International Journal of Sustainable Applied Sciences (IJSAS)
Vol.2, No.8, 2024: 739-754

# Enhancing Pomegranate Yield Through Biological Control of Shot Hole Borer: A Comparative Study

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A R T I C L E I N F O

*Keywords:* Shot Hole Borer, Xyleborus Perforans, Pomegranate, Beauveria Bassiana, Metarhizium Anisopliae, Trichogramma Spp, Biological Control

*Received : 05, July*
*Revised : 18, July*
*Accepted: 23,August*



A B S T R A C T

This study demonstrates the potential of Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium anisopliae, and Trichogramma spp. as effective biological control agents against the Shot Hole Borer in pomegranate orchards. The findings suggest that these bioagents can be integrated into existing pest management programs, offering a viable and environmentally sustainable alternative to chemical pesticides. This research contributes to the broader field of sustainable agriculture and highlights the importance of biological control in managing pest populations in fruit crops.

DOI: https://10.59890/ijsas.v2i8.2403
ISSN-E: 3025-5597
https://journal.multitechpublisher.com/index.php/ijsas

## INTRODUCTION

Pomegranate (Punica granatum), known for its nutritional and medicinal properties, has become a significant horticultural crop in India, with substantial cultivation in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The fruit's high economic value, coupled with increasing global demand, has positioned India as one of the leading producers and exporters of pomegranates. However, the production and quality of pomegranate fruits are under constant threat from various pests, among which the Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans) has emerged as a particularly destructive force.

The Shot Hole Borer, a tiny ambrosia beetle, bores into the branches and trunks of pomegranate trees, disrupting the vascular system and causing wilting, dieback, and eventually, the death of infested trees. The pest is difficult to detect in the early stages of infestation, making its control challenging. Once established, the borer's larvae create extensive galleries within the tree, leading to significant yield losses and rendering the fruits unmarketable. The economic impact of this pest is profound, with infestations often leading to reduced fruit quality, lower yields, and increased production costs due to the need for repeated chemical treatments.

Traditional methods of controlling the Shot Hole Borer have primarily relied on chemical insecticides. While these chemicals can offer temporary relief, they are not always effective against this pest due to its cryptic nature and the pest's ability to develop resistance. Moreover, the overuse of chemical pesticides has raised concerns about environmental contamination, pesticide residues in fruits, and adverse effects on non-target organisms, including beneficial insects and soil microbiota. These challenges underscore the need for more sustainable, environmentally friendly pest management strategies.

Biological control, involving the use of natural enemies to suppress pest populations, offers a promising alternative to chemical pesticides. Among the various bioagents available, entomopathogenic fungi such as Beauveria bassiana and Metarhizium anisopliae have shown considerable potential. These fungi infect and kill a wide range of insect pests, including borers, by penetrating their cuticles and proliferating within their bodies, eventually causing death. Additionally, Trichogramma spp., a genus of parasitic wasps, is widely recognized for its role in biological control, particularly through parasitizing the eggs of lepidopteran pests, thereby preventing larval emergence and subsequent crop damage.

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium anisopliae, and Trichogramma spp. in controlling the Shot Hole Borer in pomegranate orchards. The study is motivated by the need to develop sustainable pest management practices that not only reduce the reliance on chemical insecticides but also protect the environment and promote the health of pomegranate crops. By conducting field trials in major pomegranate-producing regions, this research seeks to provide empirical data on the efficacy of these bioagents and their potential integration into Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs. The findings of this study will contribute to the

broader goal of enhancing pomegranate production in India while minimizing the ecological footprint of pest control practices.

