POSSIBILITY OF REMEDIATION OF A HEAVY METAL POLLUTED SOIL

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Abstract
Sustainable development presents important challenges to environmental research, such as developing perspectives and methods that clarify the links between social activities, resource use, and pollution. A typical territory polluted by human activities is situated in the area of the Gyöngyösoroszi metal mine. The mine of Gyöngyösoroszi worked with total capacity until 1950 and it was closed in 1986. Its slag sites are contaminated with residual toxic heavy metals (e.g. Zn, Cu, Pb, Hg, Cr). Location and degree of the contamination of this area have been studied in details earlier. Application of sheep manure compost (SM compost) was tested as a possible way for remediation of polluted soils in order to produce some special plants. Pot experiments were conducted to investigate the effects of the SM compost on the growth and the stress tolerance of maize (Zea mays L.) and Italian ryegrass (Lolium multiflorum L.). Our goal was to obtain detailed information about the feature of the compost which increases the stress tolerance of plants on the basis of experimental data originated from chemical analysis of the tested soil, the compost and the phosphorite. We carried out sorption and heavy metal leaching laboratory tests on the polluted soil, too. Additionally, adsorption of extracted humic–like components of the compost on the contaminated soil was studied. Langmuir-type isotherms were used to discover some details of sorption processes of the soluble organic fraction of the tested compost on the heavy metal polluted soil. We determined the effects of the applied compost on the solubility of soil pollutants by measuring the extent of salt leaching from the tested contaminated soil as well.

Keywords: Mine sites of Gyöngyösoroszi, sheep manure compost, adsorption, leaching out of salts, metal uptake

INTRODUCTION
The slag sites of the metal mine at Gyöngyösoroszi were studied in details and a contamination map was constructed (Draskovits et al., 2002) before. The vegetations of these slag sites were mapped as well and different phytoremediation experiments were carried out there (Draskovits et al., 2002; Muráni and Ködöböcz, 2008; Papp, 2008). Application of composts for the purpose of increase the stress tolerance of plants is widespread in agricultural practice (Topcouglu et al., 2007; Ma del mar Delgado et al., 2002). However, the effect of composts is not completely clear in this respect. It is known that composts contain high amount of humic-like matters which are very good complex forming agents for some metal ions. Therefore we presume that composts can protect plants from the stress and the toxicity caused by different heavy metals (Keresztüri et al., 2008). For checking this assumption pot experiments were carried out with maize indicator plant. Effects of four different compost doses 0 (control), 50 g, 100 g, 200 g per pot (0, 30, 60, 120 t ha⁻¹ compost doses respectively) were studied. Effect of phosphate on the growth of plants was also studied in other pot experiments. In order to clarify our assumption, we studied the adsorption of humic-like fraction of the compost on the tested slag site soil, and the leaching processes of heavy metal ions from the soil, treated with sheep manure compost. During the examination of leaching out processes we applied the method used by Esakku et al. (2008). The production technology of the compost applied in our experiments
was developed by researchers of our institute (TERRASOL® compost). In this paper we summarized the conclusions of our studies concerning to the abiotic stress moderating effect of the tested compost.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Agricultural methods
Maize pot experiments
Maize (Zea mays L.) was grown in contaminated soil treated with SM compost in greenhouse. The soil was collected from the surface layer of the contaminated area of the former metal mine at Gyöngyősoroszi. Soil of 5 kg was put into plastic buckets. The following amounts of SM compost were added to the soil: 0 (control), 50 g, 100 g and 200 g per pot. The pots were arranged in completely randomized design with four replications. 20 maize seeds were sown in each pot as indicator plants.

Italian ryegrass experiments
Italian ryegrass (Lolium multiflorum L.) was grown in contaminated soil treated with SM compost and phosphorite mixture in a greenhouse. 2.5 kg of polluted soil were put into plastic buckets. Each combination of 0 (control), 25 g, 50 g and 100 g of SM compost and 0 g, 1 g, 2 g and 4 g of phosphorite was tested. The pots were arranged in completely randomized design with four replications. 40 seeds were sown in each pot as indicator plants.

Open air experiments
Open air experiments were carried out in the Gyöngyősoroszi mine sites on the original polluted soil by some plants, for example: sunflower (Helianthus annuus L.), millet (Panicum miliaceum L.), chickling vetch (Lathyrus sativus L.). The tested plants were harvested after two months. The harvested biomass was dried and analyzed by classical analytical methods.

