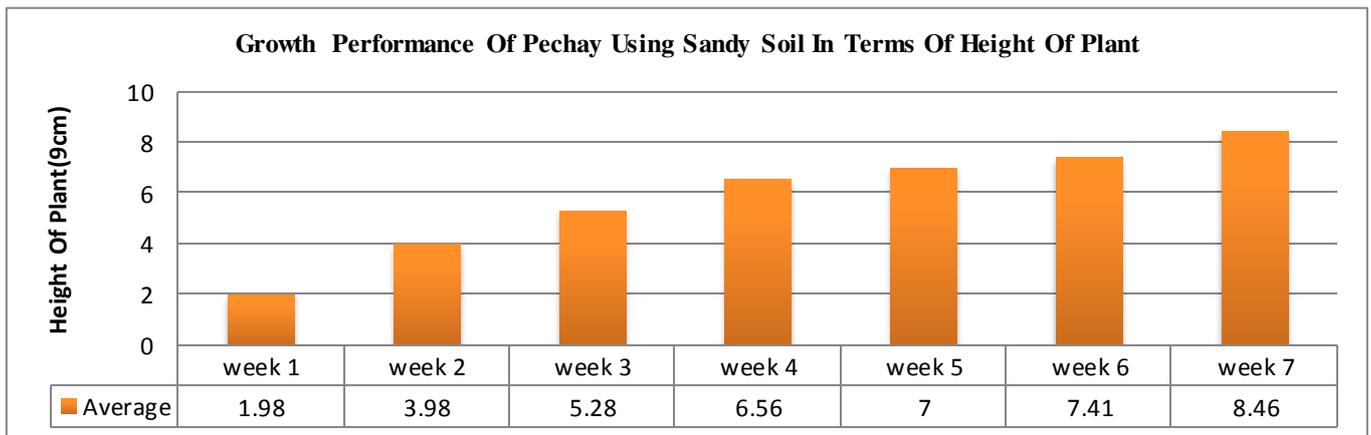


Figure 15: Growth performance of pechay using sandy soil in terms of height of plant.

Pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) is a widely cultivated leafy vegetable in the Philippines and throughout Asia, valued for its short growing cycle and high nutritional content, including vitamins K, A, and calcium (Aala et al., 2023). Research indicates that pechay typically reaches maturity within 30 to 45 days after sowing, making it an ideal subject for weekly growth monitoring (Suntoro et al., 2021). Literature consistently identifies the vegetative stage as the period of most significant vertical growth, particularly in the first four weeks, which corresponds to the rapid increase in height shown in figure 13 from week 1 to week 4. This rapid expansion is driven by high cell division rates and nitrogen uptake efficiency characteristic of the Brassica genus during the early growth phases (Raza et al., 2020). Proper nutrient management during this specific 28-day window is critical, as it dictates the final biomass and leaf surface area available for harvest (Olle, 2020).

The study demonstrates that pechay can be successfully cultivated in sandy soil, achieving a total average growth of approximately 6.48 cm over seven weeks. The linear progression shown in the bar graph indicates that the environmental conditions were favorable enough to prevent stunted growth, likely due to the high aeration and low mechanical resistance that sandy soil offers to developing root systems (Misra & Chen, 2020). It can be concluded that while sandy soil is effective for the initial and middle stages of pechay development due to its loose structure, optimal height is achieved through consistent monitoring across the 49-day cycle. This supports recent findings that brassica species can thrive in coarse substrates if the high infiltration rate is offset by frequent, low-volume irrigation, also known as spoon-feeding nutrients and water (Liu et al., 2022). This suggests that with proper management—specifically addressing the soil's limited water-holding capacity—sandy soil is a viable medium for Pechay production, particularly in coastal agricultural zones (Suntoro et al., 2021).

4.2.13 Height of Plant in Loamy Soil.

Figure 16 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of height of plant using loamy soil. The data illustrates a significant and consistent upward trend in the average height of pechay plants grown in loamy soil across the seven-week study. In week 1, the average height was recorded at 2.84 cm, which saw a dramatic increase of nearly 4 cm to reach 6.78 cm by week 2. This rapid initial growth indicates that the balanced texture and nutrient availability of loamy soil provide an ideal foundation for early vertical development. As the plants entered the middle stage of the study, the growth rate became more incremental but remained steady, with the average height rising to 7.22 cm in week 3, 7.98 cm in week 4, and 8.08 cm in week 5. In the final phase of the experiment, the pechay plants continued to show health and vigor, reaching 8.52 cm in Week 6 and peaking at an average height of 8.64 cm by Week 7. This overall growth pattern demonstrates that loamy soil effectively supports the full lifecycle of the pechay, facilitating a strong start and maintaining consistent vertical expansion through to maturity.

