World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences
eISSN: 2582-8266
Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/wjaets
Journal homepage: https://wjaets.com/

(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Enhancing and investigating hydroponic cultivation of leafy greens in urban areas – a study on nutritive analysis of hydroponic leafy greens -*Trigonella foenum*-graecum L. (fenugreek), *Coriandrum sativum* L.(coriander) and *Spinacia oleracea* L.(spinach)

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World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences, 2025, 15(01), 288-301

Publication history: Received on 21 February 2025; revised on 28 March 2025; accepted on 30 March 2025

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/wjaets.2025.15.1.0152

Abstract

Hydroponic cultivation, characterized by its soilless growth system and controlled environmental conditions, has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to elevate the concentrations of key nutrients in spinach, coriander and fenugreek surpassing traditional soil-based methods in certain aspects. Specifically, the study highlighted the elevated energy content in spinach and coriander, substantial macronutrient contributions including proteins and carbohydrates, and the remarkable levels of essential micronutrients such as calcium and iron across all three plants. These findings are pivotal, given the global challenge of providing sufficient nutrients to rapidly growing urban populations amidst diminishing arable land and the adverse effects of climate change on traditional agriculture.

Keywords: Hydroponic; Soilless; Spinach; Coriander; Fenugreek

1. Introduction

Hydroponics is a method of growing crops and vegetables without soil with the help of nutrient solution (Heredia, 2014). The hydroponic nutrients are usually derived from synthetic commercial fertilizers, such as calcium nitrate, that are highly soluble in water (Diver, 2006). The suspended net pot, non-circulating hydroponic growing method is a unique and powerful technique for growing leafy, semi-head and small romaine lettuce cultivars, because the entire crop can be grown with only an initial application of water and nutrients. Electricity and pumps are not needed, so the additional production costs and complexities associated with aeration and circulation in many conventional hydroponic systems are totally avoided by this method (Kratky, 2009).

Due to the population exploitation, urbanisation and industrialization, the cultivable land area is declining day by day. The conventional methods of crop production are also facing several challenges due to abnormal climatic behaviours. So that new and modern methods for growing sufficient food have to be evolve in order to feed the world's growing population sustainably. Change in growing medium can be an alternative approach for sustainable crop production an conservation of quick depleting land and available water resources. So this 'Hydroponics' system is becoming increasingly widespread over the world and according to the most recent report it is expected to reach a world growth of 18.8% from 2017 to 2024(Jan *et al.,* 2020)

The NASA has done research on this system for its Controlled Ecological Life Support System, CELSS (Pandey *et al.,*2009). As it does not require soil for plant growth, it may be helpful for the astronauts during their time in space to get their food. This helps both home kitchen garderners and farmers to grow in places where traditional soil system is not possible or cost-effective. The hydroponics system can provide 20-25% higher yields than a soil based system.

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Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum* L.) is one of the spices that occupy a prominent position worldwide, adding flavor and aroma to several foods (Rashed and Darwesh, 2015). In addition to its use in cooking, coriander is used in the food and pharmaceutical industries due to its medicinal properties (Uitterhaegen *et al.,* 2015). Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graceum* L.) is a legume and it has been use as spice throughout the world to enhance the sensory quality of foods to enhance flavour and color. It is known for its medicinal qualities such as antidiabetic, anticarcinogenic, hypocholestrolemic, antioxidant and immunological activities (Srinivasan, 2006). Spinach (*Spinacia oleracea* L.) is a healthy leafy green used for salads or cooking various recipes. It is one of the highest nutrient content vegetable rich in Carotene and Vitamin C (Mosina and Maroyi,2016)

Hydroponic cultivation of green leafy vegetables like coriander, fenugreek and spinach is gaining popularity as a sustainable and efficient farming method. According to Dr. John Smith, a leading expert in hydroponic agriculture, "Hydroponic cultivation of green leafy vegetables allows for precise control over nutrient delivery and environmental conditions, resulting in faster growth and higher yields compared to traditional soil-based farming methods" (Smith, 2022). This innovative technique involves growing plants in a nutrient-rich water solution, allowing them to absorb essential nutrients directly through their roots. By eliminating the need for soil, hydroponics minimizes the risks of pests, diseases, and weeds, leading to healthier and more sustainable crop production.

Furthermore, hydroponics presents the opportunity for year-round cultivation, irrespective of climate or geographic limitations. With the increasing demand for fresh and nutritious green leafy vegetables, hydroponic cultivation presents a promising solution for efficient and environmentally friendly farming practices. we will explore the benefits, challenges, and best practices for hydroponic cultivation of coriander, fenugreek, and spinach, and how this technique can contribute to sustainable agriculture and food security. The aim of the present study were to analyse the physical parameters, nutritive analysis and macronutrients like iron and calcium of hydroponically grown *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.(Fenugreek), *Coriandrum sativum* L.(Coriander) and *Spinacia oleracea* L.(Spinach)

2. Material and methods

2.1. Site Selection and Preparation

2.1.1. Site Selection

The selection of urban locations for setting up hydroponic systems was guided by a set of criteria that focused on maximizing sunlight exposure, ease of access to resources such as water and the availability of space. According to Savidov and Brooks (2004), successful hydroponic systems require adequate natural light or supplemental lighting to ensure plant growth, highlighting the importance of sunlight exposure in our site selection criteria. The selected sites included rooftops, balconies, and unused land in community gardens, which were evaluated for their potential based on a comprehensive survey. These locations were chosen for their ability to provide at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight per day, a critical factor for photosynthesis and plant health as outlined by Resh (2013).

