

Day 24: ₹2,400 Budget Garden — Every Rupee

thetrendvaultblog.com — Priya Harini B, Madanapalle

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The Rule: On a tight budget, spend on **monitoring first** (pH meter), **growing medium second** (vermicompost + cocopeat), **seeds third** (IARI + kirana). Containers and tools can be sourced cheaply. Never cut the pH meter — it prevents the most expensive invisible failure in container gardening.

THE COMPLETE BUDGET BREAKDOWN — EVERY RUPEE DOCUMENTED

Containers (terracotta)	₹580 (34%)
pH meter (priority 1)	₹340 (20%)
Seeds (IARI + kirana)	₹205 (17%)
DIY soil mix	₹190 (11%)
Pest management	₹260 (15%)
Amendments (neem cake, BM)	₹110 (7%)

Total Spent: ₹1,685

Budget: ₹2,400

Remaining: ₹715 → Season 2 carry-forward

WHERE TO SOURCE EVERYTHING CHEAPER

Item	Nursery Price	Cheaper Source	Price	Saving
Neem cake 500g	₹180	Krishi kendra (agricultural supply)	₹40	₹140 (78%)
Bone meal 1kg	₹180	Krishi kendra	₹70	₹110 (61%)
Cocopeat block 650g	₹120	Krishi kendra / Amazon	₹50	₹70 (58%)
Terracotta 12-inch pot	₹200	Local pottery market	₹75	₹125 (63%)

Coriander/methi seeds 50g	₹60–80 (10g)	Kirana store (loose)	₹20 (50g)	₹~300 per kg
Tomato seeds (Pusa Ruby)	₹80–150	Govt. seed shop (IARI)	₹25/pack	₹55–125

DIY POTTING MIX RECIPE — ₹190 FOR 25 LITRES

40% Cocopeat Resists compaction ₹50	30% Vermicompost Fertility + microbes ₹90	20% Garden Soil Local minerals ₹20	10% Coarse Sand Drainage ₹30
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Drainage test: Fill container, pour 500ml water — should drain freely within 90 seconds. If slow: add 10% more coarse sand. Commercial premium mix equivalent: ₹900–1,500.

THREE BUDGET MISTAKES — NEVER MAKE THESE

#	Wrong Choice	Why It Fails	Right Choice
1	Buy expensive ceramic pots, skip pH meter	pH 7.8 = all fertiliser locked. Looks beautiful, harvests nothing.	Local terracotta + pH meter first
2	Commercial liquid NPK, skip vermicompost	No soil biology, no buffering. pH drift worsens. NPK can't be absorbed.	Vermicompost + kitchen waste fertility
3	Import varieties, skip IARI varieties	Seeds not adapted to Indian heat. Cannot be saved. Expensive annually.	IARI + kirana seeds — save next year's seeds

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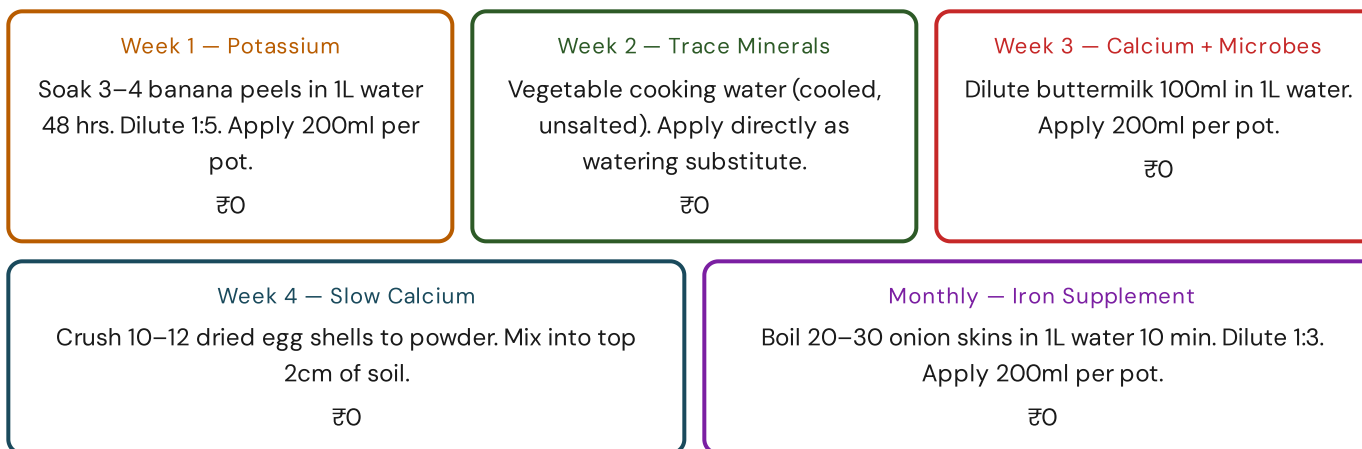
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Day 24: Kitchen Fertility + Harvest Data + ROI

Zero-Cost Feeding • Divya's Records • Season Analysis

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THE ZERO-COST KITCHEN WASTE FERTILITY SYSTEM



Monthly purchased amendment: 50g neem cake + 30g bone meal per 12-inch container, mixed into top 3cm soil.
Total monthly cost: ₹8–12 (from ₹110 pack lasting entire 5-month season).

