Should I cite the software?

You are writing up your research and wonder if you should cite a particular software package that you used.

I don't know?

Does the software ask you to cite it?

Yes

Cite!

If you use a piece of software in your research and the software/the authors request citation then you should cite it.

No

Did the software play a critical part in, or contributed something unique to, your research?

Yes

Cite!

Other researchers need to know how you arrived at your results. Knowing what tools you used is key.

No

Did the software manipulate or create your data, software or other outputs?

Yes

Cite!

Other researchers need to know how you handled data, developed or extended software and even generated figures.

No

Do the authors of the software rely on academic credit for funding?

Yes

Cite!

Many academics spend long hours developing software. If not credited they will struggle to show the impact of their work and obtain further funding for their research and improving the software you are using.

No

Don't cite!