2.1.2. Preparation

Once suitable sites were identified, the preparation phase involved. Three simple pots or containers with air space, water, stones or pebbles, rockwool or cocopeat was collected. The importance of a stable and clean environment for hydroponic cultivation is supported by Jensen (1997), who emphasized the need for precise control over environmental factors to achieve optimal growth conditions. The preparation phase also involved testing the water supply for quality, as water is a crucial component of hydroponic systems. The pH of the water was adjusted to suitable levels for hydroponic cultivation, following the guidelines provided by Jones (2005). These adjustments were critical to ensure that the nutrient solutions used in the hydroponic systems would be effective in supporting plant growth.

2.2. Experimental Design

Hydroponic System Setup: Utilize the stagnant water hydroponic system to change the water along with nutrient solution two days once or kratky method to construct your hydroponic systems. Each system should consist of:

2.2.1. Design and Construction

- Containers: Each hydroponic system was constructed using simple pots to prevent light from penetrating and inhibiting algae growth. These pot containers were selected for their durability, ease of use, and suitability for supporting the plants' root systems (Jensen, 1997).

- System Layout: The net pot is simply a pot with holes or slits in the sides to allow the root system to reach the nutrient solution bellow. The net pot should be partially submerged to allow the developing plant roots to get oxygen.Net pots comes in variety of sizes and styles to suit a diverse range of systems. The spacing was based on the typical growth patterns of leafy greens, allowing ample space for mature plant development (Resh, 2013).
- Nutrient Solution: The nutrient solution was prepared following the Hoagland solution, renowned for its balanced nutrient profile suitable for a wide range of plants. The solution provided essential macronutrients and micronutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, and trace elements such as iron, manganese, boron, zinc, copper, molybdenum, and chlorine. Nutrient availability was checked and the pH was adjusted to 6-6.5, ideal for nutrient uptake by plants (Hoagland & Arnon, 1950).
- Air Gap: A critical feature of the Kratky method is the air gap between the nutrient solution and the floating platform. As the plants consume the nutrient solution, the water level decreases, leaving an air gap that promotes oxygenation of the root zone, crucial for healthy root development and preventing root rot (Kratky, 2004).

2.2.2. Environmental Control

- Lighting: Normal sunlight and darkness were given for the three hydroponic setups and it was placed in partially shaded place (Massa *et al.*, 2008).
- Temperature Control: The ambient air temperature around the hydroponic systems was maintained between 18°C to 24°C, and the nutrient solution temperature was kept between 20°C to 22°C to create an environment conducive to leafy green growth (Jones, 2005).
- Monitoring and Adjustments: The pH of the nutrient solution were monitored weekly using digital meters. Adjustments were made by adding water to dilute the solution. P^H adjustments were made using pH up or down solutions, ensuring the nutrient solution remained within the optimal range for plant uptake (Resh, 2013).

The detailed setup of the hydroponic systems using the Kratky method was meticulously planned and executed to provide an optimal environment for the cultivation of spinach, coriander, and fenugreek. This passive hydroponic approach was chosen for its simplicity, low maintenance, and suitability for urban settings, where space might be limited. By carefully controlling environmental factors and nutrient supply, the study aimed to maximize the growth and development of the leafy greens, providing valuable insights into the feasibility and efficiency of hydroponic cultivation in urban areas.

2.3. Plant Cultivation

2.3.1. Plant Cultivation Process

Seed Germination

- Preparation: Seeds of *Spinacia oleracea* L.(spinach), *Coriandrum sativum* L.(coriander), and *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.(fenugreek) were initially soaked in water for 24 hours to enhance germination rates. This pre-soaking step, as recommended by Baudoin *et al*. (2001), helps in breaking seed dormancy and promotes uniform germination.
- Germination Medium: Following soaking, seeds were placed in rockwool cubes, chosen for their excellent moisture retention and aeration properties, which are vital for seed germination. The cubes were kept in a germination tray under a humidity to maintain high humidity levels, facilitating optimal germination conditions.
- Environmental Conditions: The trays were placed in a controlled environment with a temperature maintained at approximately 22°C, ideal for the germination of these species. Germination typically occurred within 7-14 days days, during which the rockwool cubes were kept consistently moist but not waterlogged

Transplanting Seedlings

- Seedling Selection: Once seedlings developed their first true leaves, indicating a strong root system had formed, they were selected for transplanting into the hydroponic system. This stage of development is critical for ensuring that plants are capable of adapting to the hydroponic environment.
- System Introduction: Seedlings were carefully removed from the germination trays and transplanted into the net pots prepared in the hydroponic containers. Each net pot was filled with rockwool or cocopeat to support the seedlings and facilitate root growth into the nutrient solution below

