

1 **Effects of Maize (*Zea Mays* L.) Hybrids and Nitrogen Application on Striga**  
2 **Infection and Grain Yield under Natural Infestation with the Parasitic**  
3 **Weed *Striga hermonthica***  
4

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19

20 **Abstract:** Low soil nitrogen status of savanna soils in Nigeria contributes to the persistent  
21 *Striga hermonthica* (Del.) Benth. infestation that limits maize production. The application of  
22 nitrogen fertilizer to *Striga*-resistant hybrids may reduce *Striga* infection and increase grain  
23 yields. This study assessed the performance of maize hybrids at low (30 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>) and high (120  
24 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>) nitrogen application under natural infestation with *Striga* at Kafin Madaki and Tudun  
25 Wada in 2014 and 2015. Results showed that the application of nitrogen at 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> reduced  
26 number of *Striga* plants by 59% compared to application at 30 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> in Kafin Madaki and  
27 by 21% in Tudun Wada. Compared to 30 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>, the 120 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> rate also reduced *Striga*  
28 damage rating by 22% in Kafin Madaki and by 33% in Tudun Wada across the hybrids. Hybrids  
29 8338-1 (5.3) and OBASUPER 1 (4.3) were the only entries with *Striga* damage rating greater  
30 than 4.5 (SDR > 4.5) when averaged across the nitrogen levels at both locations. Grain yield  
31 was 86 and 98% higher in Kafin Madaki and Tudun Wada, respectively when N was applied  
32 at 120 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> than at 30 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>. The hybrids M1124-3 and M1227-14 produced grain  
33 yields that were significantly higher than those of the other hybrids in all locations. The hybrid  
34 8338-1 produced the lowest grain yield across locations. Our results showed that, the  
35 application of 120 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> to *Striga* resistant maize hybrids will reduce *Striga* infection and  
36 increase grain yield.

37 **Keywords:** *Striga* infestation; *Striga* damage; yield loss; nitrogen application

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## 39 1. Introduction

40 Maize is regarded as one of the most important staple crops for many sub-Saharan  
41 African (SSA) countries [1]. It makes significant contribution in bridging the gap between food  
42 demand and supply in SSA because of its high yielding potential, stress-tolerance and wide  
43 adaptation to the major agro-ecological zones [2,3,4]. Nigeria is the second largest producer of  
44 maize in Africa, producing an average of 10.5 million tons per year over the past decade [5].  
45 Despite the importance of maize, yields in Nigeria remained at less than 2 t/ha, which is far  
46 below the average global yield of 5.5 t/ha [5].

47 In addition to intermittent drought and poor soil fertility [6], *Striga* is a serious  
48 constraint to the productivity of maize and other staple cereals in Nigeria [7-9], and can cause  
49 yield losses between 20 to 80%, or total crop failure when infestation is acute [10,11]. The  
50 increasing incidence of *Striga* has been attributed to poor soil fertility and structure,  
51 intensification of land use through continuous cultivation and an expansion of cereal  
52 production [12,13]. Yield losses depend on the level of infestation, the soil fertility status, agro-  
53 climatic conditions, the plant species, and the genotype grown [14]. Surveys in the Northern  
54 Guinea Savannah of Nigeria (NGS) showed that *Striga hermonthica* has remained a serious  
55 problem, attacking millet, sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench), maize (*Zea mays* L.) and  
56 upland rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) [15,16]. In northeast Nigeria, over 85% of the fields planted to  
57 maize and sorghum were infested with *Striga* [16]. Another field study conducted in northern  
58 Nigeria showed that *Striga* incidence range from 0% to 100% in farmers' maize fields [7]. The  
59 most important *Striga* species in Nigeria and West Africa at large is *S. hermonthica*. The  
60 parasite impairs host normal growth by developing and attaching their haustoria to the host  
61 xylem, hence drawing water and nutrients, resulting in a stunted growth, reduction of biomass  
62 and poor grain filling [17].

63 Several methods have been recommended for the control of *Striga* in maize. These  
64 include the use of *Striga*-tolerant or resistant maize cultivars [18-20], application of nitrogen  
65 particularly for poor soils [8,14,21,22], legume-maize rotation [23-26], herbicide seed coating  
66 [21,27]. Maize breeders at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) have  
67 considered breeding for polygenic resistance to *S. hermonthica* as a viable approach to provide  
68 durable protection to the crop against diverse parasite populations [19]. As a result, significant  
69 increases in grain yield, coupled with reductions in parasite-induced damage symptoms, and  
70 number of emerged parasites have been reported [19,28,29]. Significant progress has been

71 made in the deployment of some extra-early, early, and late maize cultivars that combine  
72 resistance/tolerance to *Striga* with drought tolerance [19,29].