**Objectives**

1. To assess the individual efficacy of Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium anisopliae, and Trichogramma spp. in reducing the infestation levels of Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans) in pomegranate orchards.
2. To compare the impact of these bioagents on the overall yield and fruit quality of pomegranate crops.
3. To analyze the effectiveness of these bioagents in different environmental conditions across major pomegranate-producing regions, particularly in Maharashtra and Karnataka.
4. To evaluate the potential of integrating Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium anisopliae, and Trichogramma spp. into existing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs for pomegranate cultivation.
5. To document any observed interactions between these bioagents and other beneficial organisms in the orchard ecosystem.
6. To provide recommendations for the large-scale application of these bioagents in commercial pomegranate farming, with a focus on sustainability and environmental safety.
7. To contribute to the development of a comprehensive, environmentally friendly pest management strategy for the control of Shot Hole Borer in pomegranate cultivation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview of Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans)

The Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans) is an economically significant pest affecting various fruit crops, including pomegranate (Punica granatum). It is a small beetle belonging to the family Scolytidae, known for boring into the wood of trees and shrubs. The pest creates galleries in the vascular system of the plant, leading to wilting, dieback, and ultimately tree mortality (Browne et al., 2020). The difficulty in detecting early infestations and the pest's cryptic nature complicate its management.

### Challenges with Chemical Control

Traditional chemical control methods for managing Shot Hole Borer have proven to be partially effective. Chemical insecticides, such as systemic and contact poisons, are often used to manage adult beetles and larvae. However, their effectiveness is limited by factors such as the pest's ability to develop resistance and the difficulties in delivering these chemicals effectively to all infested areas (Sharma et al., 2019). Furthermore, the over-reliance on chemical pesticides poses risks to non-target organisms, including beneficial insects, soil microorganisms, and the broader ecosystem (Kumar et al., 2021).

## Biological Control of Pests

Biological control has emerged as a promising alternative for sustainable pest management. This approach utilizes natural enemies, such as predators, parasitoids, and pathogens, to suppress pest populations. The benefits of biological control include reduced environmental impact, minimized pesticide residues, and the preservation of ecological balance (Hajek & Eilenberg, 2018).

## Entomopathogenic Fungi

### *Beauveria bassiana*

Beauveria bassiana is an entomopathogenic fungus that has shown efficacy against a range of insect pests, including wood-boring beetles. It infects insects through their cuticle, where it proliferates and ultimately kills the host (Lacey et al., 2015). Studies have demonstrated that Beauveria bassiana can effectively reduce the population of pests like the red palm weevil and other borers by infecting and killing the larvae and adult beetles (Zhao et al., 2020).

### *Metarhizium Anisopliae*

Similarly, Metarhizium anisopliae is another entomopathogenic fungus with proven effectiveness against a variety of insect pests. This fungus operates by infecting pests through their exoskeleton, leading to the eventual death of the host (Roberts & St. Leger, 2004). Research has shown that Metarhizium anisopliae can control pests such as the coffee borer beetle and various soil-dwelling insect larvae (Cheng et al., 2019).

## Parasitic Wasps

### *Trichogramma SPP*

Trichogramma spp. are small parasitic wasps known for their ability to parasitize the eggs of numerous insect pests. They are widely used in biological control programs due to their effectiveness in reducing pest populations by preventing the larvae from hatching (Wajnberg et al., 2010). Studies have highlighted the successful application of Trichogramma spp. against various lepidopteran pests and their potential to manage other pests through egg parasitism (Aydin & Karagoz, 2017).

## Previous Studies on Biological Control of Shot Hole Borer

Recent studies focusing on the biological control of Shot Hole Borer have highlighted the potential of integrating fungal and parasitic agents. For instance, research by Singh et al. (2022) demonstrated that Beauveria bassiana effectively reduced the infestation levels of Shot Hole Borer in pomegranate, leading to improved tree health and fruit quality. Similarly, studies by Sharma et al. (2021) reported the effectiveness of Metarhizium anisopliae in controlling various wood-boring beetles, suggesting its potential application for Shot Hole Borer management. However, the integration of Trichogramma spp. into control programs for Shot Hole Borer remains underexplored, warranting further investigation.

**Gaps in Current Research**

While significant progress has been made in understanding the potential of biological control agents, there is a need for more comprehensive field studies specifically targeting Shot Hole Borer in pomegranate. Existing research often lacks detailed empirical data on the efficacy of these bioagents in diverse environmental conditions and their integration into existing pest management systems.

## METHODOLOGY

### Materials

#### *Bioagents*

a. Beauveria bassiana: Purchased from a commercial supplier, formulated as a spore suspension with a concentration of 1 × 10^8 spores/ml.
b. Metarhizium anisopliae: Acquired as a spore suspension with a concentration of 1 × 10^8 spores/ml.
c. Trichogramma spp.: Obtained as parasitoid cards, with a release rate of 50,000 wasps/ha.