Chemical methods
Soil analysis
Chemical parameters of the samples were determined by the actual Hungarian standard methods. We applied combined glass electrode to measure pH values in suspension of 1:2.5 soil mass/water volume ratio. Organic matter analysis was made with oxidative methods (KCrO₄ digestion), while CaCO₃ analysis was done by means of Scheibler-method. Soluble toxic elements were extracted by 0.1M KCl-0.05M EDTA solution. For determination of total toxic element contents the samples were digested in HNO₃/H₂O₂ solution of 2:1 ratio while they were heated by microwave. The concentrations were determined by SpectraAA 220FS atomic absorption spectrometer.

Compost and phosphorite analysis
We determined N, P, K contents of compost and phosphorite by the Kjeldahl method.

Plant analysis
For determination of total toxic element contents the samples were digested in HNO₃/H₂O₂ solution of 2:1 ratio while they were heated by microwave. The concentration was determined by SpectraAA 220FS atomic absorption spectrometer.

Adsorption measurements
Measures of the adsorption of the Extracted Humic Like Material (EHLM) on soil samples: For optimization of the adsorption experiments Kreokr-method was carried out by adding 0.5-5.0 g of soil samples to 15 cm² aqueous solution of EHLM of 3.7 gdm⁻³ concentration at room temperature. In this way the optimal amount of solid phase proved to be 1.5 g.
The validity of Langmuir isotherms was studied with the optimized soil weight in the 0.3-4.1 g dm$^{-3}$ EHLM concentration range. The equilibrium EHLM concentration was determined by Spekol 1100 VIS spectrophotometer, with using a calibration curve taken previously. The amount of specific sorbed EHLM was calculated by the following formula:

$$a = (C_0 - C_e)V/m,$$

where: $C_0$: is the initial concentration, $C_e$: is the equilibrium concentration of the sorbed material after the adsorption, $V$ is the volume of the solution, $m$ is the weight of the adsorbent(soil). By calculating $\Theta = a/a_{max}$, the coverage of the surface (%) the Langmuir-plots were analyzed.

Salt leaching experiments

Soil samples of 100 g were suspended in 0.65-5 m% aqueous solution of EHLM of 0.5 dm$^3$ at room temperature for a month. The amount of leached out total salt content was gravimetrically determined in the liquid phase.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some chemical features of the polluted soil were determined with the purpose of right valuation of our results. The analytical data show some troubles of the tested soil clearly (Table 1). The soil is very acidic. Both pH parameters (measured in H$_2$O and in KCl solution) are low. The readily available phosphate and nitrogen content of the soil are low, too. The humic content seems to be sufficient, but these data can be false, because the determination of humic-material content is based on the chromate oxidation method. The question arises whether this process is applicable in case of such high heavy metal concentration. Probably the high heavy metal concentration may affect other analytical results like results concerning humic matter contents. The Table 1 shows that the sulphate content is very high and it can be toxic for plants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>pH (H$_2$O)</th>
<th>pH (KCl)</th>
<th>Humus % (Tyurin-method)</th>
<th>P$_2$O$_5$ (mg kg$^{-1}$) (Ammonium lactate, AL)</th>
<th>K$_2$O (mg kg$^{-1}$) (AL)</th>
<th>Ca (mg kg$^{-1}$) (AL)</th>
<th>Mg (mg kg$^{-1}$) (AL)</th>
<th>Na (mg kg$^{-1}$) (AL)</th>
<th>SO$_4^{2-}$ (mg kg$^{-1}$) (KCl)</th>
<th>CO$_3^{2-}$ (mg kg$^{-1}$) (Schiebler-method)</th>
<th>NO$_3^-$ (mg kg$^{-1}$) (KCl)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>21500</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25320</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</table>

We found the following metal ions in the soil written in decreasing order of concentration: Fe>Zn>Mn>Cu>Pb>Cr>Co>Ni,Cd. However, the total metal content is not available for plants. Therefore we determined the metal content which can be extracted by ammonium-lactate. We suppose that this type of metal content is available for plants. The results in decreasing order of concentration are as follows: Zn>Pb>Mn>Fe>Cu>Cr>Co>Ni. On the basis of the previous data we determined ratios of availability of each heavy metal (Walker et al, 2004; Topcouglu, 2004). The “available” (mobile fraction of total amount (%)) heavy metals in decreasing order of concentration are: Cd>Pb>Zn>Cu>Ni>Mn>Co>Cr>Fe (Table 2).
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metal content</th>
<th>Mobile fraction (mg kg(^{-1}))</th>
<th>Total amount (mg kg(^{-1}))</th>
<th>Mobile fraction ratio from total amount (%)</th>
<th>Threshold limit* (mg kg(^{-1}))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zn</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cu</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fe</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>42600</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mn</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>&lt;4.00</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>&gt;29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cd</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pb</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some chemical features of the applied compost and phosphorite are shown in the Table 3 respectively. Contrary to the investigated soil, the compost provided a good phosphorus source for the plants.