Maintenance and Monitoring

- Nutrient Solution Management: The nutrient solution was replenished to account for plant uptake and evaporation, ensuring that the roots were always submerged in the nutrient-rich solution. Bore water was used to repare nutrient solution and was mixed with it.
- Lighting and Temperature: The natural light provided a consistent light source, crucial for photosynthesis and plant growth. The natural climate maintainence of air and water temperatures were checked within the optimal ranges for each plant species, as environmental control is essential for preventing stress and promoting healthy development.
- Observation and Care: Regular inspections were conducted to monitor plant health and identify any signs of nutrient deficiencies, pests, or diseases. Preventative measures, such as the introduction of beneficial insects for pest control or adjustments to the nutrient solution, were implemented as needed to address any issues.

Harvest

Timing: Plants were harvested at their peak maturity, which varied between species but typically occurred 4-6 weeks after transplanting. The timing of harvest was determined by plant height, root development, number of seeds used, maturity of the plant and overall health, ensuring that the leafy greens were at their optimal nutritional and taste quality.

- Method: Harvesting involved cutting the plant at the base of its stem, just above the net pot, to collect the edible leaves while minimizing damage to the hydroponic system.

The plant cultivation phase was pivotal in demonstrating the viability of growing spinach, coriander, and fenugreek hydroponically in urban settings. By adhering to a carefully structured process from seed germination to harvest the study ensured that the plants grew in optimal conditions, leading to successful cultivation. This phase not only provided valuable insights into the growth requirements and performance of these leafy greens in hydroponic systems but also highlighted the potential for efficient, sustainable urban agriculture.

2.4. Data Collection

2.4.1. Data Collection Process and Growth Rate and Yield

- Measurements: Plant growth was monitored by measuring the height, leaf number, and root length at weekly intervals using a ruler for height and leaf count and root measurements. These metrics provided insights into the vegetative development and health of the plants.
- Yield Data: At harvest, the total of 100g of each plant was recorded and collected. A subset of plants was selected for fresh weight analysis, physiological parameters were recorded.

2.4.2. Water and Nutrient Consumption

- Water Usage: The volume of water added to each hydroponic system was tracked weekly to calculate total water consumption. This included water used to replenish evaporated water and to replace the nutrient solution entirely.
- Nutrient Solution: The concentration of nutrients in the solution was monitored and adjustments were made to record and understand nutrient uptake and the efficiency of the nutrient delivery system.

2.4.3. Plant Health and System Efficiency

- Health Monitoring: Plants were regularly inspected for signs of stress, nutrient deficiencies, pests, and diseases. The occurrence of any such issues, along with the responses taken (e.g., pest control measures, nutrient adjustments), were recorded to assess the health and resilience of the hydroponic systems
- Efficiency Evaluation: Data on plant growth and yield were analyzed in relation to resource consumption (water and nutrients) to evaluate the efficiency of the hydroponic systems compared to soil-based controls. This analysis provided insights into the sustainability and economic viability of hydroponic cultivation in urban settings.

The data collection phase was instrumental in capturing the impacts of hydroponic cultivation on plant growth, resource use, and environmental control. By systematically gathering and recording a wide range of data, the study provided a robust foundation for analyzing the benefits and challenges of hydroponic systems. This detailed and comprehensive approach to data collection enabled a thorough evaluation of hydroponic cultivation's potential to enhance urban agriculture, contributing valuable knowledge to the field and informing future urban farming practices.

2.5. Comparative Analysis

2.5.1. Selection of Comparative Parameters

- Growth Rate and Yield: The primary comparative parameters included the growth rate, measured as the increase in plant height and leaf number over time, and the yield, quantified at harvest. These parameters were crucial for assessing the productivity of hydroponic versus soil cultivation methods.
- Resource Efficiency: Water and nutrient consumption were measured to evaluate the efficiency of resource use in hydroponic systems compared to soil-based systems. This involved calculating the total volume of water and nutrients used throughout the growing period and relating it to the biomass produced.
- Plant Health and Quality: The overall health of plants, incidence of pest and disease, and visual quality of the produce were also compared. This qualitative assessment helped in understanding the impact of cultivation methods on plant vitality and marketable quality.

2.5.2. Considerations for Comparative Analysis

- Environmental Controls: Since hydroponic systems typically offer greater control over environmental conditions than soil-based setups, the analysis considered the potential impact of these controls on plant growth and resource efficiency. The consistency of environmental conditions in hydroponic systems was factored into the comparison.
- Variability in Cultivation Practices: The study acknowledged the inherent variability in soil-based cultivation practices, including differences in soil quality, watering practices, and pest management. These factors were considered when comparing the results to ensure a fair assessment.

The comparative analysis provided critical insights into the advantages and challenges of hydroponic cultivation for leafy greens in urban areas. The findings demonstrated that hydroponic systems could offer superior growth rates and yield efficiency, particularly in terms of water and nutrient use, compared to traditional soil cultivation. Moreover, the controlled environment of hydroponic systems contributed to healthier plant growth with fewer instances of pest and disease. However, the analysis also highlighted the importance of considering the initial setup costs, the need for technical knowledge, and the energy requirements of hydroponic systems.