#### *Pomegranate Orchards*

a. Locations: Sangola, Solapur district, Maharashtra.
b. Area: Approximately 500 plants in for experimentation.

#### *Equipment*

a. Sprayers for fungal application.
b. Water source for mixing and applying bioagents.
c. Data collection tools: pest monitoring sheets, and measuring devices for yield assessment.

#### *Chemical and Soil Analysis Tools*

Standard laboratory equipment for analyzing soil and plant health parameters.

#### *Statistical Software*

For analyzing the data, including ANOVA and other statistical tests.

### Experimental Design

#### *Design*

Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three treatments and one control.

#### *Treatments*

1. Beauveria bassiana (1 × 10^8 spores/ml)
2. Metarhizium anisopliae (1 × 10^8 spores/ml)
3. Trichogramma spp. (50,000 wasps/ha)
4. Untreated control

***Replications***

Each treatment was replicated five times to ensure statistical validity.

**Plot Preparation**

1. Size: The plot was approximately 1 hectare.
2. Treatment Application: Treatments were applied to the plots at 15-day intervals during the growing season.

**Application Procedures**

1. Beauveria bassiana and Metarhizium anisopliae: Applied as foliar sprays. Sprays were prepared by diluting the fungal suspensions in water according to the manufacturer's instructions. The application was done using hand-held or motorized sprayers.
2. Trichogramma spp.: Released using parasitoid cards distributed evenly across the plots.

**Data Collection**

***Pest Monitoring***

1. Frequency: Weekly assessments of pest infestation.
2. Method: Visual inspection of pomegranate trees, counting infested branches, and measuring the extent of damage.

***Yield Assessment***

1. Timing: At the end of the growing season.
2. Method: Harvesting and weighing pomegranate fruits from each plot to determine total yield.

***Damage Assessment***

Method: Evaluating the severity of damage on fruits and trees, including visual scoring of wilting and dieback

**Statistical Analysis**

1. Data Analysis: Collected data were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine the significance of the differences between treatments.
2. Software: Statistical analysis was performed using statistical software such as SPSS or R.

**Documentation and Reporting**

1. Record Keeping: Detailed records were maintained for all treatments, pest counts, and yield data.
2. Reporting: Results were compiled into tables and graphs for presentation and interpretation. Statistical significance was assessed at a 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

**Field Observations**

Environmental Monitoring: Regular observation of environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity, which can affect the efficacy of bioagents.

## RESULTS

**Pest Infestation Levels**

1. Frequency of Monitoring: Weekly assessments were conducted throughout the growing season.
2. Parameters Recorded: Number of infested branches per tree, percentage of infested trees, and severity of damage (visual scoring).

**Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits**

1. Parameters Recorded: Total yield (kg/ha), fruit size (average weight), and fruit quality (percentage of marketable fruits).

**Effectiveness of Bioagents**

1. Fungal Application: Number of dead beetles and larvae observed per plot.
2. Parasitic Wasps: Number of parasitized eggs per 100 eggs observed.

**Environmental Conditions**

1. Parameters Recorded: Temperature, humidity, and rainfall, which could influence the efficacy of bioagents

**Trial No.1**

***Pest Infestation Levels***

Table 1. Pest Infestation Levels

| Treatment | Infestation (%) | Number of Infested Branches per Tree | Severity of Damage (Score 1-5) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 48.20% | 7 | 4.5 |
| Beauveria bassiana | 14.50% | 2 | 2 |
| Metarhizium anisopliae | 17.10% | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Trichogramma spp. | 19.30% | 2.9 | 2.7 |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 74.32, $p < 0.001$
2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): The differences between Beauveria bassiana and the control, as well as between Beauveria bassiana and other treatments, were statistically significant.

*Observation*

The control group experienced the highest level of pest infestation with 48.2% infestation and severe damage (score 4.5). Beauveria bassiana significantly reduced both infestation levels and damage severity, demonstrating its high efficacy. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also reduced infestation but were less effective than Beauveria bassiana.

***Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits***

Table 2. Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits

| treatment | Total Yield (kg/ha) | Average Fruit Weight (g) | Marketable Fruits (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control** | 9,800 | 240 | 70% |
| **Beauveria bassiana** | 12,500 | 280 | 82% |
| **Metarhizium anisopliae** | 12,000 | 270 | 78% |
| **Trichogramma spp.** | 11,800 | 260 | 76% |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 61.19, $p < 0.001$
2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): Significant differences were found between the control and all bioagent treatments, with Beauveria bassiana showing the most substantial improvements in yield and fruit quality.

*Observation*

The control group had the lowest yield and fruit quality, with 9,800 kg/ha and 70% marketable fruits. Beauveria bassiana resulted in the highest yield (12,500 kg/ha) and quality (82% marketable fruits), suggesting that effective pest management correlates with improved production. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also showed beneficial effects but were less effective than Beauveria bassiana.

***Effectiveness of Bioagents***

a. Beauveria bassiana: 87% mortality of beetles and larvae.
b. Metarhizium anisopliae: 81% mortality of beetles and larvae.
c. Trichogramma spp.: 72% of eggs parasitized.

*Statistical Analysis*

Significant differences in mortality rates and parasitism were observed, with all bioagents showing efficacy ($p < 0.001$ for fungal treatments; $p < 0.01$ for parasitoids).

*Observation*

Both Beauveria bassiana and Metarhizium anisopliae showed high mortality rates, indicating strong fungal pathogen effects. Trichogramma spp. was effective in parasitizing eggs, providing long-term control benefits.

**Trial 2**

***Pest Infestation Levels***

Table 3. Pest Infestation Levels

| Treatment | Infestation (%) | Number of Infested Branches per Tree | Severity of Damage (Score 1-5) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control** | 47.90% | 6.7 | 4.4 |
| **Beauveria bassiana** | 15.10% | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| **Metarhizium anisopliae** | 16.50% | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| **Trichogramma spp.** | 18.20% | 2.7 | 2.5 |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 69.87, $p < 0.001$
2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): All bioagent treatments showed significant reductions in infestation compared to the control, with Beauveria bassiana being the most effective.

*Observation*

Pest infestation levels were highest in the control group (47.9%). Beauveria bassiana achieved the lowest infestation levels (15.1%) and damage severity (score 2.2). Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also reduced infestation and damage but were less effective compared to Beauveria bassiana.

***Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits***

Table 4. Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits

| Treatment | Total Yield (kg/ha) | Average Fruit Weight (g) | Marketable Fruits (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control** | 10,000 | 245 | 72% |
| **Beauveria bassiana** | 12,800 | 290 | 84% |
| **Metarhizium anisopliae** | 12,600 | 275 | 80% |
| **Trichogramma spp.** | 12,400 | 265 | 78% |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 55.03, $p < 0.001$

2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): Significant improvements in yield and quality were observed for all bioagent treatments compared to the control, with Beauveria bassiana showing the most significant benefits.

*Observation*

The control yielded 10,000 kg/ha with 72% marketable fruits. Beauveria bassiana achieved the highest yield (12,800 kg/ha) and marketable fruit percentage (84%). Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also enhanced yield and fruit quality but not to the extent of Beauveria bassiana.

*Effectiveness of Bioagents*

a. Beauveria bassiana: 85% mortality of beetles and larvae.
b. Metarhizium anisopliae: 79% mortality of beetles and larvae.
c. Trichogramma spp.: 68% of eggs parasitized.
d. Statistical Analysis: Efficacy of all treatments was significant ($p < 0.001$ for fungal treatments; $p < 0.05$ for parasitoids).
e. Observation: High mortality rates from fungal treatments and effective egg parasitism by Trichogramma spp. confirm the effectiveness of these bioagents.

**Trial 3**

Table 5. Pest Infestation Levels

| Treatment | Infestation (%) | Number of Infested Branches per Tree | Severity of Damage (Score 1-5) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control** | 46.80% | 6.5 | 4.3 |
| **Beauveria bassiana** | 13.80% | 2.3 | 2 |
| **Metarhizium anisopliae** | 17.20% | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| **Trichogramma spp.** | 18.90% | 2.8 | 2.8 |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 77.55, $p < 0.001$
2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): All bioagent treatments were significantly different from the control, with Beauveria bassiana showing the greatest effect.

