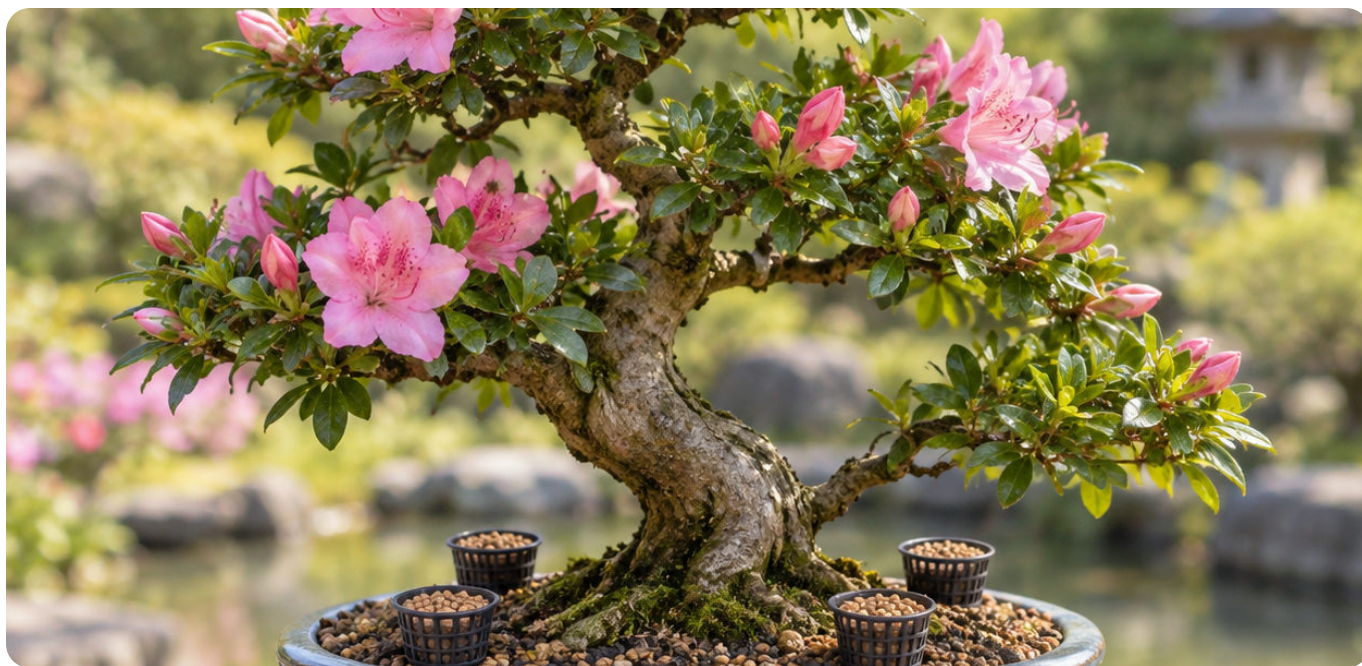


How to Fertilize Flowering Bonsai

A beginner guide to healthy growth buds and better bloom preparation



A flowering bonsai needs more than a fertilizer with a large middle number. It needs the correct light, season, pruning, water, health, and species-specific bloom cycle. Fertilizer supports that system; it cannot replace any of those conditions.

The beginner program uses Hanasaku as the primary fertilizer and MicroTotal as an occasional supplement. Before setting the schedule, determine whether the flowering tree is tropical or cold-hardy.

Flowering overlaps the other tree types

Flowering describes what the tree does, not the climate it lives in. Bougainvillea and some other flowering bonsai are tropical. Azalea, wisteria, flowering quince, crabapple, and cherry are generally cold-hardy. That distinction matters because the two groups do not share the same winter schedule.

TROPICAL

Tropical flowering bonsai may continue to grow indoors when warmth and strong light are available. Feed only while active growth continues.