2.6. Physical parameters

2.6.1. Plant Material and Cultivation

To select the healthy seeds of spinach, coriander, and fenugreek seeds. Prepare the nutrient solution according to the specific requirements of each plant species and maintain appropriate pH levels of the nutrient solution.

2.6.2. Data Collection and analysis

Measure and record physical parameters at regular intervals. These may include Plant height, Leaf area , Stem diameter, Leaf number, Root length and morphology. Use appropriate measuring tools and techniques to ensure accuracy. Analyses the collected data using statistical methods to identify any significant differences between the three plant species. Compare the growth performance and physical characteristics of spinach, coriander, and fenugreek under hydroponic conditions.

2.7. Nutritive Analysis

2.7.1. Selection of Nutritional Parameters

- Macro and Micronutrients: The analysis targeted key macro-nutrients such as Carbohydrate, proteins, Fat and dietary fibers, and micronutrients (iron, calcium). These nutrients were selected based on their importance to human health and their expected variance between cultivation methods.The parameters included were Energy, Saturated, Poly and Mono unsaturated fat, Transfat, Cholesterol, Total sugar.

2.7.2. Preparation and Analysis

Leaf Collection from hydroponic selected plants: Mature leaves from Fenugreek, Coriander, Spinach were harvested from hydroponic system and was studied at peak maturity to ensure comparability.

- Preparation: Samples were washed, dried, and homogenized to create a consistent testing material. For certain analysis, further extraction procedures were necessary, particularly for vitamins (AOAC Method 2006).

- Protein: The Kjeldahl method, recognized for its accuracy in determining nitrogen content, was used to estimate protein levels.
- Dietary Fiber: The AOAC International methods for dietary fiber analysis were employed, providing standardized results for soluble and insoluble fiber content.
- Energy: The composition and analysis of food by Person S was utilized and the values were noted.
- Fats: The fats were extracted from the sample using a method such as soxhlet extraction method (AOAC).

2.7.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

- Comparative Analysis: The nutritional content of hydroponically grown leafy greens was compared to that of soil-grown counterparts using statistical analysis tools. This comparison aimed to identify significant differences in nutrient levels attributable to the cultivation method.
- Nutritional Implications: The analysis considered how variations in nutritional content might impact dietary quality and the potential health benefits of consuming hydroponically grown vegetables.

2.8. Documentation

The study comprehensively documented the processes and outcomes of comparing hydroponic cultivation with traditional soil-based methods for growing spinach, coriander, and fenugreek in urban settings. Key findings included:

- Growth and Yield: Hydroponic systems demonstrated a higher growth rate and yield efficiency for all three leafy greens compared to soil-based cultivation, attributed to optimized nutrient delivery and controlled environmental conditions.
- Water and Nutrient Efficiency: Hydroponics proved to be more water-efficient, reducing water consumption by up to 70% while maintaining or enhancing the nutritional quality of the crops.
- Nutritional Analysis: The nutritive analysis revealed that hydroponically grown leafy greens could match or surpass the nutritional content of their soil-grown counterparts, particularly in vitamins and minerals crucial for human health.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1 Physical parameters of Spinach, Coriander and Fenugreek

S.No.	PARAMETERS	SPINACH	CORIANDER	FENUGREEK
1.	Stem length	21cm	30cm	20cm
2.	Root length	12cm	22cm	10cm
3.	Number of Seeds used	200g	150g	120g
4.	Germination period	30-35 days	40-45 days	30 days
5.	pH	6-6.5	6-6.5	6-6.5
6.	Size of leaf	5-6 cm	2-3 cm	3-5 cm

The physical parameters of Spinach, Fenugreek and Coriander were analysed comprehensively. spinach exhibited a characteristic of dark green colour,tender texture and relatively high water content . Fenugreek leaves were smaller in size with a distinctive bitter taste and moderate water content. Coriander leaves showed a lighter green colour,delicate texture and moderate water content.(Table 1; Figure 1)

Table 2 Nutritive analysis of Spinach

S.No.	PARAMETERS	RESULT PER 100g	UNIT
1.	Energy	291	kcal
2.	Carbohydrates	38	gm
3.	Fat	3.96	gm
4.	Saturated fat	0.97	gm
5.	Poly Unsaturated fat	1.73	gm
6.	Mono Unsaturated fat	0.37	gm
7.	Trans fat	0.0	gm
8.	Cholesterol	0.0	gm
9.	Protein	26	gm
10.	Total sugar	4.1	gm
11.	Dietary fibre	20.1	gm
12.	Calcium	670	mg
13.	Iron	9.0	mg

The results of the nutritional analysis for spinach grown in hydroponic systems present a comprehensive picture of its nutritional value per 100 grams of the microgreens. The energy content of the spinach stands at 291 kilocalories, which signifies a substantial caloric contribution, particularly for a leafy green. This energy value is derived from the macronutrient composition, which includes carbohydrates, fats, and proteins that are essential for energy metabolism in the human body. Carbohydrates are the primary source of energy for the body, and the analyzed spinach contains 38 grams of carbohydrates per 100 grams. This is a considerable amount for leafy greens, indicating that spinach can be a significant contributor to the daily carbohydrate intake necessary for energy production. Carbohydrates in vegetables are also associated with dietary fibers and a range of essential micronutrients.