73 The application of nitrogen has been reported to be effective in reducing *Striga*  
74 infection and damage in maize [30]. Adequate nitrogen, especially urea and cereal-legume  
75 rotation, had been reported to be effective in reducing *Striga* emergence, damage, and  
76 increasing dry weight in maize and sorghum [9,13,30]. Most studies however, reported that the  
77 effect of nitrogen on *Striga* infection is only effective at very high doses [8,13,30]. Rates  
78 between 120 [30] and 280 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> [31] reduced *Striga* damage on cereal crops, such as maize  
79 and sorghum. Kamara et al. [8] also reported significant reductions in the number of emerged  
80 *Striga* at N application of 120 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> for early-maturing varieties and 60 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> for late  
81 maturing varieties in northeast Nigeria. Showemimo et al. [15] reported that a combination of  
82 fertilizer between 50 and 100 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>, and some level of *Striga* tolerance reduced *Striga*  
83 emergence and increased sorghum grain yield. Farmers in Nigeria however, do not generally  
84 apply high doses of N to maize crops because of high cost. This makes it difficult to rely on N  
85 application alone to control *Striga* infection in maize.

86 The combination of the use of *Striga*-resistant or tolerant maize varieties or hybrids  
87 with the application of N fertilizers have been reported to significantly reduce *Striga* infection  
88 and damage in maize. For example, Kim et al. [30] reported that the application of between  
89 120 and 150 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> of N to *Striga*-tolerant maize hybrids reduced the number of emerged  
90 *Striga* and *Striga* damage in maize under artificial infestation. Under natural field infestations,  
91 Kamara et al. [8] reported significant reduction of number of emerged *Striga* and *Striga* damage  
92 on open-pollinated varieties of maize that were bred for resistance to *Striga* when N was applied  
93 at between 60 to 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>. *Striga* infection in maize can be managed by integrating  
94 appropriate resistant and tolerant maize varieties with adequate N fertilization.

95 Past studies on the combined effects of improved maize varieties and N application on  
96 *Striga* emergence and damage had considered either *Striga*-tolerant hybrids [29,30] or *Striga*-  
97 resistant/tolerant open-pollinated maize varieties [8,13]. Most of the reports on the effects of  
98 N application to *Striga*-resistant and tolerant maize genotypes on *Striga* infection and damage  
99 in Nigeria have focused on open-pollinated varieties (OPVs) except for the studies of Badu-  
100 Apraku et al. [29] and Kim et al. [30]. Recently, breeders at International Institute of Tropical  
101 Agriculture (IITA) have developed several high-yielding modern maize hybrids that are  
102 resistant and or tolerant to *Striga* infection (Abebe Menkir Personal communication). These  
103 hybrids were however, evaluated under artificial *Striga* infestation. Information on their  
104 performance under natural infestation of *Striga* is not known. Moreover, the combined effects

105 of these hybrids and N application are not known. Therefore, the objective of this study was to  
106 assess the effect of two N fertilizer rates on Striga-resistant maize hybrids in fields naturally  
107 infested with Striga.

## 108 2. Materials and methods

### 109 2.1. Description of the Experimental Sites

110 Four hybrids combining tolerance to drought with resistance to *Striga* (DTSTR)  
111 developed in the maize breeding program at IITA plus commercial and susceptible hybrid  
112 checks were included in the present study (Table 2). The study was conducted at Kafin Madaki  
113 (N 10° 42.296' E 009° 46.536' altitude 623 masl) in the Sudan savanna (SS) of Bauchi State  
114 located in the northeast Nigeria, and Tudun Wada, (N11°13.123' E 008°29.969', altitude 621  
115 masl) in the northern Guinea savanna (NGS) of Kano State located in the northwest Nigeria.  
116 The sites were selected based on their known history of endemic high and frequent *Striga*  
117 infestation levels when cereals are planted. The two sites are characterized by mono-modal  
118 rainfall distribution. Figure 1 shows total monthly rainfall and monthly average minimum and  
119 maximum temperatures for the two experimental sites in 2014 and 2015 recorded using  
120 WatchDog 2000 series weather station installed at each site. At Kafin Madaki total annual  
121 rainfall was 559 and 880 mm respectively for 2014 and 2015. Although the rainfall was higher  
122 in 2015 the distribution was more uniform in 2014. Average minimum temperature during the  
123 season was 22.1 °C in 2014 and 22.4 °C in 2015. Average maximum temperature was 34.7 °C  
124 in 2014 and 35.3 °C in 2015. At Tudun Wada, rainfall was higher in 2014 (1064 mm) than in  
125 2015 (893 mm). However, peak rainfall amount for the 2 years of the experiment was in August  
126 while distribution was more normal in 2014. Average maximum temperature was 33.4 °C in  
127 2014 and 33.8 °C in 2015. The temperature was higher around March to May, and then lowered  
128 from July in both experimental years.