COLD-HARDY

Cold-hardy flowering bonsai follow an outdoor seasonal cycle. Feed during active growth and stop as dormancy approaches.

Two questions guide the feeding plan

Tree type controls the season. Flowering controls the fertilizer choice.

QUESTION ONE

Is it tropical or cold-hardy?

Tropical

Feed only while healthy growth continues

Cold-hardy

Feed in season and stop for dormancy



QUESTION TWO

Is flowering the main goal?

Use Hanasaku as the primary fertilizer

Add MicroTotal every 6-8 weeks while the tree is actively growing

A flowering bonsai still needs the correct light, season, watering, and pruning.

THE FLOWERING BONSAI FEEDING PATH

Use Hanasaku as the primary fertilizer

Hanasaku is a Japanese organic pellet fertilizer with an analysis of 1.5-9-4.5. Its lower nitrogen relative to phosphorus and potassium makes it appropriate for a bloom-focused program that does not aim to push aggressive leafy growth.

- 1 Confirm that the tree is healthy and actively growing.
- 2 Use approximately 5 pellets for every 5 inches of pot width.
- 3 Distribute the pellets across the soil or divide the measured amount among fertilizer cups.
- 4 Water normally so water reaches the pellets.

- 5** Follow the current package directions for reapplication. The current Bonsai Outlet guidance calls for applying Hanasaku every 3 to 4 weeks during the growing season.

THE CUPS ARE NOT THE DOSE

The four cups included with the Flowering Bonsai Feeding Made Simple Bundle keep pellets contained, but the cups are not the dose. Count the pellets by pot width first. A small pot may use fewer than four cups.

Count pellets by pot width

Use about five pellets for every five inches of pot width

5 inch pot

About 5 pellets



10 inch pot

About 10 pellets



15 inch pot

About 15 pellets



Place pellets on the soil or divide them among fertilizer cups

Water normally and follow the current package directions for reapplication

HANASAKU PELLET AMOUNTS BY POT WIDTH

Add MicroTotal on its own schedule

MicroTotal is a 5-0-0 liquid supplement containing nitrogen and supporting nutrients including iron, magnesium, sulfur, manganese, copper, zinc, and boron. It supplies no phosphorus or potassium, so it complements rather than replaces Hanasaku.

WHERE THE TREE IS GROWING	MICROTOTAL MIXING RATE	TIMING
Indoor tropical flowering bonsai	1 tablespoon per gallon of water	Every 6 to 8 weeks during active growth
Outdoor tropical flowering bonsai	2 tablespoons per gallon of water	Every 6 to 8 weeks during active growth
Outdoor cold-hardy flowering bonsai	2 tablespoons per gallon of water	Every 6 to 8 weeks during active growth and not during dormancy

Use only enough mixed solution to water the pot normally. Apply MicroTotal on a different day from placing or refreshing Hanasaku pellets.

Feed through the bloom cycle

STAGE 1

Before buds are visible

Build health during the species' normal active season. Use Hanasaku consistently rather than waiting until flowers are already open. A spring-blooming cold-hardy tree may have formed its flower buds during the previous growing season, so late fertilizer cannot replace lost buds.

STAGE 2

When buds and flowers appear

Keep watering consistent and avoid unnecessary stress. Continue the product schedule if the tree remains active, but do not increase the dose to chase a larger display. Heavy root work, severe pruning, or repeated drying can shorten or disrupt flowering.

STAGE 3

After flowering

Remove spent flowers when appropriate for the species and continue feeding while healthy growth continues. Check the species care sheet before pruning. Many spring-flowering woody plants set the next flower buds on growth made after the current bloom, so pruning at the wrong time can remove next year's display.

STAGE 4

During rest or dormancy

Pause fertilizer when a tropical stops growing in weak winter light. Stop feeding a cold-hardy flowering bonsai as it enters dormancy. A fertilizer designed for flowers is still fertilizer; it is not needed by an inactive tree.