DIVYA'S HARVEST RECORDS — FEBRUARY TO JUNE 2024, HSR LAYOUT BANGALORE

Month	Crop	Weight	Running Total
March	Methi, coriander, palak (first cuts)	0.9 kg	0.9 kg
April	Tomato first fruits + methi 2nd + coriander 2nd	2.1 kg	3.0 kg
May	Tomato main + ridge gourd + capsicum (post-aphid recovery) + chilli	7.4 kg	10.4 kg
June	Tomato final + bitter gourd + ridge gourd continued	4.2 kg	14.6 kg

Key pattern: 51% of total harvest came in May alone — from seeds sown in February and soil prepared in January. The first 8 weeks of no visible harvest build the season that follows.

ROI ANALYSIS — THREE WAYS TO LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

Season 1	-58% (equipment costs)
Season 2	+95% ROI (₹360 → ₹703)
Season 3+	+250% ROI (saved seeds)

Cost Category	Season 1	Season 2	Season 3+ (saved seeds)
Containers + pH meter (one-time)	₹920	₹0	₹0
Soil mix + amendments	₹300	₹170 (refresh)	₹170
Seeds	₹205	₹60 (not saved)	₹0 (fully saved)
Pest management	₹260	₹130 (proactive)	₹130
Total cost	₹1,685	₹360	₹300
Harvest value	₹703	₹703+	₹703+

Divya Menon — HSR Layout, Bangalore — 3rd Floor East-Facing

BUDGET CONSTRAINT

₹2,400 strict ceiling. Every purchase deliberate. Visited pottery market, krishi kendra, IARI seed shop before buying anything.

KEY DECISIONS

pH meter: refused to skip.
Vermicompost: before any liquid fertiliser. Kirana seeds: identical germination. Kitchen waste fertility: ₹0/month ongoing.

SEASON RESULT

14.6 kg harvest. ₹1,685 actual spend. ₹715 carried to Season 2. Season 2 ROI projected: +95%.

"I'm measuring the money. But I'm not measuring the fact that my daughter now knows where methi comes from."

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Day 24: 47-Item Sunday Check + Seed Saving

Products • Bangalore City Advantage • Season 2 Planning

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BANGALORE VS OTHER CITIES — WHY THE BUDGET WORKS HERE

City	Tap TDS	May Peak Temp	pH Drift Rate	Budget Difficulty
Bangalore	180–260 ppm	30–35°C	Slow	LOW — best for budget
Mumbai	340–420 ppm	35–40°C	Moderate	MEDIUM — add hygrometer
Chennai	280–380 ppm	36–41°C	Moderate	MEDIUM
Hyderabad	300–420 ppm	38–43°C	Moderate	MEDIUM–HIGH
Delhi	420–680 ppm	44–48°C	Fast	HIGH — add ₹900 to budget

SEED SAVING GUIDE — SEASON 2 SEEDS AT ₹0

Crop	When to Save	Method	Saved Season 2?
Pusa Ruby Tomato	Allow 2–3 fruits to fully ripen	Scoop seeds, dry on paper 2 weeks, store in envelope	✓ Yes — ₹25 saved
Methi	Allow pods to dry on plant	Collect pods, thresh, dry in shade 1 week	✓ Yes — ₹15 saved
Coriander	Allow umbel to turn brown	Collect seeds when half-dried, dry fully in shade	✓ Yes — ₹20 saved
Green chilli	Allow 2–3 fruits to turn full red	Extract seeds, dry in shade 10 days	✓ Yes — ₹15 saved
Ridge gourd (F1 hybrid)	Cannot save	Buy new seeds each season	✗ Buy fresh — ₹25

THE 47-ITEM SUNDAY CHECK — DAY 24 COMPLETE LIST

- Soil moisture finger test 5cm
- White crust on soil surface
- Pot lift test — heavy = waterlogged
- Wilting pattern AM vs all-day
- Growing tips — sticky or distorted
- Fruit surface at 1 PM (sunscald)
- Stem lean $>10^\circ$ = stake today
- Flower drop count windy days
- Shade cloth angle + condition
- Paw print inspection
- Fridge temp (veg drawer $>10^\circ\text{C}$)
- Leaf underside edema check
- Drainage speed test (monthly)
- Underleaf pest inspection
- pH check monthly (6.2–6.8)
- Succession sowing reminder
- New growth colour — pale = pH
- Pot wall temp (west/south-facing)
- Wind flower drop count (confirm)
- Paw print monitoring
- Harvest surplus process check
- Cost-harvest log update
- PM2.5 leaf wash (Delhi/monthly)
- Drainage hole — free flow
- Soil smell — earthy ok
- Pot surface temp at 2 PM
- Leaf undersides — tap test paper
- White powder check (PM)
- Leaf cover over fruit clusters
- Wind ribbon check
- Fruit set — alert if $<30\%$
- Skewer grid on bare soil
- Flower drop change after fix
- Harvest surplus >3 days
- Watering time — before 9 AM
- Root inspection (monthly)
- Sticky trap count weekly
- Herb bolt check — stalk height
- Flower drop vs wind correlation
- White paper tap test (spider mites)
- Stem lean + stakes secure
- Skewer grid incl. harvested pots
- Fridge + storage audit
- Multi-problem cross-check monthly
- Loo wind alert check (Delhi/North)

- Budget-harvest log review (monthly): Compare total input costs against total harvest market value. If negative after month 3, identify highest-cost input and assess whether it delivers proportional benefit NEW — Day 24
- Seed saving check: During harvest, identify 1–2 best plants of open-pollinated varieties (IARI, desi, kirana). Allow 2–3 fruits to fully ripen to seed stage. Dry 2 weeks in shade. Store in paper envelope. Next season: ₹0 NEW — Day 24

47 checks. Under 52 minutes. Once a week.

“The knowledge matters more than the budget. The pH meter is never the cut.”

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