*Observation*

The control had the highest infestation (46.8%) and damage severity (4.3). Beauveria bassiana showed the most significant reduction in infestation (13.8%) and damage (score 2.0), highlighting its superior effectiveness compared to Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp.

***Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits***

Table 6. Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits

| Treatment | Total Yield (kg/ha) | Average Fruit Weight (g) | Marketable Fruits (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control** | 10,500 | 255 | 73% |
| **Beauveria bassiana** | 13,300 | 295 | 86% |
| **Metarhizium anisopliae** | 13,000 | 285 | 82% |
| **Trichogramma spp.** | 12,700 | 275 | 80% |

*Statistical Analysis*

1. ANOVA Results: F-value = 63.25, $p < 0.001$
2. Post-hoc Test (Tukey's HSD): Differences were significant between the control and all bioagent treatments, with Beauveria bassiana showing the greatest improvement.

*Observation*

The control group had the lowest yield and quality. Beauveria bassiana produced the highest yield (13,300 kg/ha) and fruit quality (86% marketable fruits), demonstrating its efficacy in improving pomegranate production. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also improved yield and fruit quality, but not as significantly as Beauveria bassiana.

***Effectiveness of Bioagents***

a. Beauveria bassiana: 84% mortality of beetles and larvae.
b. Metarhizium anisopliae: 78% mortality of beetles and larvae.
c. Trichogramma spp.: 70% of eggs parasitized.
d. Statistical Analysis: The effectiveness was significant, with differences in mortality rates and parasitism ($p < 0.001$ for fungi; $p < 0.05$ for parasitoids).
e. Observation: All bioagents effectively controlled Shot Hole Borer, with Beauveria bassiana showing the highest mortality rates and effectiveness in managing pest populations.

**Summary of Observations**

***Pest Infestation Levels***

1. Beauveria bassiana consistently showed the lowest infestation levels and damage severity across all trials, highlighting its superior efficacy in controlling Shot Hole Borer.
2. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also reduced infestation and damage, but to a lesser extent compared to Beauveria bassiana.

***Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits***

1. Beauveria bassiana resulted in the highest yield and fruit quality improvements, correlating with its effectiveness in pest control.
2. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also improved yield and quality but not as significantly as Beauveria bassiana.

***Effectiveness of Bioagents***

1. Beauveria bassiana achieved the highest mortality rates and effectiveness in controlling both beetles and larvae.
2. Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. were effective but less so compared to Beauveria bassiana.

**DISCUSSION**

The data from our trials underscore the profound effectiveness of Beauveria bassiana in controlling Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans) in pomegranate orchards. Across all trials, Beauveria bassiana consistently demonstrated superior performance, reducing pest infestation levels and damage severity significantly compared to the control. In Trial 1, for instance, the infestation rate with Beauveria bassiana was reduced to 14.5%, a stark contrast to the 48.2% observed in the untreated control. This trend was consistent across subsequent trials, with Beauveria bassiana achieving the lowest infestation percentages and damage scores. The mortality rates of beetles and larvae, ranging from 84% to 87%, further affirm its exceptional efficacy. The statistical analyses, including ANOVA and Tukey's HSD tests, validate these findings, confirming Beauveria bassiana as the most effective bioagent in managing this pest.

In addition to its pest control efficacy, Beauveria bassiana also positively impacted the yield and quality of pomegranate fruits. The trials revealed that Beauveria bassiana led to significant improvements in both yield and fruit quality. For instance, in Trial 1, the yield reached 12,500 kg/ha, and the percentage of marketable fruits increased to 82%. These results are markedly higher than those of the control group, which had a yield of 9,800 kg/ha and only 70% marketable fruits. Similar improvements were observed in other trials, with Beauveria bassiana consistently outperforming other treatments. This correlation between effective pest management and enhanced agricultural productivity underscores the value of Beauveria bassiana in pomegranate cultivation.

While Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also exhibited effectiveness in reducing pest populations and improving fruit quality, their impact was not as pronounced as that of Beauveria bassiana. Metarhizium anisopliae reduced infestation levels to 17.1% and 16.5% in Trials 1 and 2, respectively, and Trichogramma spp. was effective in parasitizing pest eggs. However, neither of these bioagents achieved the same level of control or improvement in yield and quality as Beauveria bassiana.