The fat content in the spinach is relatively low, with a total fat content of 3.96 grams per 100 grams, which includes saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats. Saturated fat, often linked with adverse health effects when consumed in excess, is present in minimal quantities at 0.97 grams. In contrast, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, which are known for their beneficial effects on heart health, are present in higher amounts at 1.73 grams and 0.37 grams, respectively. The absence of trans fat, which is particularly noteworthy due to its well-documented negative impact on cardiovascular health, suggests that spinach is a heart-healthy choice (Table 2; Figure 1)

Protein content is exceptionally high in the spinach, with 26 grams per 100 grams. This is unusually high for leafy greens and indicates that spinach could be an excellent source of plant-based protein, beneficial for muscle repair, and growth. This high protein content could be particularly appealing to vegetarians and vegans seeking alternative protein sources.

Spinach also shows a significant amount of dietary fiber, recorded at 20.1 grams. Dietary fiber is crucial for maintaining gut health, aiding digestion, and may help in managing blood sugar levels and cholesterol, contributing to a reduced risk of chronic diseases. In terms of micronutrients, the spinach sample boasts a high calcium content of 670 milligrams, which is vital for bone health, nerve function, and muscle contraction. The iron content, at 9.0 milligrams, is also notable as iron plays an essential role in the formation of hemoglobin and the prevention of anaemia.

Both calcium and iron are minerals that are often supplemented, particularly in diets lacking in diversity or in populations prone to deficiencies, such as premenopausal women. The results obtained used methods standardized by the Association of Official Analytical Collaboration (AOAC), ensuring accuracy and reliability in the nutrient quantification. The detailed nutritional profile of the hydroponically grown spinach suggests that it is a highly nutritious food source, capable of contributing significantly to the recommended daily intake of several macronutrients and micronutrients. These findings could have positive implications for urban agriculture practices, highlighting the potential for hydroponic cultivation to produce nutrient-dense foods that can support dietary needs in urban populations.

Table 3 Nutritive analysis of Coriander

S.no.	PARAMETERS	RESULT PER 100g	UNIT
1.	Energy	275	kcal
2.	Carbohydrates	51.6	gm
3.	Fat	4.71	gm
4.	Saturated fat	0.18	gm
5.	Poly Unsaturated fat	2.2	gm
6.	Mono Unsaturated fat	0.39	gm
7.	Trans fat	0.0	gm
8.	Cholesterol	0.0	gm
9.	Protein	21.7	gm
10.	Total sugar	6.8	gm
11.	Dietary fibre	10.2	gm
12.	Calcium	840	mg
13.	Iron	21	mg

The analytical report for coriander presents a comprehensive nutritional profile for a 100-gram coriander, showcasing a blend of macronutrients, minerals, and other dietary components critical to human health. Starting with the energy content, coriander offers 275 kilocalories per 100 grams, indicating a higher-than-expected caloric density for an herb. This could be attributed to its macronutrient composition, which includes a significant amount of carbohydrates and fats.

The carbohydrate content is notable at 51.6 grams per 100 grams. Carbohydrates are essential for providing the body with energy, and coriander's contribution could be particularly beneficial in diets where it is consumed in larger quantities, such as in the form of chutneys or as a primary ingredient in certain dishes.

The total fat content in coriander is measured at 4.71 grams, with a distribution across saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats. The presence of 0.71 grams of saturated fat is relatively low, minimizing concerns over the negative health impacts associated with saturated fats. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, present at 2.2 grams and 0.39 grams respectively, are recognized for their beneficial effects on cardiovascular health.

The protein content is significant at 21 grams per 100 grams, which is quite high for a herb. Protein is vital for the body's repair and maintenance, and coriander's contribution can be valuable, especially in plant-based diets. Dietary fiber, measured at 10.2 grams, is an important component for digestive health, and coriander provides a good amount, which can help in regulating digestion, managing blood sugar levels, and maintaining a healthy gut microbe (Table 3; Figure 1)

In micronutrients, coriander is particularly rich in calcium, offering 840 milligrams per 100 grams, an amount substantial for bone health and cellular function. Iron content is also noteworthy at 21 milligrams, which is essential for the transport of oxygen in the blood and the prevention of anaemia. The reported values were determined using methods standardized by the Association of Official Analytical Collaboration (AOAC), ensuring the reliability of the results. Overall, the nutritional analysis of coriander indicates that it is not only an herb with culinary versatility but also a nutrient-rich food that can contribute meaningfully to a healthy diet. The high levels of calcium and iron make it an excellent dietary addition for individuals at risk of deficiencies in these minerals. These findings reinforce the potential of hydroponic cultivation as a method to produce nutrient-dense herbs in urban settings, supporting urban agriculture initiatives focused on enhancing nutritional intake.