129 Soil analysis results for the two locations in Table 1 shows little variation in the soil  
130 particle composition of both locations between the experimental years. The soil pH in Kafin  
131 Madaki was moderately acidic (6.0) in 2014 and slightly alkaline (7.1) in 2015. In Tudun Wada,  
132 pH was neutral (6.6) in 2014 and then slightly alkaline (7.3) in 2015. Across the two locations  
133 pH was generally lower in 2014 than in 2015. Also, organic carbon was very low at both  
134 locations in 2014; 3.2 and 2.4 g/kg in 2014 in Kafin Madaki and Tudun Wada respectively and  
135 7.9 and 5.6 g/kg in 2015 for Kafin Madaki and Tudun Wada respectively. Total nitrogen is  
136 rated low using Esu [32] classification, at both location with Kafin Madaki having 0.3 g/kg

137 while Tudun Wada had 0.19g/kg in 2014. In 2015, the total nitrogen content is rated moderate;  
138 1.05 and 0.40 g/kg respectively for Kafin Madaki and Tundun Wada. Available phosphorus is  
139 rated very low; with values of 3.39 and 3.70 mg/kg respectively for Kafin Madaki and Tudun  
140 Wada in 2014. The available phosphorus values were moderate, (13.7mg/kg for Kafin Madaki  
141 and 7.88 mg/kg for Tudun Wada) in 2015. Exchangeable cations (Ca, K and Na) were also  
142 higher in 2015 than in 2014 across the sites. Following Esu [32] fertility rating criteria,  
143 exchangeable cations across the sites fall under low fertility class a fertility rating apart from  
144 Mg which is moderate.

## 145 2.2. *Experimental Design and Treatments*

146 The experiment was conducted during the 2014 and 2015 cropping seasons on adjacent  
147 pieces of land. Fields previously grown to sorghum were selected based on the level of Striga  
148 infestation in the sorghum fields in the previous years. Fields were ploughed and ridged using  
149 draught animals. Six maize hybrids and 2 nitrogen rates were compared under natural  
150 infestation with *S. hermonthica*. The experiment was arranged in split plot design with three  
151 replications. The main plot consisted of nitrogen rates of 30 and 120 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>. The maize  
152 hybrids were assigned to the subplot. Each hybrid was planted in four rows of 4 m length  
153 spaced 0.75 m apart with 0.5 m spacing between plants in each row. Three maize seeds were  
154 sown in a hole of 5 cm depth. Two weeks after planting, all plants were thinned to two per hill  
155 to give a final plant population of 53,333 plants ha<sup>-1</sup>. All plots received 40 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> each of P as  
156 single super phosphate and K as muriate of potash immediately after planting. All fertilizer was  
157 band-applied on ridges. Nitrogen was applied in form of urea in two equal splits for all the  
158 treatments a week after sowing (WAS) and the other half at 5 WAS. Immediately after sowing,  
159 gramozone (1:1-dimethyl-4, 4'-bipyridinium dichloride) was applied at the rate of 280 g a.i ha<sup>-1</sup>  
160 to control weeds. Hoe weeding was done at 4 WAS. Subsequently, hand pulling of weeds  
161 was done regularly to keep the field clean.

## 162 2.3. *Measurements*

163 *Striga* damage symptoms and numbers of emerged plants were recorded from both  
164 locations. Damage symptoms were visually rated on the maize plants from the two middle rows  
165 at 10 and 12 WAS using a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 = no visible symptoms and 9 = all leaves  
166 completely scorched resulting in premature death [32]. Similarly, *Striga* count was done by  
167 individually counting all emerged *Striga* plants within the two inner rows of each plot at 12

168 WAS and the number converted to per meter square. Maize grain yield was determined by  
169 harvesting all the ears of plants in the two middle rows, excluding the last two plants of each  
170 row. The ears from each plot were dried, shelled and the percentage grain moisture was  
171 determined using a FARMEX MT-16 grain moisture tester (Model HH21 GH350142) from  
172 Farmex manufacturers Finland). Grain yield adjusted to 12% moisture was computed from the  
173 shelled grain.

