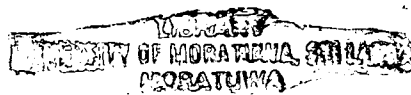


**Removal of nutrients (N and P) and heavy
metals (Fe, Al, Mn and Ni) from industrial
wastewaters by phytoremediation using
water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)
under different nutritional conditions**

By

J.C. KASTURIARACHCHI



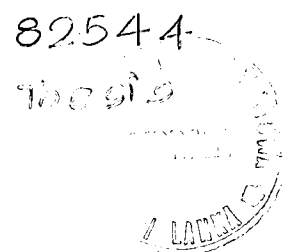
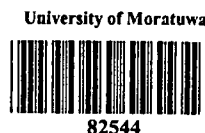
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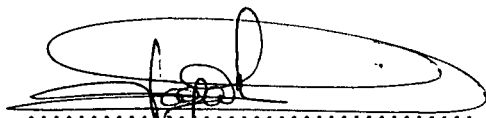
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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study was investigated the utilization of phytoremediation strategies to remove nitrogen, phosphorus and heavy metals (Fe, Al, Mn and Ni) from wastewaters by water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes* [Mart.] Solms). Batch studies were conducted for 15 weeks using fiberglass tanks in which healthy young plants were grown for a period of 15 weeks under different nutrient concentrations of 2-fold (56 TN mg/l and 15.4 TP mg/l), 1-fold (28 TN mg/l and 7.7 TP mg/l), 1/2-fold (14 TN mg/l and 3.85 TP mg/l), 1/4-fold (7 TN mg/l and 1.93 TP mg/l), 1/8-fold (3.5 TN mg/l and 0.96 TP mg/l) and control (without nutrients). In each week plants, water and sediments were analysed for TN and TP. The phytoremediation potential of heavy metal removal was determined at above nutrient concentrations with the addition of the constant heavy metal concentrations (Fe-9.27 mg/l, Al-5.62 mg/l, Mn-0.92 mg/l and Ni-0.21 mg/l) in fiberglass tanks. Plant, water and sediment were analyzed for heavy metals during the 15 weeks of culture period. A mass balance was conducted to investigate the phytoremediation efficiencies and to determine the different mechanisms governing nutrient and heavy metal removal from the wastewaters.

Our results manifested that hyacinth could be effectively utilized in constructed wetlands to phytoremediate N rich wastewaters than P. Plant uptake was the major TN and TP removal mechanism during the initial periods. Accumulation of a high content of nitrogen in plant tissues due to plant uptake and denitrification was found to be the key mechanisms involved in the efficient removal of nitrogen at the latter part of the study period. Plant uptake of phosphorus and chemical precipitation together with adsorption on to the detritus are the key mechanisms of phosphorus removal. However the phosphorus removal seems to be not high with that of nitrogen indicating that hyacinth systems are not ideal for phosphorus removal from wastewaters. In conclusion, very young plants having seems to be ideal to commence a constructed wetland after a period of acclimatization and approximately 56-63 days of hydraulic retention time is recommended for optimum phytoremediation of nitrogen as well as phosphorus.

Phytoremediation of Fe largely due to the process of rhizofiltration and the chemical precipitation followed by flocculation and sedimentation were the key Fe removal mechanisms during the first few weeks of the study. Plants grown in the control set-up showed a highest phytoremediation efficiency of 47% during optimum growth at the 6th week with a highest accumulation of 6707 Fe mg/kg dry weight. Root effluxing of Fe to the wastewaters at intermittent periods and with time was a key mechanism of avoiding Fe phytotoxicity in water hyacinth. It can be concluded from this study that water hyacinth is an ideal plant for a batch removal of low polluting Fe rich industrial wastewaters under completely nutrient poor conditions. Very young plants are ideal to commence a constructed wetland after a period of acclimatization and approximately 42 days hydraulic retention time is recommended for optimum phytoremediation. Phytoextraction was the key Mn removal mechanism and root effluxing of Mn was observed intermittently possibly to avoid any phytotoxicity caused by an excessive accumulation of Mn in hyacinths. Hyacinths cultured in the 1/8-fold set-up showed a highest accumulation of 1133 Mn mg/kg dry weight with an optimum removal of 79% at the 9th week. Hence very young plants inhabiting waterbodies containing approximately 3.5 TN mg/l and 0.96 TP mg/l seems to be more ideal for a batch removal of low polluting Mn rich wastewaters in constructed wetlands.

Acclimatization of the plants is necessary for at least 1 week prior to the removal of Mn and then approximately 63 days hydraulic retention time is recommended to optimize phytoremediation. Chemical precipitation followed by flocculation and sedimentation with phytoremediation mainly due to rhizofiltration were the key Al removal mechanisms. Control and 1/8-fold set-ups showed higher phytoremediation efficiencies of 63% and 54%, respectively with maximum accumulations of 4278 Al mg/kg dry weight and 4224 Al mg/kg dry weight, respectively. Therefore young plants of completely nutrient starved adult hyacinths seems to be more ideal for a batch removal of low polluting Al rich industrial wastewaters in pilot scale constructed wetlands. A hydraulic retention time of approximately 28 days is recommended for optimum removal after a period of acclimatization of the young plants. The results manifested that hyacinths are essentially Ni excluders since higher levels of Ni were detected in water throughout the study.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	i
List of Figures	ii
Abbreviations	iv
 Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.0. Introduction	1
1.1. Sources of pollutants	1
1.1.1. Nutrients (N and P)	1
1.1.2. Heavy metals	1
1.2. Environmental and public health consideration	3
1.2.1. Nutrients	3
1.2.2. Heavy metals	4
1.3. Conventional methods to remove nutrients and heavy metals	5
1.4. Phytoremediation and water hyacinth	6
1.5. Objective of the research	9
 Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1. Phytoremediation	10
2.2. Categories of phytoremediation	11
2.3. Background of plants used for phytoremediation	13
2.4. Genetic engineering	17
2.5. Microorganisms assisted phytoremediation	18
2.6. Ways of optimization	20
 Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY	
3.0. Methodology	21
3.1. Nutrient removal	21
3.1.1. Experimental set-up	21
3.1.2. Analysis of physical and chemical parameters	22
3.2. Heavy metal removal	22
3.2.1. Experimental set-up	22
3.2.2. Preparation of plant matter for heavy metal analysis	23
3.2.3. Sampling of water and sediments	24
3.2.4. Analysis of heavy metals	24
3.2.5. Analysis of physical and chemical parameters	24
3.2.6. Growth parameters	25
3.2.7. SEM photographs	25

