

Chapter 9. Hair Masks & Conditioners (Hibiscus, Fenugreek, Curry Leaves)

1 | Why Post-Wash Masks Matter in Ayurveda?

- **Śleṣaka Kapha** in scalp secretes natural sebum; frequent shampoo—herbal or otherwise—can disturb its balance, especially in Vāta or Pitta seasons.
- A mask (*keśa lepa*) **re-fattens the cuticle, cools or warms per doṣa, and seals moisture for 48-72 h.**
- The mucilage of hibiscus & fenugreek plus pitta-cool curry-leaf phyto-pigments create a slip and glossy finish without silicones.

2 | Ingredient Highlights

Herb (part)	Sanskrit / Latin	Key Phytochemicals	Guṇa · Vīrya	Primary Hair Actions
Hibiscus petal	<i>Japa / Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Anthocyanins, plant mucilage	Madhura · Śīta	Slip, pH 4 shine, cuticle smoothing
Fenugreek seed	<i>Methi / Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Trigonelline, galactomannan	Kaṣāya · Uṣṇa	Plant protein, binds keratin, anti-break
Curry leaf	<i>Kadipatra / Murraya koenigii</i>	Carbazole alkaloids, β-caryophyllene	Kaṭu · Uṣṇa	Melanin support, DHT modulation, scalp tone

3 | Formulation Blueprints (Single-Use Mask ≈ Shoulder-length hair)

Rule-of-Thumb Ratios

Mucilage/conditioner 60 % | Actives 25 % | Boosters 15 %

3.1 Hibiscus-Rose Shine Mask (Universal, colour-safe)

Ingredient	Qty
Fresh hibiscus petals* or ultra-fine dry powder	6 Tbsp
Rose petal powder	2 Tbsp
Aloe-vera gel (pure)	3 Tbsp
Honey	1 Tbsp
Activator → cooled green-tea infusion	q.s. to make creamy paste

If fresh: grind petals to pulp; retain natural acids = pH ≈ 4.2.

Application - After shampoo, squeeze water, apply roots→tips, cover cap 15 min, lukewarm rinse.

Benefits - Immediate glossy glaze, floral fragrance; pH seals cuticle.

3.2 Fenugreek Protein-Boost Mask (Dry / Breakage / Vāta)

Ingredient	Qty
Fenugreek seeds soaked o/n + ground	4 Tbsp paste
Banana pulp (ripe)	2 Tbsp
Almond milk	3 Tbsp
Bala-Ashwagandha taila	1 tsp
Few drops lavender hydrosol	q.s. consistency



Application – Damp hair, coat mid-lengths & ends; 20 min under warm towel; rinse thoroughly.

Benefits – Galactomannan coats shaft → tensile strength ↑; banana K⁺ smooths frizz.

3.3 Curry-Leaf Melanin Mask (Oily / Early Greying / Kapha-Pitta)

Ingredient	Qty
Fresh curry leaves blended with yogurt	5 Tbsp
Amla powder	1 Tbsp
Neelibhringādi taila	1 tsp
Rice starch	1 tsp (thickener)

Application – Massage at roots, pull through; wrap with shower cap 25 min; cool rinse; follow with 2-drop Neelibhringādi leave-on.

Benefits – Copper & carbazoles nurture melanocytes; yogurt lactic acid deodorises scalp.

4 | Customising per Doṣa & Season

Doṣa / Climate	Modify Like This	Frequency
Vāta (winter, dry)	Add 1 tsp sesame oil or ½ ripe avocado to any mask	2×/week
Pitta (summer, hot)	Swap yogurt for coconut milk; add 1 tsp vetiver powder	1-2×/week
Kapha (humid/oily)	Replace banana/avocado with 1 Tbsp rice-flour; add 3 drops lemon	Alt-days if acneic scalp

5 | Application Protocol (Client Handout)

- Pre-Oil** (optional for Vāta-dry) – light head massage 30 min prior.
- Cleanse** – herbal powder wash; squeeze out excess water.
- Section Hair** – 4 quadrants; apply mask with brush or fingers root→tip.
- Occlude** – shower cap + warm towel (not for Pitta summer).
- Rinse** – lukewarm; no shampoo unless very oily.
- Final Rinse** – 500 ml water + 1 Tbsp apple-cider vinegar for Kapha / Pitta.
- Dry** – air-dry; avoid heat tools 12 h.

6 | Stability & Retail Tips

- **Powder mixes** (hibiscus, fenugreek) < 5 % moisture; 9-month shelf; include silica desiccant.
- **Fresh leaf masks** must be used immediately; supply pre-blended curry leaf freeze-dry powder for DIY activation.
- **Label:** “No preservatives—mix fresh, discard leftovers.”
- For spa / clinic: batch-prepare, freeze in ice-cube trays, thaw as needed (quality stable 4 weeks).

7 | Common Troubleshooting

Issue	Likely Cause	Remedy
Excess slip / hard to rinse	Too much aloe or mucilage	Add rice flour or rinse with diluted shampoo
Flaky residue post-dry	Coarse powders not ultra-fine	Sift 120-mesh; institute vinegar rinse



Issue	Likely Cause	Remedy
Curry-leaf mask staining highlights	Over-fermented yogurt acidity	Shorten leave-time to 15 min, use coconut milk base

Key Take-Aways

1. **Hibiscus = acidic shine, Fenugreek = protein & slip, Curry leaf = pigment vitality**—rotate per need.
2. The **base liquid** (yogurt, coconut milk, herbal tea) steers doṣa-specific cooling/heating.
3. **Powder-plus-activator model** avoids preservatives and maximises phyto-potency.
4. Masks work best **post-herbal shampoo and pre-leave-on serum** (see Chap 7).
5. Always rinse lukewarm, air-dry and seal ends with 2 drops of growth oil.

Laboratory mantra: “Cleanse with nature’s soap, feed with nature’s mucilage, seal with nature’s oil—hair answers in its own sheen.”

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