#### 174 2.4. Statistical Analysis

175 Statistical analysis of the data collected was done with SAS version 9.3 [33]. The data  
176 were analysed separately for each location using mixed-model procedure using the PROC  
177 Mixed command of SAS. Replication and Year were treated as random effect, whereas nitrogen  
178 rates and hybrids were treated as fixed effects in determining the expected mean squares and  
179 appropriate F-test. Mean differences of treatments were separated using LSD. Pearson's  
180 correlation coefficient between grain yield and *Striga* related parameters was also computed  
181 using PROC CORR of SAS [33].

### 182 3. Results

183 In the analysis of variance (Table 3), the effect of year (Y) was significant on all  
184 measured traits, except *Striga* count in Kafin Madaki and *Striga* damage rating in Tudun Wada.  
185 Nitrogen had a significant effect on all traits recorded in both locations, whereas Nitrogen (N)  
186  $\times$  Year (Y) interaction had significant effect only on grain yield in the two locations.  
187 Differences among hybrids (H) and the hybrid  $\times$  year interaction were significant for all traits,  
188 except the hybrid  $\times$  year interaction for *Striga* damage rating in both locations. The H  $\times$  N  
189 interaction was only significant for total dry matter and grain yield in both locations. The H  $\times$   
190 Y  $\times$  N were significant for total dry matter in Kafin Madaki and for grain yield in both locations.

191 The application of nitrogen at the rate of 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> reduced the number of emerged  
192 *Striga* plants by 59% in Kafin Madaki and by 21% in Tudun Wada compared to the application  
193 of 30 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> (Table 4). Among the hybrids, OBASUPER 1 and 8338-1 recorded larger  
194 number of emerged *Striga* plants than the new DTSTR hybrids at the two locations. The  
195 differences among the new hybrids were not significant in Kafin Madaki. In Tudun Wada, the  
196 number of emerged *Striga* counted on hybrid M1227-17 was significantly higher than those  
197 counted on other DTSTR hybrids (Table 4).



198 *Striga* damage rating was significantly affected by nitrogen level and hybrids at both  
199 locations. On the average, increasing nitrogen application from 30 to 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> significantly  
200 reduced the *Striga* damage rating by 22%, in Kafin Madaki and by 33% in Tudun Wada. The  
201 *Striga* damage rating was highest on the susceptible hybrid 8338-1 at both locations. The new  
202 DTSTR hybrids had damage ratings that were significantly lower than the commercial hybrid  
203 (OBASUPER 1) and the susceptible hybrid 8338-1 checks at the two locations. Differences  
204 among the new DTSTR hybrids in *Striga* damage rating were not significant. The susceptible  
205 hybrids 8338-1 and OBASUPER 1 sustained *Striga* damage symptoms exceeding 4.5 across  
206 the two levels of nitrogen (Table 4) in both sites.

207 Nitrogen application increased total dry matter and grain yields of the hybrids in both  
208 locations. Increasing nitrogen application from 30 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> to 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> increased total dry  
209 matter by 37 % at Kafin Madaki and by 46% at Tudun Wada (Table 4). Total dry matter and  
210 grain yield differed significantly among the hybrids at both locations. The hybrid 8338-1  
211 produced the lowest total dry matter and grain yields at both levels of nitrogen application in  
212 the two locations. The total dry matter produced by the new DTSTR hybrids was 2 times higher  
213 than that produced by the hybrid 8338-1 at both locations. The commercial hybrid  
214 (OBASUPER 1) produced total dry matter that did not differ significantly from those produced  
215 by the new DTSTR hybrids at both locations. The response of total dry matter to N application  
216 varied with the hybrid. When N was applied at 30 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup> in Kafin Madaki, M1124-3  
217 produced the highest total dry matter, whereas M1227-14 produced the highest total dry matter  
218 at 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>. The hybrid M1124-3 produced the highest total dry matter at N application of  
219 30 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> at Tudun Wada, while OBASUPER 1 produced the highest total dry matter at 120  
220 kg N ha<sup>-1</sup>. Grain yield increased by 87 % in Kafin Madaki and by 98% in Tudun Wada when  
221 the application of nitrogen increased from 30 to 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>. The new DTSTR hybrids produced  
222 grain yields that were significantly higher than those of the susceptible (8338-1) and  
223 commercial (OBASUPER1) hybrid when nitrogen was applied at either 30 or 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.  
224 Grain yield response to N application varied with N rates at both locations. At each location,  
225 hybrid M1227-14 produced the highest grain yield at N application rate of 30 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> though not  
226 significantly different from those of the other DTSTR hybrids. Hybrid M1124-3 produced the  
227 highest grain yield at nitrogen application of 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>.