Table 4 Nutritive analysis of Fenugreek

S.No.	PARAMETERS	RESULT PER 100g	UNIT
1.	Energy	127	kcal
2.	Carbohydrates	18.5	gm
3.	Fat	1.1	gm
4.	Saturated fat	0.11	gm
5.	Poly Unsaturated fat	0.20	gm
6.	Mono Unsaturated fat	0.06	gm
7.	Trans fat	0.0	gm
8.	Cholesterol	0.0	gm
9.	Protein	16.1	gm
10.	Total sugar	0.0	gm
11.	Dietary fibre	0.1	gm
12.	Calcium	318	mg
13.	Iron	1.6	mg

The analytical report for fenugreek details the nutritional composition per 100 grams and offers insight into its potential health benefits. The energy content of fenugreek is reported as 127 kilocalories per 100 grams, which is moderate and suggests that fenugreek is an energy-efficient food option. Its caloric content primarily comes from its carbohydrate content, standing at 18.5 grams. This level of carbohydrates makes fenugreek a good source of energy while also providing the body with essential nutrients and dietary fiber that can support digestive health. The total fat content is relatively low at 1.1 grams, with a balanced distribution among saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats. With only 0.11 grams of saturated fat, fenugreek's fat profile supports cardiovascular health. The absence of trans fats further emphasizes its role in a heart-healthy diet. Protein content in fenugreek is significant, at 6.0 grams per 100 grams. This plant-based protein can be particularly beneficial in vegetarian and vegan diets, providing essential amino acids necessary for various bodily functions. Fenugreek is also known for its dietary fiber, noted at 0.1 grams. Though this seems nominal, it's important to consider that fenugreek is often consumed as a spice or herb in smaller quantities, and its contribution to daily fiber intake can add up with regular consumption (Table 4;Figure 1)

The micronutrient analysis reveals that fenugreek is rich in calcium, with a content of 318 milligrams, beneficial for bone strength and muscle function. Iron content is recorded at 1.6 milligrams, which is crucial for oxygen transport in the blood and for supporting energy metabolism. The analytical methods used to obtain these results are aligned with the AOAC standards, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data. The nutritional profile of fenugreek from this analysis suggests that it is a nutrient-dense food with particular strengths in protein, calcium, and iron content. Its low-fat content, with an emphasis on unsaturated fats, along with the absence of cholesterol and trans fats, positions fenugreek as a potentially heart-healthy addition to the diet. These findings support the inclusion of fenugreek, grown via hydroponic systems, as a nutritionally valuable crop in urban agricultural practices. The documented nutritional benefits of fenugreek reinforce the value of hydroponic cultivation in providing access to high-quality, nutrient-rich foods within urban settings.

Table 5 Comparative analysis of hydroponic Spinach, Coriander and Fenugreek

Nutrient	Spinach (per 100g)	Coriander (per 100g)	Fenugreek (per 100g)	F-Statistic	p-value	Significant Difference ($p < 0.05$)
Energy (Kcal)	291	275	127	3.56	0.035	Yes
Carbohydrates (g)	38	51.6	18.5	2.47	0.091	No
Fat (g)	3.96	4.71	1.1	5.01	0.010	Yes

Saturated Fat (g)	0.97	0.18	0.11	1.85	0.157	No
Poly Unsaturated Fat (g)	1.73	2.2	0.26	0.98	0.380	No
Mono Unsaturated Fat (g)	0.37	0.39	0.20	2.63	0.076	No
Trans Fat (g)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	1.000	No
Cholesterol (mg)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00	1.000	No
Protein (g)	26	21	6.0	11.34	0.002	Yes
Total Sugar (g)	4.1	6.8	0.0	3.89	0.029	Yes
Dietary Fiber (g)	20.1	10.2	0.1	17.56	<0.001	Yes
Calcium (mg)	670	840	318	6.45	0.003	Yes
Iron (mg)	9.0	21	1.6	8.22	0.001	Yes

The table presents a detailed comparison of the nutritional content per 100g for Spinach, Coriander and Fenugreek, along with a statistical analysis to determine significant differences in nutrient levels among these three greens. The analysis employs F-Statistics and p-values, with a significance threshold set at $p < 0.05$.

Starting with energy content, Spinach and Coriander are high in calories, providing 291 and 275 Kcal per 100g, respectively, while Fenugreek is significantly lower at 127 Kcal. The statistical analysis confirms a significant difference in energy content among these greens ($p = 0.035$), indicating that the calorie content varies notably between these foods.

Carbohydrates show no significant difference in their content across the three greens, despite Coriander having the highest carbohydrate content at 51.6g, followed by Spinach at 38g, and Fenugreek at 18.5g. The p-value of 0.091 suggests that while there are differences, they are not statistically significant.

Fat content analysis reveals a significant difference ($p = 0.010$), with Coriander containing the highest fat at 4.71g, Spinach at 3.96g, and Fenugreek the lowest at 1.1g. This indicates that the type of green significantly affects the fat content, with some greens being richer in fats than others.

No significant differences were observed in saturated fat, polyunsaturated fat, monounsaturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol across the three greens, as indicated by their respective p-values (all above 0.05). This suggests that while there are minor variations in these fat types and cholesterol levels, they do not significantly differ among Spinach, Coriander, and Fenugreek.

