



## *Pomegranate*

The pomegranate is a beautiful landscape tree that produces delicious and unique fruits. The fruits are known for being rich in antioxidants, vitamins, potassium, folic acid, and iron.

Pomegranates grow to 12 to 20 feet tall into a fountain-shaped, multi-trunked shrub or tree. They are one of the easiest fruit trees to grow in our area, and they are *self-fertile*. Pomegranate trees can survive drought conditions, but fruit quality and quantity decline without sufficient irrigation. Adequate soil moisture is necessary during tree establishment, and should be maintained at the same rate, especially close to harvest, to minimize fruit splitting<sup>1</sup>.

Choose a location in full sun. Pomegranates vary in susceptibility to freeze damage. Mature trees have survived temperatures as low as 10°, but suffered a lost season of fruiting. To protect the tree, select a spot protected from northern winter winds. The pomegranate does best in well-drained ordinary soil, but also thrives on calcareous or acidic loam as well as rock strewn gravel.<sup>2</sup> Add **compost** if necessary to ensure your growing location provides the required drainage. Along with compost or soil, you can mix in a **mineral supplement**. Water thoroughly and deeply. Follow with a drench of a **mycorrhizae inoculant** to introduce beneficial bacteria and fungi, which has been shown to promote healthy growth and improved yield.<sup>3</sup> Water regularly, keeping the soil moist but not soggy. During the growing season, water at least once a week, depending on weather and soil type. Fertilize spring and fall using an **organic high nitrogen fertilizer**.

Allow the pomegranate to grow naturally as a multi-trunked shrub. Annual pruning of bearing pomegranates is not really necessary--but dead or damaged portions should be removed as time permits, and some thinning of suckers or branches may be necessary from time to time<sup>4</sup>. Heavy pruning reduces fruit production. While it is possible to trim a pomegranate to a single-trunk tree form, the plant will sucker frequently and require constant maintenance. It is easier on the tree (and you) to keep it in multi-trunk form.

Pomegranates vary in the time it takes them to reach maturity, but your patience will be rewarded. Young trees are likely to drop fruit during their early years; this is normal, but disappointing behavior. In spring, pomegranates produce vibrant red or red-orange flowers. The fruit ripens in the fall, and must ripen fully on the tree. Harvest by cutting off the fruit to prevent damage. The pulp surrounding the seed can be eaten fresh or made into wine, jelly, or juice. The juicy pulp, known as the aril, and the seed are both edible, but the cream- or pink-colored membranes and the skin are not. Pomegranate fruit may be refrigerated for up to two months, or may be stored in a cool, dark place for up to a month.

### **Pomegranate Varieties for Central Texas.**

**Austin** – Orange flower blooms producing a large fruit with pink skin with a red blush. Fruit ripens early October and has a slightly tart, red to dark red aril that is up to 1.5 times juicier than Wonderful. Reaches a mature height of 12-15 feet.

**Garnet Sash** – A large, dark red fruit that is both sweet and tart. A productive tree with fruit ripening in October.

**Granada** – Deep red flower blooms producing a large, dark, red skin fruit. Dark red, juicy arils that are less tart than Wonderful ripens in October. Can reach 18 feet in height.

**Kandahar Early** – A large fruit with bright red skin. The sweet, red arils with slight tartness ripen in October.

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<sup>1</sup> UC Davis Fruit and Nut Research and Information: Pomegranate

<sup>2</sup> California Rare Fruit Growers: Pomegranate

<sup>3</sup> Journal of Applied Horticulture . 2012, Vol. 14 Issue 2, p129-133. 5p.

<sup>4</sup> Texas Citrus and Sub-Tropical Fruits, Home Fruit Production: Pomegranate

**Kashmir Blend** – A medium fruit with light pink-red skin. Fruit ripens in late October to early November. The deep-red arils have intense flavor.

**Parfianka** – A large red skin fruit that ripens in late October. Fruit has red arils and very small seeds with great flavor.

**Pink Satin** – A medium to large fruit ripening in late October. Red to dark red skin with sweet, light pink arils that taste like “fruit punch”. Arils have soft seeds and a non-staining juice.

**Red Silk** – A medium to large fruit ripening in October. Fruit has large, firm seeds with a “sweet berry” taste. A semi-dwarf tree growing to 6 – 7 feet.

**Sharp Velvet** – A large fruit with a dark red skin ripening in November. Dark red arils with a unique, slightly tart flavor. Productive.

**Texas Pink** – A medium-sized pink to red fruit ripening in early October. Light pink seeds taste like “fruit punch.” Juice is light pink and non-staining.

**Wonderful** – An orange-red bloom producing a very large, blushed red skin fruit ripening in September. Rich red, juicy, tart fruit. May reach 18 feet tall. Wonderful is the most popular commercial variety in the U.S. A vigorous and productive variety.