Chapter 4: **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

4.1. Nutrient removal	26
4.1.1. Physicochemical parameters	26
4.1.2. Biomass production and growth	27
4.1.3. Nitrogen and phosphorus removal	32
4.1.4. Design criteria for constructed wetland system with water hyacinth (batch reactor systems)	38
4.2. Heavy metal removals	42
4.2.1. Physicochemical parameters	42
4.2.2. Mechanisms of Fe removal	48
4.2.3. Mechanisms of Mn removal	60
4.2.4. Mechanisms of Al removal	68
4.2.5. Mechanisms of Ni removal	78

Chapter 5: **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1. Nutrient removal	86
5.2. Heavy metal removal	87

Appendix	90
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Bibliography	95
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LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 3.1: Mineral nutrient composition of the standard (1-fold) culture solution	21
Table 3.2: Heavy metal concentrations in artificial wastewaters	23
Table 4.1: Percentage removal of TN and TP by different key mechanisms in different time periods	33
Table 4.2: Area required for the removal of nitrogen (m ²)	38
Table 4.3: Area required for the removal of phosphorus (m ²)	38
Table 4.4: Fe accumulation in water hyacinth tissues	54
Table 4.5: Mn accumulation in water hyacinth tissues	63
Table 4.6: Al accumulation in water hyacinth tissues	71
Table 4.7: Ni accumulation in water hyacinth tissues	82



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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
Figure 1.1: Schematic simplified diagram of nitrogen cycling in a water body containing water hyacinth	7
Figure 1.2: Schematic simplified diagram of phosphorus cycling in a water body containing water hyacinth	8
Figure 1.3: Schematic simplified diagram of heavy metal cycling in a water body containing water hyacinth	8
Figure 3.1: Experimental tanks containing water hyacinth populations	22
Figure 4.1: Temperature variation in the culture solutions	26
Figure 4.2: Dissolved oxygen distribution in the culture media	27
Figure 4.3: pH variation in the culture media	27
Figure 4.4: Biomass production in different nutrient media	28
Figure 4.5: Biomass distribution in 2-fold and 1/8-fold culture solutions	28
Figure 4.6: Variation of biomass production during the study period	30
Figure 4.7: Distribution of root: shoot ratio	30
Figure 4.8: Variation of nitrogen removal rates in different culture solutions	32
Figure 4.9: Variation of phosphorus removal rates in different culture solutions	32
Figure 4.10: TN variation in water hyacinth	36
Figure 4.11: TP variation in water hyacinth	36
Figure 4.12: Distribution of TN and TP in different plant tissues	37
Figure 4.13: pH variation in the culture media	42
Figure 4.14: Temperature variation in the culture media	43
Figure 4.15: Turbidity variation in the culture media	44
Figure 4.16: Dissolved oxygen variation in the culture media	46
Figure 4.17: Sulphate variation in the culture media	47

Figure 4.18: Fe distribution in different compartments of the system	49
Figure 4.19: Initial chemical precipitation (milky-white)	50
Figure 4.20: Heavy metal adsorption to root surface	51
Figure 4.21: Fe distribution in above ground and below ground tissues	53
Figure 4.22: Fe bioaccumulation coefficient	59
Figure 4.23: Mn distribution in different compartments of the system	61
Figure 4.24: Mn distribution in above ground and below ground tissues	64
Figure 4.25: Mn bioaccumulation coefficient	67
Figure 4.26: Al distribution in different compartments of the system	69
Figure 4.27: Al distribution in above ground and below ground tissues	72
Figure 4.28: Al bioaccumulation coefficient	77
Figure 4.29: Ni distribution in different compartments of the system	80
Figure 4.30: Ni distribution in above ground and below ground tissues	81
Figure 4.31: Ni bioaccumulation coefficient	83

ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	–	Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer
ACC	–	1-Aminocyclopropane-1-carboxylic acid
AS	–	Aluminosilicate
BAC	–	Bioaccumulation coefficient
BOD	–	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
CEC	–	Cation Exchange Capacity
DNA	–	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
DO	–	Dissolved Oxygen
HRT	–	Hydraulic Retention Time
ITRI	–	Iron Transporter
MAO	–	Monoamine Oxidase Activities
MT	–	Metallothioneins
PAHs	–	Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons
PC	–	Phytochelatins
PCB	–	Poly Chlorinated Biphenyl
PCP	–	Pentachlorophenol
SD	–	Standard Deviation
SFW	–	Subsurface Flow Wetlands
SOD	–	Sediment oxygen Demand
SRB	–	Sulphate Reducing Bacteria
TCE	–	Trichloroethylene
TN	–	Total Nitrogen
TNT	–	Trinitrotoluene
TP	–	Total Phosphorus
TSS	–	Total Suspended Solids