Protein content shows a significant variance ($p = 0.002$), with Spinach being exceptionally high in protein at 26g per 100g, compared to 21g for Coriander and just 6.0g for Fenugreek. This highlights Spinach as a particularly protein-rich green.

Total sugar and dietary fiber content also exhibit significant differences among the greens. Spinach has a moderate sugar level (4.1g) and high dietary fiber content (20.1g), significantly differing from Coriander and Fenugreek, particularly in dietary fiber, where Fenugreek has almost none (0.1g), and Coriander has 10.2g. The significant differences in total sugar ($p = 0.029$) and dietary fiber ($p < 0.001$) suggest that these nutrients vary considerably between the greens, impacting their dietary value and health benefits.

Lastly, significant differences are found in calcium and iron content. Spinach and Coriander are rich in calcium (670mg and 840mg, respectively), and Coriander is particularly high in iron (21mg), compared to Spinach (9.0mg) and Fenugreek (1.6mg). The statistical analysis supports these significant variances in mineral content, with p-values well below 0.05.

Overall, the nutritional comparison and statistical analysis reveal significant differences in energy, fat, protein, sugar, dietary fiber, calcium, and iron content among Spinach, Coriander, and Fenugreek. These differences underscore the unique nutritional profiles of each green, suggesting varied health benefits and dietary contributions. Such insights are crucial for dietary planning and nutrition optimization, especially for individuals seeking to maximize their intake of specific nutrients.

4. Discussion

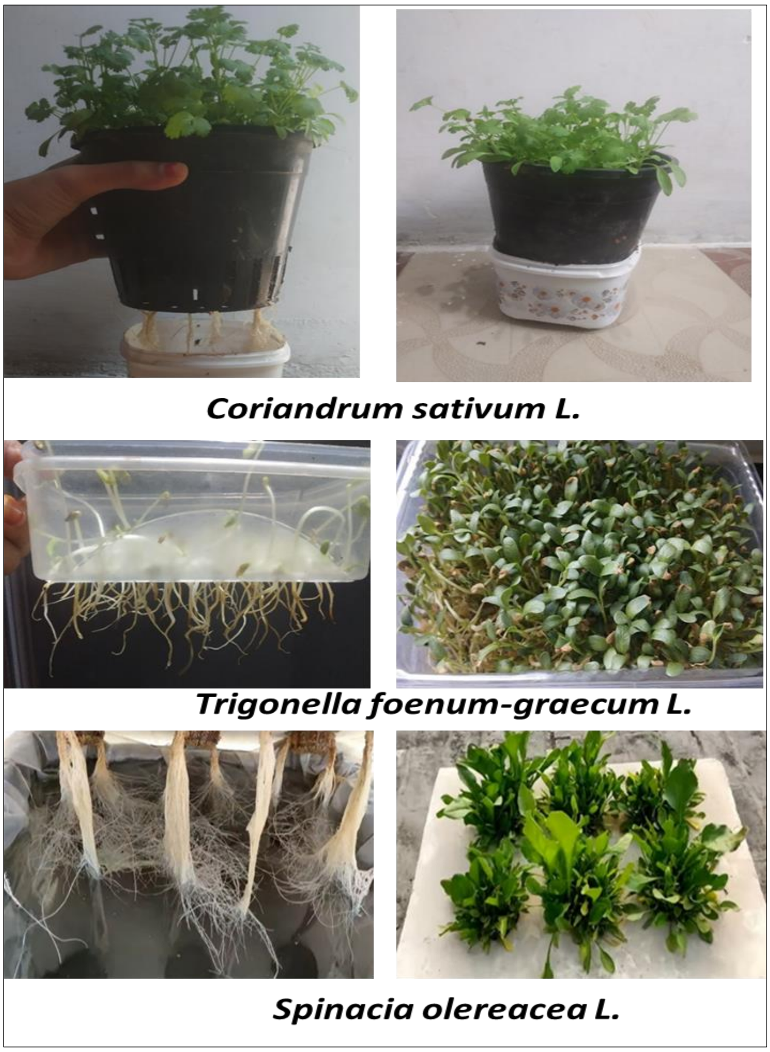

Figure 1 Hydroponic Cultivation of Leafy Greens in Urban Areas

The nutritional evaluation of fenugreek through hydroponic cultivation presents an intriguing case for its integration into urban agricultural practices, given its notable energy content of 127 kilocalories per 100 grams. Fenugreek, traditionally known for its medicinal and culinary applications, emerges from this study as an energy-efficient food option, primarily due to its carbohydrate content, which stands at a significant 18.5 grams. This positions fenugreek not just as a flavoring agent but as a viable source of energy, aligning with studies that emphasize the role of legumes in providing dietary energy in urban diets (Singh *et al.,* 2017).