The rigorous statistical analyses further support these observations. The significant F-values and low p-values from ANOVA tests confirm that Beauveria bassiana's performance was statistically superior. The Tukey's HSD test highlights its exceptional efficacy compared to other treatments, reinforcing the practical benefits of incorporating this bioagent into pest management strategies.

In summary, the findings from this research advocate for the widespread adoption of Beauveria bassiana as a primary biological control agent for Shot Hole Borer. Its remarkable effectiveness in reducing pest infestations, coupled

with substantial improvements in yield and fruit quality, makes it an invaluable tool for pomegranate growers. While Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. offer supplementary benefits, Beauveria bassiana stands out as the optimal choice for sustainable and effective pest management. This study highlights the potential of Beauveria bassiana to revolutionize pomegranate cultivation, providing a sustainable pathway to agricultural success.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the quest for sustainable agricultural practices, the control of pest infestations remains a pivotal challenge. Among the myriad of strategies available, the use of biological agents offers a promising and eco-friendly solution. This study sheds light on the efficacy of three biological control agents—Beauveria bassiana, Metarhizium anisopliae, and Trichogramma spp.—in managing the notorious Shot Hole Borer (Xyleborus perforans) in pomegranate orchards. The findings provide compelling evidence of how these bioagents can transform pest management and enhance agricultural productivity.

### Effectiveness of Bioagents in Pest Control

Our trials revealed a standout performer in the battle against Shot Hole Borer: Beauveria bassiana. This bioagent demonstrated exceptional effectiveness in reducing pest infestation and damage severity. In Trial 1, it slashed infestation rates to a mere 14.5% compared to the 48.2% observed in the untreated control. This trend was consistently observed across all trials, with Beauveria bassiana achieving significantly lower infestation rates and damage scores. Its success was underscored by high mortality rates of the beetles and larvae, ranging from 84% to 87%. The statistical analysis confirmed that Beauveria bassiana outperformed other treatments, making it the most effective bioagent for controlling this pest.

Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. also proved to be effective, albeit less so than Beauveria bassiana. Metarhizium anisopliae reduced infestation levels to 17.1% and 16.5% in Trials 1 and 2, respectively, while Trichogramma spp. showed good performance in parasitizing pest eggs. However, their impact on reducing pest populations and damage was not as pronounced as that of Beauveria bassiana.

### Impact on Yield and Quality of Pomegranate Fruits

The influence of these bioagents on pomegranate yield and fruit quality was equally notable. Beauveria bassiana led to significant improvements, producing yields of 12,500 kg/ha in Trial 1 and 13,300 kg/ha in Trial 3, with the highest percentages of marketable fruits (82% to 86%). This underscores the strong link between effective pest management and enhanced agricultural productivity. In contrast, while Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. improved yield and quality compared to the control, their results were less remarkable compared to Beauveria bassiana.

**Statistical and Practical Implications**

The rigorous statistical analyses validate the superior performance of Beauveria bassiana in controlling Shot Hole Borer. The significant F-values and low p-values from ANOVA tests confirm the efficacy of this bioagent. The Tukey's HSD test further emphasizes its exceptional performance compared to other treatments. This scientific validation reinforces the practical benefits of incorporating Beauveria bassiana into pest management strategies.

In summary, this research highlights Beauveria bassiana as a game-changer in the management of Shot Hole Borer, promising enhanced pest control, better yields, and superior fruit quality. Its integration into pest management programs could revolutionize pomegranate cultivation, offering a sustainable pathway to agricultural success.

**Recommendations**

The study's findings advocate for the widespread adoption of Beauveria bassiana as a primary biological control agent for Shot Hole Borer. Its remarkable effectiveness in pest control and its contribution to increased yield and fruit quality make it an invaluable tool for pomegranate growers. While Metarhizium anisopliae and Trichogramma spp. offer supplementary benefits, Beauveria bassiana stands out as the optimal choice for sustainable and effective pest management.

**FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic is still needed "Enhancing Pomegranate Yield Through Biological Control of Shot Hole Borer: A Comparative Study."

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