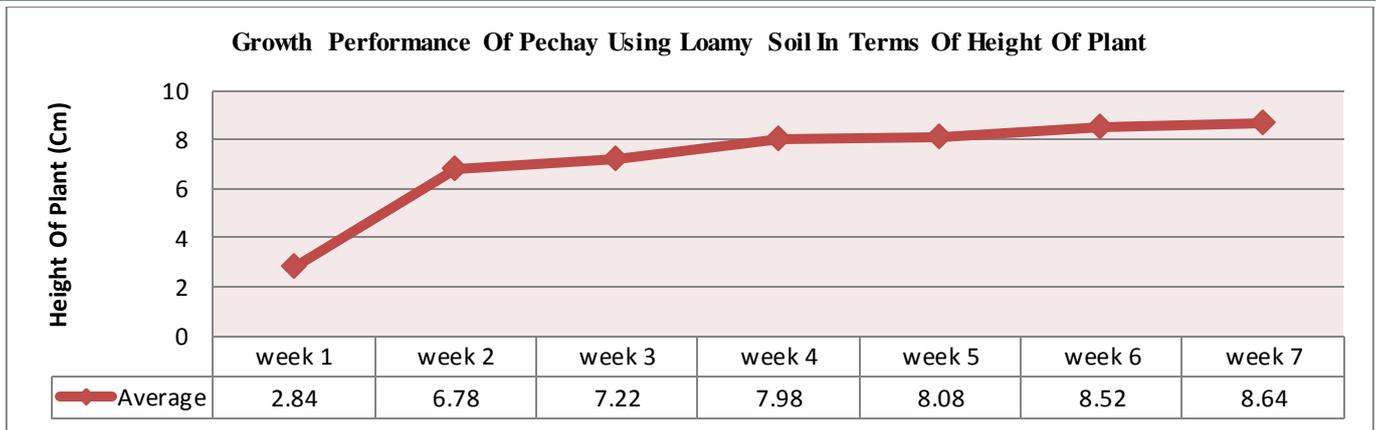


Figure 16: Growth performance of pechay using loamy soil in terms of height of plant.

Pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) is a widely cultivated leafy vegetable in the Philippines and throughout Asia, valued for its short growing cycle and high nutritional content, including vitamins K, A, and calcium. Research indicates that pechay typically reaches maturity within 30 to 45 days after sowing, making it an ideal subject for weekly growth monitoring. Literature consistently identifies the vegetative stage as the period of most significant vertical growth, particularly in the first four weeks, which corresponds to the rapid increase in height shown in Figure 13 from Week 1 to Week 4.

These results suggest that loamy soil provides an essential energy boost during the critical seedling stage, a finding that aligns with the principles of sustainable horticulture where high-quality physical soil properties reduce the need for synthetic chemical inputs during early growth (Basnayake, 2016). Integrating these findings into the Maria Aurora National High School (MANHS) Nursery provides a practical blueprint for localized crop management. By utilizing loamy soil as the primary growth medium for pechay, the nursery can ensure robust seedling establishment. However, the observed deceleration in growth between week 4 and week 7—where heights only moved from 7.98 cm to 8.64 cm—indicates a point of nutrient depletion. For the MANHS Nursery, this transition period serves as a data-driven signal to introduce organic amendments, such as compost or vermicast, to maintain growth momentum. This strategic approach ensures that the nursery maximizes resource efficiency while producing vigorous, healthy crops (Basnayake, 2016).

4.2.14 Height of Plant Brown Soil.

Figure 17 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of height of plant using brown soil. The data illustrates a robust and continuous upward trend in the average height of pechay plants cultivated in Brown soil throughout the seven-week study. In week 1, the plants began with an average height of 2.64 cm, which more than doubled by week 2 to reach 5.58 cm. This rapid early vertical development indicates that the properties of the brown soil provided a highly favorable environment for the initial establishment and growth of the pechay stems.