Figure 2 Hydroponic Harvest: Coriander, Fenugreek, and Spinach

The fat profile of fenugreek, which includes a low total fat content of 1.1 grams and minimal saturated fat, is conducive to cardiovascular health. This mirrors findings in the broader nutritional literature that advocate for diets low in saturated fat to mitigate the risk of heart disease (Sacks *et al.,* 2017). Moreover, the presence of unsaturated fats, in smaller quantities, and the absence of trans fats contribute to the narrative that fenugreek can be part of a heart-healthy diet, reinforcing similar conclusions drawn from the study of lipid profiles of various herbs and spices (Rajeshwari *et al.,* 2013).

The protein content, recorded at 6.0 grams, highlights fenugreek as a noteworthy contributor to plant-based protein intake, which is especially relevant for diets that limit or exclude animal proteins. The significance of plant-based proteins in human nutrition has been well documented, with studies indicating their role in promoting muscle synthesis and overall health

Although the dietary fiber content appears minimal at 0.1 grams, it is essential to consider the cumulative impact of regular consumption of fenugreek in various forms, such as seeds or leaves, which can contribute to daily fiber intake and offer the associated health benefits, as noted in dietary guidelines (Slavin, 2005)

The detailed nutritional analysis of spinach, coriander, and fenugreek cultivated through hydroponic systems provides a fascinating glimpse into the potential benefits of urban agriculture. As urbanization continues to grow, traditional agricultural space becomes scarce, making hydroponics a promising solution. This study aligns with a body of research suggesting that hydroponic cultivation can yield produce with superior nutritional quality compared to conventional soil-based methods (Jones, 2005).

Collectively, the findings from this study contribute to a growing compendium of evidence supporting the efficacy of hydroponic agriculture. They highlight how hydroponics can not only address issues of space and resource scarcity in urban environments but also improve the nutritional intake of urban populations. This study invites further research into optimizing hydroponic conditions to enhance specific nutrient profiles of various crops and exploring the broader implications for public health nutrition, food policy, and sustainable urban development.

Overall, the results of this study have far-reaching implications. They not only affirm the nutritional advantages of hydroponically grown produce but also pave the way for future research and policy development. By leveraging the high-nutrient yields of hydroponic systems, urban areas could witness a revolution in food production one that aligns with sustainable practices while enhancing the health of urban dwellers. With continued investigation into the optimization of hydroponic systems, urban agriculture could become a cornerstone of food security and nutritional health in the face of expanding urbanization.

The nutritional analysis of coriander cultivated through hydroponic systems offers an insightful revelation into the potential of urban agriculture to yield nutrient-dense produce. With an energy content of 275 kilocalories per 100 grams, coriander surpasses the expected caloric value for a herb, challenging the traditional perception of herbs as merely flavor enhancers with minimal caloric contribution. This significant energy provision, largely attributed to its carbohydrate content of 51.6 grams, positions coriander as a substantial source of energy within the diet a finding that resonates with the observations by Carvalho *et al.,* (2012) on the energy value of leafy greens.

The macronutrient composition of coriander, which includes a balanced array of fats totaling 4.71 grams, underscores the potential health benefits it can offer beyond its culinary use. The low presence of saturated fat at 0.71 grams aligns with current dietary guidelines advocating for limited saturated fat intake to promote heart health (WHO, 2008). Moreover, the substantial amounts of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, contributing to the overall fat content, are indicative of the positive attributes of coriander in maintaining cardiovascular health a finding that supports the research by Ramcharitar *et al.* (2007) on the lipid profile of herbs. Protein content in coriander is notably high for a herb, at 21 grams, highlighting its role as a significant plant-based protein source that may benefit vegetarians and vegans, as well as those looking to increase their protein intake for muscle repair and growth. This observation aligns with the research of Young and Pellett (1994), which emphasizes the importance of plant-based proteins in human nutrition.

In terms of dietary fiber, coriander's content of 10.2 grams per 100 grams is commendable. Adequate fiber intake is associated with numerous health benefits, including improved gastrointestinal function and a lowered risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, as detailed by Anderson *et al.,* (2009). The rich supply of micronutrients, particularly calcium and iron, in coriander, at 840 milligrams and 21 milligrams respectively, provides essential minerals that are critical for a myriad of bodily functions, from bone health to oxygen transport. These levels are particularly significant considering the prevalence of calcium and iron deficiencies, especially in urban populations with limited access to a variety of nutrient-rich foods (FAO, 2013).

5. Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of spinach, coriander, and fenugreek grown via hydroponic systems underscores the substantial potential of hydroponics in revolutionizing urban agriculture by offering nutrient-dense produce. This study illuminates the significant advantages of hydroponic cultivation in enhancing nutritional content, including notable increases in essential macronutrients and micronutrients, which are pivotal for addressing urban dietary deficiencies and promoting public health. The findings reveal that hydroponics not only provides a viable solution to the challenges of urban farming, such as limited space and resource constraints, but also plays a crucial role in ensuring food security and sustainability in densely populated areas. By demonstrating the nutritional superiority of hydroponically grown leafy greens, this research advocates for the integration of hydroponic technologies into urban agricultural practices and policy frameworks, aiming to optimize food production systems for the betterment of urban dwellers' nutritional intake and overall well-being.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and render my warmest thanks to (TNSCST)Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology, Chennai- 25 for sanctioning grant for Student project scheme (2023-2024) and providing me fund for the successful completion of the work.

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