



**Nook & Nature**

By Neha Kunal Deshmukh

# FERTILIZER CYCLE & CARE GUIDE

Simple steps for healthy , happy plants



## SHEVANTI

(ANTIRRHINUM)



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## 1. Fertilizer Cycle (Stage-wise)

### Sowing / Planting Stage (Oct–Dec in India)

Soil mix: 40% garden soil + 30% compost + 20% sand + 10% cocopeat.

Sow seeds on the surface (do not bury deeply — they need light to germinate).

Mist gently and cover with a transparent sheet until germination (takes 10–15 days).

Transplant seedlings (2–3 inches tall) into beds or 8–10 inch pots.

At planting → Add vermicompost (100 g per plant) or slow-release NPK 14:14:14 (1 tsp per pot).

### 🌱 Vegetative Growth Stage (2–4 weeks after transplanting)

Feed every 15 days with balanced NPK (19:19:19, 1 g/litre water).

Pinch off the top 1 inch when plants reach 6 inches tall → encourages branching & more blooms.

Keep soil moist but well-drained. Avoid overhead watering to prevent fungal infections.

### 🌸 Budding & Flowering Stage (Dec–March)

Switch to phosphorus & potassium-rich fertilizer (NPK 10:26:26 or 0:52:34, 1.5 g/litre water every 12–15 days).

Add bone meal or banana peel compost monthly → improves flower size and color.

Remove faded spikes (deadheading) → encourages continuous blooming.

For taller varieties → provide light staking or support.

### 🌱 Post-Flowering / End of Season (March–April)

Allow a few flower spikes to dry on the plant → collect seeds for next season.

Remove dry plants and rejuvenate soil with compost.



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## 2. Caring Tips

- ✓ Sunlight – Needs 5–6 hours of direct sunlight daily.
- ✓ Watering – Regular, moderate watering; soil should remain moist but not soggy.
- ✓ Soil – Fertile, well-drained, slightly alkaline (pH 6.5–7.5).
- ✓ Temperature – Ideal range 10°C–25°C; prefers cool weather.
- ✓ Spacing – 8–10 inches between dwarf plants, 12–18 inches for tall ones.
- ✓ Container Growing – Ideal for pots, borders, and balcony gardens.
- ✓ Pests – Watch for aphids, whiteflies, or powdery mildew → neem oil every 10–15 days.

## 3. Pro Hacks

- 🌱 Pinching Trick → Early pinching (after 5–6 leaves) → doubles flower spikes.
- 🌱 Deadheading Hack → Regularly remove faded blooms → longer flowering season.
- 🌱 Epsom Salt Spray → 1 tsp/litre water every 3–4 weeks → improves color vibrancy.
- 🌱 Mulching Tip → Add dry leaves/cocopeat → keeps soil cool & retains moisture.
- 🌱 Bloom Booster Hack → Add 1 spoon bone meal or banana peel powder per plant every month.

## 4. Blooming Pattern in India 🌻

Season: Winter annual (Nov–April).

Peak Bloom: Jan–March.

Colors: Red, pink, white, yellow, orange, purple, bicolor.

Fragrance: Mild, sweet.

Type: Annual flowering plant; height ranges from 20 cm (dwarf) to 90 cm (tall varieties).

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