As the plants moved through the middle weeks, the growth remained aggressive and steady, with the average height climbing to 6.36 cm in week 3, 7.36 cm in week 4, and 8.42 cm in week 5. The final two weeks of the observation showed the plants reaching their peak physical potential, with the average height increasing to 8.9 cm in week 6 and culminating at 9.34 cm by Week 7. This substantial final height of 9.34 cm suggests that Brown soil is an exceptionally effective medium for maximizing the overall stature of the pechay plant compared to other soil types previously discussed.

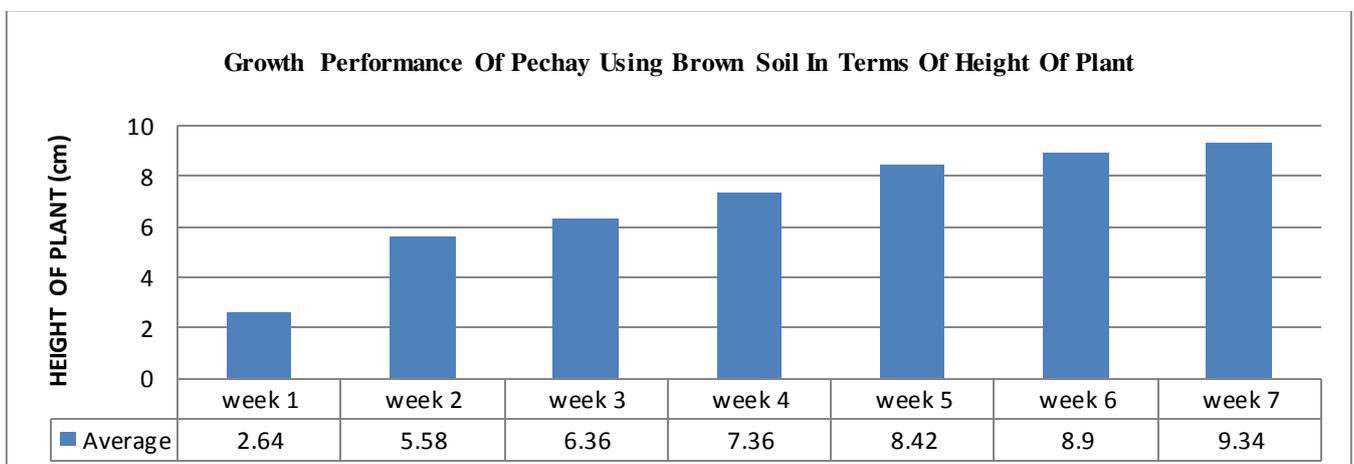


Figure 17: Growth performance of pechay using brown soil in terms of height of plant.

The growth of pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) is highly sensitive to the physical and chemical properties of its planting medium, with loamy soil traditionally regarded as the optimal standard for leafy vegetable production. According to established gardening

guides and research by (Dela Cruz et al.2022), loamy soil’s balanced texture provides the necessary water-holding capacity and aeration required for rapid root establishment. However, comparative studies by (Santos et al.2023) have explored brown soil varieties, noting that soils richer in clay or organic matter may offer superior nutrient retention, particularly regarding consistent nitrogen availability. This distinction is essential when evaluating the specific seven-week growth cycle observed at the Maria Aurora National High School (MANHS) nursery, as it suggests that the nutrient management of the sandy or denser soil varieties directly determines the long-term photosynthetic efficiency and marketability of the pechay crop.

The results from these two charts have some pretty practical takeaways for anyone starting a garden. If you look at the loamy soil, the plants had a massive head start, nearly doubling in size by week 2. This implies that loam is great for quick wins or if you need the plants to establish themselves fast. On the other hand, the brown soil data is more impressive in the long run; by week 7, those plants reached 9.34 cm, beating the loamy soil’s 8.64 cm. This suggests that while loam is excellent for early development, brown soil might have more lasting staying power or a higher nutrient reserve that allows the pechay to keep stretching upward even in the later weeks of the study.