#### 228 4. Discussion

229 Evaluation of maize under natural infestation are considered important to confirm  
230 performance and effects of *Striga* parasitism [8]. Screening for *Striga* resistance under natural



231 infestation can prove useful when artificial infestation is not effective due to reduction in  
232 inoculum load and desirable growing conditions [34]. As the soils at the two sites were low in  
233 organic matter, total N and available P, these could contribute to high *Striga* infestation. Poor  
234 soil fertility and moisture stress in the savanna soils are usually associated with high levels of  
235 *Striga* infestation [7,6]. Nitrogen application at 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> reduced *Striga* emergence at the  
236 two sites, consistent with the findings of several authors who reported reduced *Striga*  
237 infestation when N was applied at high doses [8,11,30,35]. According to Yoneyama et al. [36],  
238 cereals such as sorghum, maize, and rice produce high amounts of Strigolactones that  
239 ultimately stimulate the germination of *Striga* seeds when soils are deficient in N and P. High  
240 N application also reduced *Striga* damage in the hybrids, corroborating the findings of Kamara  
241 et al. [8], and Kim et al. [30] who reported the reduction of *Striga* damage symptoms when N  
242 is applied at high doses. Our results show that although N application reduced *Striga* infection  
243 and damage in maize hybrids, high doses may be needed for N to be more effective in reducing  
244 the *Striga* damage. Kamara et al. [8], and Kim et al. [30] also suggested that high doses of N  
245 are needed for effective suppression of *Striga* infection and damage in maize crops. The results  
246 clearly showed that the use of resistant varieties in combination with high rates of N fertilizer  
247 provided much higher yields than use of susceptible hybrids in *Striga* infested fields.

248 In this study, the hybrids 8338-1 and OBASUPER1 had *Striga* counts that were higher  
249 than those of the new hybrids combining tolerance to drought with resistance to *Striga*. The  
250 hybrid 8338-1 recorded higher damage scores than OBASUPER1 and the new DTSTR hybrids,  
251 consistent with the findings of Kamara [8] and Menkir and Kling [28]. These authors concluded  
252 that whereas 8338-1 is susceptible to *Striga*, OBASUPER1 is tolerant to *Striga* infection. It is  
253 interesting to note that hybrids bred for tolerance to *Striga* allow more seed production and  
254 high emergence of the parasite with little damage and reduction in grain yield [8].

255 The lower number of emerged *Striga* on the resistant hybrids was mainly because they  
256 were bred for reduced *Striga* emergence possibly because resistant varieties produce little or  
257 no amounts of the *Striga*-germination stimulant Strigol [10]. As expected N application at 120  
258 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> significantly increased total dry matter and grain yield of all the hybrids at the two  
259 locations, confirming reports from other authors that indicate N is a major limiting nutrient for  
260 maize in the Nigeria savannas. Kamara et al. [8] and Kamara et al. [24] reported significant  
261 response of maize cultivars to added N in the Nigerian savannas. Oikeh [37] reported yield  
262 increase of 130% with application of N to maize. Across N rates, the new DTSTR hybrids  
263 produced grain yields that were 65% higher than the *Striga* susceptible hybrid 8338-1 at the  
264 two locations, and 23% and 13% higher in Kafin Madaki and in Tudun Wada, respectively

265 than the commercial hybrid OBASUPER1. The new DTSTR hybrids were bred under  
266 controlled drought stress and artificial *Striga* infestation and were selected for low *Striga*  
267 emergence and damage (A. Menkir, personal communication). Our results show that varieties  
268 or hybrids that are bred for low *Striga* emergence and damage produced higher grain yields in  
269 fields naturally infested with *Striga*, consistent with findings of Kamara [8]. In on-farm soybean  
270 maize rotation experiment in northern Nigeria, Kamara et al. [21] reported that continuously  
271 grown *Striga*-resistant maize varieties produced grain yields similar to that of *Striga*-resistant  
272 maize variety grown after soybean but had higher grain yields than the local susceptible maize  
273 hybrids. The higher dry matter and grain yields recorded in the new DTSTR hybrids may be  
274 due to the combined effects of N application and lower *Striga* infection and damage.

