Electronic Supplementary Information:

ALGINATE BEADS CONTAINING LAYERED DOUBLE HYDROXIDE INTERCALATED WITH BORATE: A POTENTIAL SLOW-RELEASE BORON FERTILIZER FOR APPLICATION IN SANDY SOILS

Gustavo Franco de Castro,*a Lincoln Zotarelli,b Edson Marcio Mattiello,a and Jairo Tronto*c

a Federal University of Viçosa, Department of Soil, Viçosa - MG, Brazil. E-mail: gustavofcastro@ymail.com; mattieloem@gmail.com.

b University of Florida, Horticultural Sciences Department, 1241 Fifield Hall, Gainesville - FL, United States of America. E-mail: lzota@ufl.edu.

c Federal University of Viçosa, Institute of Exact and Technological Sciences, Rio Paranaíba - MG, Brazil. E-mail: jairotronto@ufv.br.

*Corresponding author:

Gustavo Franco de Castro; Phone: +51 (31)998286683; E-mail address: gustavofcastro@ymail.com;

Jairo Tronto; Phone: +51 (34)999474119; E-mail address: jairotronto@ufv.br.
Table S1: Chemical characterization of the irrigation water collected in Hastings Agricultural Extension Center research farm located in Hastings, FL, U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate (mg L⁻¹)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>Iron (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosphorus (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<td>Manganese (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potassium (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<td>Sulfate (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnesium (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<td>pH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calcium (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<td>Chloride (mg L⁻¹)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium (mg L⁻¹)</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>Carbonate (mg L⁻¹)</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boron (mg L⁻¹)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Bicarbonate (mg L⁻¹)</td>
<td>448.35</td>
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</table>

Total concentration of nitrogen (N) in the LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG fertilizers:

LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG presented a low fraction of N in their compositions. Nitrogen is a macronutrient required in relatively large amounts, and it is directly related to plant growth and development. The total N concentration was 15.0 g kg⁻¹ in LDH-B-ALG (1.50% of N) and 6.0 g kg⁻¹ in BA-ALG (0.60% of N). In the present study, the total N applied from LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG was considered negligible.

The total amount of LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG was calculated to supply B, considering the plant’s relatively low B requirement. The B rates applied in this study were 0, 0.5, 1.0, 3.0, and 5.0 mg dm⁻³ of B in the “Greenhouse experiment without leaching” and 2.0 mg dm⁻³ of B in the “Greenhouse experiment with leaching”. Under the highest B rate (5.0 mg dm⁻³), the total N applied as LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG corresponded to less than 1% of the total N supplied (200 mg dm⁻³ of N as urea source) in the first and second cultivations at pre-planting and sidedress. Therefore, the contribution of N from LDH-B-ALG and BA-ALG was not considered.
**Fig. S1:** Shoot, root and total dry matter as a function of the applied B (H$_3$BO$_3$, BA-ALG, Ulexite, and LDH-B-ALG) in first (a, b, and c) and second (d, e, and f) cultivation. *ns* = not significant.
Cumulative Release and Leaching of Boron from Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH, LDH-B-ALG, H\textsubscript{3}BO\textsubscript{3} and BA-ALG:

The B release test was performed and adapted from the “in vitro” release method, described by Bin Hussein and coworkers.\textsuperscript{1} A factorial 6 x 2 was established with six collection times (0, 0.5, 1, 2, 4, and 6 hours), and two B sources (LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH). The experiment was conducted in a randomized complete block design with four replicates. The water used in the boron release test was H\textsubscript{2}O deionized-Milli-Q system. Using an Erlenmeyer’s flask with 250 mL of capacity, 45 mg L\textsuperscript{-1} of total B from the B sources and 100 mL of the water were added. At pre-established times (0, 0.5, 1, 2, 4, and 6 hours), a slight agitation was performed to homogenize the solution and aliquots of 5 mL were withdrawn. Immediately afterwards, 5 mL of the water was added in order to keep the volume constant. The analyses of B concentration were performed according to the method described by López and coworkers.\textsuperscript{2}

The leaching in soil columns was performed the same as described in section “2.2 Boron leaching in soil columns” of this manuscript, except for the boron sources (LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH) and incubation time (1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 days).

The B release and leaching tests were replicated comparing H\textsubscript{3}BO\textsubscript{3} and BA-ALG sources. The collection and incubation times was the same previously described.

The cumulative release and leaching of B from LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH are shown in Fig. S2a. In the first collection, the total B released from LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH were equivalent to 0.6% and 0.7%, respectively of the total B. After 6 hours of LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH application, 54.7% and 100% of the B were released, respectively. LDH-B-ALG presented a cumulative B release significantly lower at 2, 4, and 6 hours of collection than Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH source. For H\textsubscript{3}BO\textsubscript{3} and BA-ALG sources (Fig S2c), the B release from BA-ALG was significantly lower at 0.5, 1, and 2 hours compared to H\textsubscript{3}BO\textsubscript{3}. The total B released (100%) from H\textsubscript{3}BO\textsubscript{3} and BA-ALG were at 2 and 4 hours of collection, respectively.

Regarding B leaching, as expected, the leachate had more quantity of B when Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH was applied (Fig. S2b). For the first leaching collection time, 1.7% and 5.2% of the total B applied were leached from the LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH sources, respectively. At 30 days, after the LDH-B-ALG and Mg\textsubscript{2}Al-B-LDH
application, 67% and 88% of B was leached, respectively. The B leaching from LDH-B-ALG was significantly lower at 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 days of incubation compared to Mg₂Al-B-LDH. These results showed a higher B leaching profile from Mg₂Al-B-LDH compared to LDH-B-ALG. The slow leaching profile was also confirmed for BA-ALG, in which in all incubation times the B leached was lower compared to H₃BO₃ (Fig. S2).

The results presented by LDH-B-ALG in the release and leaching of B study, suggested a lower release and leaching profile by LDH-B-ALG compared to Mg₂Al-B-LDH, showing an advantage in producing LDH-B-ALG beads compared to the Mg₂Al-B-LDH in powder form.

Fig. S2: Cumulative release (a and c) and leaching (b and d) of boron from Mg₂Al-B-LDH, LDH-B-ALG, H₃BO₃, and BA-ALG. Values followed by the same lowercase letter within each time (hours) and incubation time (days), indicate that the mean of release and leaching of B, are not significantly different at p<0.05 according to Tukey test between B fertilizer sources.
References