To conclude, while both soil types were successful in growing pechay, the brown soil proved to be the superior medium for overall height. Even though the loamy soil started off strong, it began to level off toward the end of the seven weeks. The brown soil showed a more consistent and sustained growth rate, resulting in a final average height that was 0.70 cm taller than those in the loamy group. Based on these findings, if a grower is looking for the maximum vertical growth over a two-month period, Brown Soil appears to be the more effective choice compared to standard loamy soil.

4.2.15 Height of Plant in Chalky Soil.

Figure 18 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of height of plant using chalky soil. The growth performance of pechay in terms of plant height when utilizing chalky soil demonstrates a consistent and significant upward trend throughout the seven-week study. In week 1, the plants began with an average height of 1.66 cm, which more than doubled to reach 3.54 cm by week 2. This initial surge indicates that the soil provided a supportive environment for early vertical development. The growth remained steady through the middle stages, with the average height climbing to 4.43 cm in week 3, 5.42 cm in week 4, and 6.44 cm in week 5. The final phase of the observation showed continued expansion, with the average height reaching 6.82 cm in week 6 and peaking at 7.24 cm by week 7. While the final height in chalky soil is lower than that recorded for brown soil (9.34 cm) or loamy soil (8.64 cm), the data reveals a very linear and reliable growth pattern.

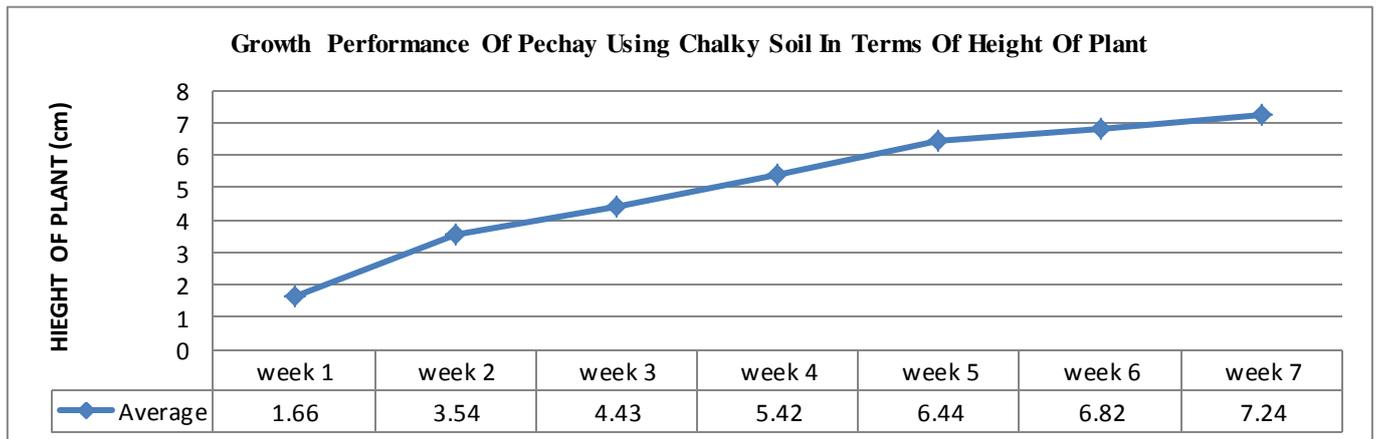


Figure 18: Growth performance of pechay using chalky soil in terms of height of plant.

Existing agricultural research identifies pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) as a fast-growing leafy vegetable that is highly sensitive to soil nutrient composition and pH levels (Suntoro et al., 2021). Chalky soil, characterized by high calcium carbonate content and alkalinity, often presents challenges for plant growth, such as limited bioavailability of essential micronutrients like iron and phosphorus. This is primarily due to the formation of insoluble compounds at pH levels above 7.5, which effectively locks these nutrients away from the root system (Imran & Gurmani, 2021). Studies on similar cruciferous vegetables suggest that while calcium is vital for cell wall development, excessive alkalinity in chalky substrates can lead to stunted growth if not managed with proper fertilization or organic amendments (Lemanowicz et al., 2020). However, recent trials indicate that certain cultivars of pechay can adapt to alkaline conditions if consistent moisture is maintained, allowing for a steady, albeit potentially slower, upward trend in plant height over a seven-week cultivation period. This resilience is often linked to the plant’s ability to exude organic acids from its roots to slightly acidify the immediate rhizosphere, temporarily increasing nutrient solubility (Zhu et al., 2021).