Why a flowering bonsai may not bloom

Poor flowering is often blamed on fertilizer because fertilizer is easy to change. In practice, several other conditions may control whether buds form and survive.

LIGHT

Too little light can prevent the tree from storing enough energy and forming buds.

PRUNING

Pruning at the wrong time can remove flower buds before they open.

SEASON

Some species need a normal winter rest, temperature cycle, or species-specific trigger.

AGE AND HEALTH

A young, recently repotted, or stressed tree may direct its resources to establishment instead of flowers.

WATER

Repeated drying, waterlogged roots, or a sudden change in moisture can interrupt buds and flowers.

NUTRITION

Too much nitrogen can favor leafy growth, but adding excessive phosphorus does not guarantee more flowers.

SIX REASONS A BONSAI MAY NOT FLOWER

Hanasaku and other fertilizers

If flowering is the main goal, use Hanasaku as the primary fertilizer. Do not place Hanasaku, BioGold, and Bonsai Thrive on the same tree simply because all are available. They are different primary programs.

Uncle Bill's 3-3-3 can maintain a healthy flowering bonsai when you prefer a balanced liquid routine, especially when flowers are not the immediate goal. Bonsai Thrive is better suited to tropical growth and development than to a bloom-focused program.

Uncle Bill's 0-10-10 is not the same as Hanasaku. It contains no nitrogen and is not a complete primary fertilizer. Do not use it as a general bloom booster or as a reason to fertilize a dormant tree.

Common flowering questions

Should I fertilize while the tree is in full bloom?

If the tree is healthy and actively growing, continue the established program at the normal rate. Do not increase fertilizer during bloom. Stable watering and light are more important than a last-minute dose.

Can I make a bonsai flower by adding more phosphorus?

No fertilizer can guarantee flowers. Plants need phosphorus, but research does not support the idea that increasingly high phosphorus automatically produces more blooms. Confirm light, pruning, species, health, and season first.

Should a flowering tropical be fed in winter?

Only if it remains warm, receives strong light, and continues healthy growth. If growth slows or stops, pause fertilizer until it resumes.

Should a flowering azalea be fed in winter?

A cold-hardy azalea follows an outdoor seasonal cycle and should not receive routine fertilizer during dormancy. Use the cold-hardy guide for timing.

Can MicroTotal replace Hanasaku?

No. MicroTotal contains no phosphorus or potassium. It provides supporting nutrients and should be used with an appropriate primary fertilizer.

Can I fertilize after repotting?

Wait until the tree has recovered and resumed healthy growth. Flowering may be reduced after major root work because recovery takes priority.

Flowering feeding checklist

- ☐ I know whether the flowering tree is tropical or cold-hardy.
- ☐ The tree is healthy and in its active growing period.
- ☐ The tree receives the light and seasonal conditions required by its species.
- ☐ I know whether recent pruning may have removed flower buds.
- ☐ I measured Hanasaku by pot width before dividing pellets among cups.
- ☐ I scheduled MicroTotal separately for 6 to 8 weeks later.
- ☐ I will not increase fertilizer to force flowers or feed during dormancy.

Continue with the right guide

How to Fertilize a Bonsai Tree

Start here for fertilizer basics and product selection.

How to Fertilize Tropical Bonsai

Use this for ficus, dwarf jade, schefflera, Fukien tea, and other tropical bonsai.

How to Fertilize Cold Hardy Bonsai

Use this for outdoor deciduous trees and conifers that follow a seasonal dormancy cycle.

PRODUCTS MENTIONED IN THIS GUIDE

[Hanasaku](#)

[MicroTotal](#)

[Uncle Bill's Liquid Bonsai Brew 3-3-3](#)

[Bonsai Thrive 180](#)

[Uncle Bill's 0-10-10](#)

**SHOP ALL BONSAI OUTLET
FERTILIZERS AND FEEDING
BUNDLES**