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determined material</th>
<th>Phosphorite (mg kg(^{-1}))</th>
<th>Compost * (mg kg(^{-1}))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Under the detection limit</td>
<td>19800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(_2)O(_5)</td>
<td>270000</td>
<td>17500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K(_2)O</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>37900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total organic material</td>
<td>Under the detection limit</td>
<td>480000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* TERRASOL

The maize was sowed in soil treated with different amount of compost. We measured the height of plants after one month. We found that the increasing amount of compost resulted in monotonously increasing height of maize (Figure 1). This increase of height can probably be caused by the improving phosphorus (P) supply and the complex forming ability (with metal ions) of the SM compost (Dömsödi 1989; Máté-Gáspár and Anton, 2005).

![Figure 1: Effect of compost doses for height of maize in pot experiments](image)

We carried out another pot experiments with Italian ryegrass because we wanted to verify the effect of phosphate content of compost. We mixed the compost and the phosphorite in different ratio and added them to the pots. We determined the average height of plants (Figure 2-3).
We observed that phosphorite is beneficial to the growth of grass. Moreover, we experienced the compost is more effective than the natural phosphorite in equivalent amount. The phosphate can affect the growth of plants in two different ways. It is either a good nutrient for plants or it decreases the biological availability of heavy metals by reducing their solubility (Lide, 2003-2004). Therefore we may conclude that other components of the compost can take effect on growth of plants. In heavy metal tolerance of plants the humic fraction content of the compost can play important role. In order to clarify the chemical mechanism of heavy metal retention of the compost we studied the adsorption features of humic fraction on the soil.

We also determined the amounts of some heavy metal ions of the maize plants. The analytical data supported our assumption, because the increasing compost doses decreased the heavy metal contents of aboveground parts of the tested plants (Figure 4-5). Our results corroborate the finding of Tury et al. (2008) and Morrison (2000).

Analytical data of the roots do not show such an obvious results. The copper content decreased, but the zinc did not decrease by compost addition (Figure 6-7). Probable reason is that, copper forms strong complexes with humic materials while zinc does not (Wei et al., 2004).
The reduction of heavy metal uptake caused by the compost application was confirmed in open air experiments as well. We compared the metal contents and the average height of stalks of plants produced on treated and untreated soils. We found that the compost treatment increased the height of plants and decreased the metal concentration in the plants (Table 4).

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Average Height (m)</th>
<th>Heavy metal content (mg kg⁻¹)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunflower</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Helianthus annus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chickling vetch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lathyrus sativus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Millet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Panicum miliaceum</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We amended our plant tests with chemical experiments. We studied the salt leaching from tested soil by different doses of compost. *Figure 8,9,10* show that application of the compost decreases the leach out of salts and heavy metals ions. Hence their availability for plants decreases in soil-SM compost suspensions. This observation can be explained by the complex formation of heavy metal ions with SM compost adsorbed on the soil particles.
We studied the adsorption features of the \textit{EHLM} on the tested soil because we wanted to know the way of the metal-soil-humic complex formation. The Langmuir-type plot (Figure 10) shows a good linearity of adsorption of \textit{EHLM} on the tested soil. It means that the \textit{EHLM} forms a monomolecular layer on the surface of the soil particles and the process is reversible. The type of this bond is probably electrostatic with binding constant of $2.9 \pm 0.3 \text{ dm}^3 \text{g}^{-1}$, which represents a remarkably strong interaction between the surface of soil particles and \textit{EHLM}.

Figure 8: The amount the leached salt from soil versus of SMC compost content

Figure 9: The leached concentration of Cu and Zn versus of SMC compost content

Figure 10: \textit{Linearized Langmuir-type isotherm of EHLM extract on the tested soil}
CONCLUSION

This study suggests that the sheep manner compost is a good protecting agent for survival and growing of plants in polluted soil. We suppose that the following reasons explain the results:
1. The compost makes up for phosphorus which is absent from soil.
2. The water soluble fraction of compost strongly adsorbs to the contaminated soil, and as a very good complex forming material holds back the heavy metals.
3. The SM compost reduces the mobility of salts and heavy metals in polluted soil suspensions.
4. Increasing the amount of compost unambiguously helps the growing of maize in pot experiments.
5. According to greenhouse tests the added compost results in higher plants.
6. The SM compost treatment decreases the Cu and Zn concentrations in the stalk of the different plants.

Acknowledgements

Financial support of the "NKFP 074- Biofinom Ányos Jedlik Program" project is highly acknowledged.

REFERENCES