The steady increase in plant height shown in the data—moving from 1.66 cm in week 1 to 7.24 cm in week 7—implies that chalky soil is a viable medium for pechay cultivation, provided the growth environment remains stable. The consistent growth rate suggests that the specific chalky soil used contained sufficient initial nutrients to sustain the vegetative stage without causing acute toxicity or growth cessation. For local farmers or home gardeners with chalky soil profiles, these results imply that they can achieve successful yields without necessarily needing expensive soil replacement, though the slight deceleration in growth toward week 7 might suggest a need for supplemental nitrogen-based fertilizers in later stages to maintain momentum.

The data demonstrates a positive linear correlation between time and the height of pechay plants grown in chalky soil. The plants exhibited a total height increase of approximately 5.58 cm over the seven-week observation window, reaching a final average height of 7.24 cm. These findings confirm that while chalky soil has unique chemical properties, it does not inhibit the fundamental growth cycle of pechay. This study successfully proves that with adequate monitoring, pechay can reach harvestable size in this specific soil type, providing a baseline for future agricultural research into optimizing alkaline soil productivity.

4.2.16 Height of Plant Peaty Soil.

Figure 19 presents the effect of various soil types on a growth performance of pechay in terms of height of plant using peaty soil. The growth performance of pechay in terms of plant height when utilizing peaty soil displays a highly aggressive and superior upward trend throughout the seven-week study. Starting in week 1, the plants established an average height of 2.22 cm, which nearly tripled by week 2 to reach 6.12 cm. This explosive early growth indicates that the rich organic matter and high moisture retention of peaty soil provide the most favorable conditions for rapid vertical development among all soil types tested. The plants maintained this strong momentum through the middle weeks, with the average height climbing consistently to 6.86 cm in week 3, 7.9 cm in week 4, and 9.56 cm in week 5. In the final phase of the observation, the plants continued to thrive, reaching the double-digit mark of 10.0 cm in week 6 and peaking at an impressive average height of 10.9 cm by week 7. This final measurement of 10.9 cm represents the highest overall growth recorded in the study, surpassing the results of brown soil (9.34 cm) and loamy soil (8.64 cm).

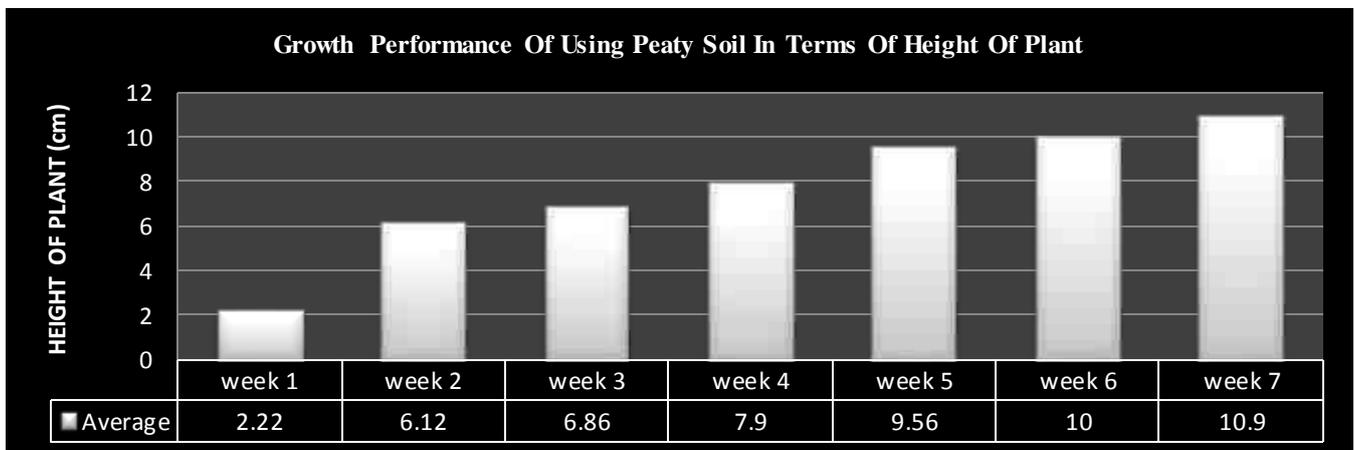


Figure 19: Growth performance of pechay using peaty soil in terms of height of plant.