## 275 5. Conclusion

276 Results from the field study showed a reduction in *Striga* infestation and damage when  
277 we increased N application rates from 30 to 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> for all maize varieties. The new DTSTR  
278 hybrids supported fewer emerged *Striga* plants, sustained lower damage scores and produced  
279 higher dry matter and grain yields than the susceptible and commercial hybrids. The application  
280 of N at the recommended rate of 120 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in combination with DTSTR hybrids can reduce  
281 *Striga* damage and increase grain yield. We conclude that farmers can get better return on their  
282 investment when they plant DTSTR hybrids along with optimal level of nitrogen application.

283  
284 Author Contributions: Conceptualization, A.Y.K., A.M., D.C., L.O.O., I.B.M. and R.S.;  
285 methodology, A.Y.K., A.M., and R.S.; formal analysis, A.I.T., K.T.A., T.A. and R.S.; field  
286 experimentation, R.S., A.I.T., and A.Y.K.; resources, A.Y.K., D.C., and A.M.; data curation,  
287 R.S., A.I.T., T.A., and K.T.A.; writing-original draft preparation, R.S., A.Y.K and K.T.A.;  
288 writing-review and editing, L.O.O., A.I.T., A.Y.K., and A.M.; supervision, A.Y.K. and I.B.M.;  
289 funding acquisition, A.Y.K., D.C., and A.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published  
290 version of the manuscript.

291

292 **Funding.** This research was funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, grant  
293 number: OPP1006185.

294 **Acknowledgements.** The authors are thankful to the field technicians for managing the  
295 trials.

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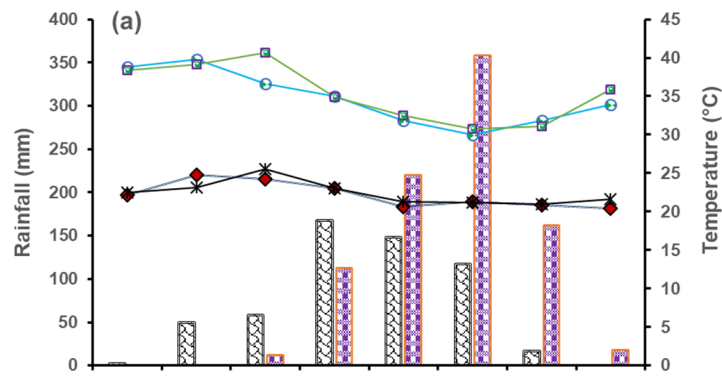
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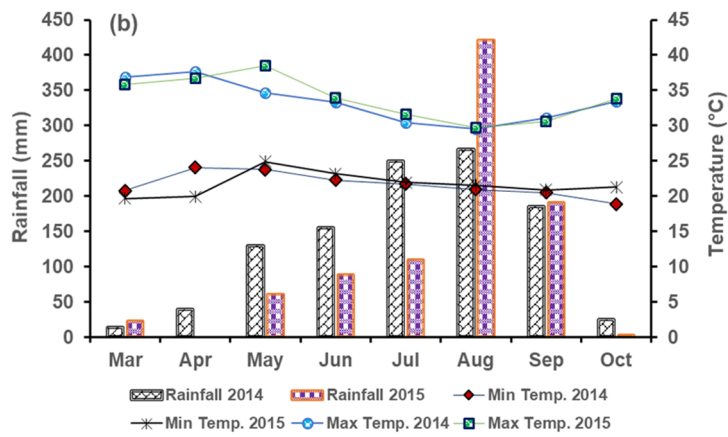
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413 **Figure 1.** Rainfall and temperature of (a) Kafin Madaki and (b) Tudun Wada experimental  
 414 sites for 2014 and 2015 seasons

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Table 1. Physico-Chemical properties of soils of the experimental sites.