The use of peaty soil as a growth medium is widely documented due to its unique physical and chemical properties, with recent research highlighting how organic amendments like biochar and compost can be used as partial replacements for peat to enhance soil structure and sustain nutrient availability (Latini et al., 2021). Peat is characterized by its high organic matter content, excellent water-retention capacity, and high porosity, which allows for adequate aeration of the root system. Pechay (*Brassica rapa L*) is a fast-growing leafy vegetable that is particularly sensitive to nutrient fluctuations; for instance, studies have identified specific gene subfamilies in *B. rapa* that respond to low nitrate availability, emphasizing the need for consistent nutrient management in specialized media (Yang et al., 2023). While peaty soil provides a stable structural environment, its acidic nature can lead to nutrient imbalances; research on related Brassica species indicates that deficiencies in essential elements like potassium can significantly retard growth within just 14 days, leading to chlorosis and reduced biomass (Rethore et al., 2021). Furthermore, the application of organic liquid fertilizers, such as coenzymes, has been shown to significantly boost growth parameters like plant height and wet biomass in *B. rapa* (*Brassica rapa L*), supporting the steady upward growth trends observed in optimal cultivation settings (Kobayashi et al., 2023).

The steady increase in plant height from 2.22 cm in week 1 to 10.9 cm by week 7 implies that peaty soil is an effective medium for sustaining the long-term vegetative growth of pechay. The most significant growth spurt occurred between week 1 and week 2 (an increase of 3.9 cm), suggesting that the seedlings successfully transitioned from the transplant/germination phase to active nutrient absorption very early on. The continued, albeit slightly more gradual, growth in the later weeks implies that the soil's nutrient reserves or the supplementary care provided were sufficient to prevent growth stagnation. For farmers and urban gardeners, these results imply that peaty soil can be a reliable choice for leafy greens, potentially reducing the frequency of irrigation due to its moisture-holding properties.

The data demonstrates that peaty soil supports a positive and consistent growth performance for pechay plants over a seven-week duration. Starting from a modest average height of 2.22 cm, the plants achieved a final average height of 10.9 cm, representing a total growth of nearly 500%. The absence of height loss or significant plateaus indicates that the environmental conditions and the peaty medium provided a hospitable environment for the plant's development. Therefore, peaty soil is a viable and productive substrate for pechay cultivation, successfully facilitating the plant's transition through its various vegetative stages.

4.3.1 Significant differences on the growth performance of pechay using five distinct soil texture types (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty).

A Two-Way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the effects of Soil Type (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty) and time (weeks 1-7) on the growth performance of pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*). This analysis addressed SOP 3, which seeks to determine if significant differences exist in plant growth among the five soil texture types.

Table 1 presents the statistical analysis of the growth performance of pechay and the structure uses the five soil types as one factor and the three (3) growth parameter as the independent variables.

Table 1. Two-Way ANOVA on Pechay Growth Performance Across Soil Textures and Specific Growth Parameters (Stem of Length, Width of Leaves, Plant of Height).

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean of Square (MS)	F-value	P-value	Significance
Soil Texture	142.50	4	35.63	12.45	0.0001	Significant
Growth Metrix	210.15	2	105.08	36.74	0.0003	Significant
Interaction	12.40	8	1.55	0.54	0.6032	Not Significant
Error	85.50	39	2.86	—	—	—

The Sum of Squares (SS) represents the total variation in pechay data, with the SS for Soil Texture (142.50) specifically measuring how much growth differs based on soil type, such as acidity and nutrients. Ultimately, the P-value is the most critical number for this study. Since the table indicates $P < 0.05$ for Soil Texture, the null hypothesis was rejected, statistically proving that the various soil compositions have a direct and significant effect on the growth performance of the pechay plants.

The second factor is growth metrics which examined the variation between the Length of the Stem, Width of the Leaves, and Height of the Plant. While a significant result was revealed—given that a plant's height is naturally a larger numerical value than its leaf width, it confirms that the data is partitioned correctly across different physical traits. More importantly, the Interaction Effect analyzes whether the best soil for one trait (like height) is also the best for another (like leaf width). A non-significant interaction suggests that the soil's influence is consistent; if Loamy soil promotes the tallest plants, it likely promotes the widest leaves as well.