| Soil properties                                       | Kafin Madaki |            | Tudun Wada |            |
|---|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | 2014         | 2015       | 2014       | 2015       |
| <b>Mechanical analysis (0-15cm)</b>                   |              |            |            |            |
| Sand (g/kg)   | 793          | 790        | 776        | 770        |
| Silt (g/kg)   | 122          | 120        | 78         | 80         |
| Clay (g/kg)   | 85           | 90         | 146        | 150        |
| Textural class  | Sandy-loam   | Sandy-loam | Sandy-loam | Sandy-loam |
| <b>Chemical analysis</b>                              |              |            |            |            |
| pH in (H <sub>2</sub> O)                              | 6.0          | 7.1        | 6.6        | 7.3        |
| Organic Carbon (g/kg)                                 | 3.2          | 7.9        | 2.4        | 5.6        |
| Total N (g/kg)  | 0.3          | 1.05       | 0.19       | 0.40       |
| Available P (mg/kg)                                   | 3.39         | 13.70      | 3.70       | 7.88       |
| <b>Exchangeable bases (C mol (+) kg<sup>-1</sup>)</b> |              |            |            |            |
| Ca  | 1.06         | 1.00       | 1.98       | 1.92       |
| Mg  | 0.53         | 0.25       | 0.60       | 1.17       |
| K   | 0.21         | 0.30       | 0.20       | 0.26       |
| Na  | 0.09         | 0.06       | 0.11       | 0.07       |
| CEC   | 1.98         | 4.80       | 2.77       | 4.00       |

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Table 2. Characteristics of maize hybrids used in the study.

| <b>Entry</b> | <b>Hybrid name</b> | <b>Colour</b> | <b>Seed size</b> | <b>Reaction to <i>Striga</i></b>      |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1            | M1124-3            | White         | large            | Striga resistant and drought tolerant |
| 2            | M1124-4            | White         | medium           | Striga resistant and drought tolerant |
| 3            | M1227-14           | White         | large            | Striga resistant and drought tolerant |
| 4            | M1227-17           | White         | large            | Striga resistant and drought tolerant |
| 5            | OBASUPER 1         | White         | medium           | Commercial hybrid                     |
| 6            | 8338-1             | White         | small            | Susceptible hybrid                    |

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Table 3. P values showing effects of year, nitrogen level, hybrids and their interactions on Striga count, Striga damage rating, total dry matter and grain yield in Kafin Madaki and Tudun Wada.

| Sources of Variation | Kafin Madaki                    |                         |  |  | Tudun Wada                         |                            |  |  |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
|                      | Striga count<br>m <sup>-2</sup> | Striga damage<br>Rating | Total dry<br>matter<br>m <sup>-2</sup> | Grain<br>Yield<br>(kg ha <sup>-1</sup> ) | Striga<br>count<br>m <sup>-2</sup> | Striga<br>damage<br>Rating | Total dry<br>matter<br>m <sup>-2</sup> | Grain<br>Yield<br>(kg ha <sup>-1</sup> ) |
| Year (Y)             | 0.2375                          | 0.0009                  | <.0001                                 | 0.0417                                   | <.0001                             | 0.5286                     | 0.0034                                 | <.0001                                   |
| Nitrogen Level (N)   | <.0001                          | <.0001                  | <.0001                                 | <.0001                                   | <.0001                             | <.0001                     | <.0001                                 | <.0001                                   |
| Y x N                | 0.1167                          | 0.6411                  | 0.5208                                 | <.0001                                   | 0.3597                             | 0.211                      | 0.4157                                 | <.0001                                   |
| Hybrid (H)           | <.0001                          | <.0001                  | <.0001                                 | <.0001                                   | <.0001                             | <.0001                     | <.0001                                 | <.0001                                   |
| H x Y                | 0.0489                          | 0.6907                  | 0.0013                                 | 0.0001                                   | 0.0022                             | 0.5786                     | 0.0019                                 | <.0001                                   |
| H x N                | 0.4659                          | 0.1638                  | 0.3407                                 | 0.0421                                   | 0.899                              | 0.3032                     | 0.3315                                 | 0.0025                                   |
| H x Y x N            | 0.2118                          | 0.8867                  | 0.0394                                 | 0.0005                                   | 0.7472                             | 0.7557                     | 0.5949                                 | 0.01                                     |