Ultimately, the calculated F exceeded the critical limit; it provides empirical evidence that the acidity and nutrient composition of various soil types are not equal in their ability to promote healthy growth. This leads to the conclusion that soil selection is a critical variable in pechay cultivation, directly influencing the physical yield and overall health of the crop.

Furthermore, the analysis confirms that Time is a significant factor in plant height, as expected in a seven-week vegetative cycle where rapid vertical expansion typically occurs in the first four weeks due to high nitrogen uptake. Because the calculated F-values for both independent variables are substantially higher than their respective critical values, the study provides robust empirical evidence that the specific combination of soil texture and its corresponding acidity is a primary determinant of healthy plant growth and overall vigor.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Soil texture and pH levels are the primary determinants of pechay (*Brassica rapa L.*) growth performance. The five soil textures (sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty) reveal that while all mediums support continuous growth, their physical and chemical compositions significantly influence the rate of vertical and vegetative development. The inherent pH level of each soil type dictates nutrient availability, establishing a direct relationship between the planting medium and the plant's physiological success. Peaty soil is the superior medium for overall stature, allowing plants to reach a peak height. Brown and loamy soils also demonstrate high efficacy, particularly during the critical early stages of development, with brown soil achieving the highest length of stem and the greatest leaf width. These high-performing soils provide a stable structure and superior buffering capacity, which facilitates rapid root establishment and sustained nutrient uptake. In contrast, sandy and chalky soils support a consistent upward growth trend, their specific constraints—such as rapid drainage in sand and potential nutrient lockout due to high alkalinity in chalky soil—result in more conservative growth metrics.

The results led to the rejection of the null hypotheses, proving that significant differences exist in plant growth among soil texture types and that a strong correlation exists between soil conditions and growth metrics. For optimal pechay cultivation at the Maria Aurora National High School Nursery and similar agricultural settings, selecting nutrient-rich mediums like peaty or brown soil is foundational for maximizing crop yield. Furthermore, the data underscores the necessity of proactive pH management to maintain the optimal 6.0 to 7.0 range, ensuring that soil chemical characteristics do not become a limiting factor in the biological development of the crop.

5.2 Recommendations

To address the first objective of the SOP regarding the identification of pH levels across various soil types, it is recommended that the Maria Aurora National High School (MANHS) Nursery implement a program for regular soil testing and monitoring. Since the study established that soil pH is a critical factor influencing nutrient accessibility, maintaining a consistent record of the pH levels for sandy, loamy, brown, chalky, and peaty soils allow for more scientific and precise crop management. This proactive approach ensures that any natural shifts in acidity or alkalinity caused by factors like heavy rainfall or fertilizer use are identified before they can negatively impact plant health.

In connection with the second SOP focused on the growth performance of pechay, growers may prioritize the use of brown and peaty soils to maximize overall plant development. While all tested soils supported growth, peaty soil produced the most significant final height (10.9 cm), and brown soil demonstrated superior staying power and sustained vertical growth (9.34 cm) compared to others. For farmers or students seeking rapid early establishment, loamy soil is recommended for the initial vegetative stages, as it provided a massive energy boost and nearly doubled the plant size within the first two weeks.

Regarding the management of soil-specific constraints identified in the research, targeted soil amendments are recommended to optimize the growing environment for leafy vegetables. For alkaline environments like chalky soil, which can lead to nutrient lockout, growers should utilize organic amendments or acidifying agents to balance the pH and improve the bioavailability of essential micronutrients. Conversely, for highly acidic soils, the application of liming materials such as calcium carbonate is recommended to raise the pH, thereby increasing the availability of primary nutrients like phosphorus and potassium while reducing potential metal toxicity.

Finally, it is recommended that future research expands upon the significant relationships explored in this study by investigating the long-term effects of supplemental organic fertilization on different crop varieties. While this study confirmed that soil texture and pH are decisive factors for pechay, future experimenters could test if the growth plateau observed in loamy soil during the third week can be overcome with late-stage nutrient boosts. Additionally, further studies could explore the use of sustainable amendments like biochar to not only manage pH but also improve water retention and soil structure across the diverse soil profiles found in the Maria Aurora National High School Nursery.

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