Table 4. Effect of hybrid and nitrogen level on Striga count, Striga damage rating, total dry matter and grain yield in Kafin Madaki and Tudun Wada

| Hybrids             | Striga count<br>m <sup>-2</sup> |     |      | Striga damage<br>Rating |     |      | Total dry matter<br>m <sup>-2</sup> |        |        | Grain Yield<br>(kg ha <sup>-1</sup> ) |        |        |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------|-------------------------|-----|------|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|
|                     | 30                              | 120 | Mean | 30                      | 120 | Mean | 30                                  | 120    | Mean   | 30                                    | 120    | Mean   |
| <b>Kafin Madaki</b> |                                 |     |      |                         |     |      |                                     |        |        |                                       |        |        |
| M1124-3             | 6.8                             | 1.7 | 4.3  | 4.8                     | 3.0 | 3.9  | 938.9                               | 1216.1 | 1077.5 | 3425.6                                | 7073.8 | 5249.7 |
| M1124-4             | 2.5                             | 1.7 | 2.1  | 4.3                     | 3.2 | 3.8  | 910.8                               | 1103.6 | 1007.2 | 3462.7                                | 6349.6 | 4906.1 |
| M1227-14            | 3.3                             | 1.0 | 2.2  | 4.2                     | 3.3 | 3.8  | 865.2                               | 1333.5 | 1099.3 | 3919.8                                | 6647.6 | 5283.7 |
| M1227-17            | 4.7                             | 1.5 | 3.1  | 4.3                     | 3.0 | 3.7  | 791.8                               | 1136.0 | 963.9  | 3447.4                                | 6178.8 | 4813.1 |
| 8338-1 ©            | 14.3                            | 6.8 | 10.6 | 5.7                     | 4.8 | 5.3  | 342.3                               | 637.8  | 490.0  | 1866.7                                | 4265.9 | 3066.3 |
| OBASUPER1 ©         | 17.0                            | 7.7 | 12.3 | 4.3                     | 4.2 | 4.3  | 757.2                               | 870.4  | 813.8  | 2984.5                                | 5209.1 | 4096.8 |
| Mean                | 8.1                             | 3.4 |      | 4.6                     | 3.6 |      | 767.7                               | 1049.6 |        | 3184.4                                | 5954.1 |        |
| LSD H               | 2.6                             |     |      | 0.6                     |     |      | 162.1                               |        |        | 441.6                                 |        |        |
| LSD N               | 1.5                             |     |      | 0.4                     |     |      | 93.6                                |        |        | 255.0                                 |        |        |
| LSD H x N           | 3.6ns                           |     |      | 0.9ns                   |     |      | 224.5ns                             |        |        | 611.8                                 |        |        |
| <b>Tudun Wada</b>   |                                 |     |      |                         |     |      |                                     |        |        |                                       |        |        |
| M1124-3             | 2.5                             | 1.3 | 1.9  | 5.0                     | 3.2 | 4.1  | 772.5                               | 980.8  | 876.6  | 3478.5                                | 7553.1 | 5515.8 |
| M1124-4             | 2.0                             | 0.3 | 1.2  | 4.7                     | 3.7 | 4.2  | 653.7                               | 917.2  | 785.5  | 2802.4                                | 5508.5 | 4155.4 |
| M1227-14            | 2.0                             | 0.3 | 1.2  | 4.7                     | 2.8 | 3.8  | 752.5                               | 996.6  | 874.5  | 4000.7                                | 6662.5 | 5331.6 |
| M1227-17            | 4.8                             | 2.7 | 3.8  | 5.3                     | 3.7 | 4.5  | 654.0                               | 1040.2 | 847.1  | 3447.6                                | 5774.7 | 4611.1 |
| 8338-1 ©            | 13.0                            | 8.3 | 10.7 | 7.0                     | 4.5 | 5.8  | 298.8                               | 505.9  | 402.4  | 1551.9                                | 4394.8 | 2973.4 |
| OBASUPER1 ©         | 12.7                            | 6.0 | 9.3  | 5.7                     | 3.8 | 4.8  | 673.7                               | 1115.2 | 894.5  | 2791.7                                | 5889.3 | 4340.5 |
| Mean                | 6.2                             | 3.2 |      | 5.4                     | 3.6 |      | 634.2                               | 926.0  |        | 3012.1                                | 5963.8 |        |
| LSD H               | 1.7                             |     |      | 0.6                     |     |      | 129.1                               |        |        | 408.9                                 |        |        |
| LSD N               | 1.0                             |     |      | 0.4                     |     |      | 74.6                                |        |        | 236.1                                 |        |        |
| LSD H x N           | 2.4ns                           |     |      | 0.8ns                   |     |      | 178.9ns                             |        |        | 566.4                                 |        |        |

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