



Urban Harvest  
Gardening for good.

## Pomegranates

Category:	Temperate; deciduous
Hardiness:	Easily withstands freezes
Fruit Family:	Pome fruits
Light:	Full sun
Size:	6' – 15' H x Varies W average, may be pruned to desired HxW
Soil:	Well-drained, will not tolerate standing water
Planting:	Container grown pomegranates may be planted year round

Homegrown pomegranates at their best are light years ahead of those found in supermarkets. The world's best pomegranates are sweet with an alluring tartness. They are packed with antioxidants. The juicy flesh around the seeds is a delight. The seeds are edible and delicious whole, but the fruit can be juiced and the seeds removed through a strainer if you prefer.



### Care of Pomegranate Trees

**Planting:** Plant the tree 6' to 8' from the nearest tree in full sun and in a well-drained location. Dig a hole that is wide and deep enough to easily accommodate the root ball. The sides of the hole should be tapered outward, not straight down (visualize a wok, not a stock pot) with the widest point at the top of the hole. The deepest point of the hole should be no deeper than the existing root ball.

Remove the tree from its container. Trim any roots that appear to be circling the root ball and any broken or clearly dead roots. Place the root ball in the prepared hole. Check for straightness. Backfill ½ of the depth with existing soil – no amendments should be added during planting. Water well and allow it to drain. Fill the remaining ½ of the depth. Tamp the soil, but do not pack hard. Water in well and water every day for a few days unless it rains. A mulch of composted native mulch or rotted leaves is highly recommended. Do not use bark mulch.

**Pruning:** Pomegranates are best grown as a multi-trunked tree. Select no more than 3-5 trunks coming out of the base. These should angle outwards at about 45-60° from the horizontal. Each of these trunks should subdivide into about 3 branches approximately 2-3 ft. from where they emerge at the base. These can again subdivide 2-3 feet further out. Pomegranates sucker at the base profusely –

monitor and remove additional suckers to keep the tree open for sunlight penetration and air flow. Major pruning can be done in the winter during dormancy, but suckers should be removed any time they are observed.

**Production:** Young pomegranates may bloom sporadically for a couple of years before they produce their first real crop of fruits. They may produce one or two fruits at the tips of the branches and they may just drop all of the blooms without producing fruit. This is a sign that they are not yet mature enough to set fruit and is not a reason for concern. It is advisable to remove second year fruits to allow the tree to put its energy into root and canopy development rather than fruit production.

Good-sized fruit is born on short spurs near the tips of 2-3 year old wood. At their best, a bush may be loaded with dozens of fruits. Pomegranates are natives of arid places. They don't pollinate well if we have very wet weather at bloom time. All are self-fruitful.

**Watering:** All fruit trees should get consistent water in the first few years. Watering can come from rain or a hose. During the first year, if the soil under the mulch is dry, provide the tree with about 7 gallons of water per week, preferably once a week. Water slowly. This can be a little more than 3 minutes with a ½" hose and 1 ½ minutes with a 5/8" hose. Remember to account for rainfall when determining how much to water with a hose. Do not overwater pomegranates. Once established, they are very drought tolerant.

**Fertilizing:** We recommend an organic program for fruit trees in the home landscape. For a small number of trees, use a slow release organic fertilizer, available at local independent nurseries. If you have a large number of trees, or a small number of trees and a limited budget, you can use cottonseed meal, available at nurseries and feed stores. Fertilizers should be broadcast under the entire canopy space of the tree. An organic mulch of compost and native mulch, or well-rotted leaves should be maintained at all times as part of your nutrition program.

Slow release organic fertilizer: 1<sup>st</sup> year – ½ cup; 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> years – 3 pounds; subsequent years - 20 to 40 pounds per 1000 square feet. Apply every 3 – 4 months.

Cottonseed meal: 1<sup>st</sup> year – 1.5 cups; 2<sup>nd</sup> year – 3 cups; 3<sup>rd</sup> year – 6 cups; mature trees – 3 to 6 quarts per inch of trunk measured at the base. Apply in February and May.

**Harvesting:** Pomegranates ripen in the fall any time from early August to late September, or even into October. When the fruit has a good color, the blossom end is dry, and it comes off the stem easily, pick off one fruit and open it. If there is fully colorful seeds and juice inside, then it is ripe. If not, wait and check again weekly. If the fruit peel cracks, you waited too long.

**Pests:** Pomegranates are easy to grow in the Houston area with no serious diseases and minimal pests. Wet weather in late summer can hasten interior fruit rot. For home consumption, poor parts of the fruit can often be removed and the rest eaten, but this is one fruit where low rainfall years are a benefit.

**Winter Protection:** The varieties described below need **150-200 chill units** each winter to produce fruit, but have little trouble with late freezes.

## Varieties of Pomegranates for the 2016 Fruit Tree Sale

*Kashmir Blend, Parfianka, Pink Satin, Red Silk, Sharp Velvet, Texas Pink*

### Varieties of Pomegranates for Southeast Texas

**Cloud:** A medium-sized fruit with a green-red color, and juice that is sweet and white and arils that are large and almost clear. One of the better tasting pomegranates but with medium hard seeds. Very productive except in very wet summers. Cloud is a proven and reliable producer on the Gulf Coast.

**Desertnyi:** Desertnyi translates to English as “Dessert” and it is a real dessert treat. The juice has an excellent sweet-tart balance with citrus overtones and a great, firm eating texture with very soft edible seed. The light orange rind contrasted by dark red arils makes for a unique look. Desertnyi has been rated number one in taste tests all over the world, and in the last few years has produced here on the Gulf Coast. We are excited to finally have this variety.

**Garnet Sash:** Vigorous tree sets big crops of large, dark red fruit with deep-red, partially edible sweet-tart seeds. Can be grown as a shrub or tree and kept any height by summer pruning. Eat fresh or use in cooking. Excellent source of antioxidants.

**Kashmir Blend:** Medium size pomegranate with light pink-red exterior. Ruby red seeds have intense flavor with no overbearing acidic taste. Tree has a slightly spreading growth habit and can also be grown as a shrub.

**Parfianka:** A favored selection from a collection of over 1000 Pomegranate varieties. The fruit is quite large and deeply colored in beautiful bright red. The arils are large and bright red with a very small, soft, edible seed. Sweet, with a hint of acidity. Always receives the highest praise for overall flavor. Great for juice or fresh eating. Vigorous upright plant dependably sets a heavy crop, even at a young age. Maintain at any height with summer pruning. Self-fruitful. **100 - 200 chill hours**

**Pink Satin:** Produces medium to large fruit with light pink, edible seeds. The light-colored juice is non-staining! Vigorous growth; can be trained as a shrub or a tree and kept to your preferred height with summer pruning. Self-fruitful. **150 – 200 chill hours**

**Red Silk:** This UC Davis introduction is a heavy bearer of large fruit with red juice and a delicious grenadine flavor. Firm yet edible seeds have a sweet berry flavor and a great acid-sugar balance. Eat fresh or use in cooking. A naturally semi-dwarf variety with a slightly spreading crown that is suitable for containers, hedgerows and patio gardens. Grow as a tree or shrub and keep any height by summer pruning. Self-fruitful. **150 – 200 chill hours**

**Sharp Velvet:** Large-sized pomegranate with a very appealing, unique, refreshing flavor. Fruit has a dark red exterior and dark burgundy seeds; like crushed red velvet. Upright growing tree sets huge crops of highly ornamental fruit and can be kept any height with summer pruning. Eat fresh or use in cooking. An excellent source of antioxidants. Self-fruitful.

**Texas Pink:** Dark green and glossy leaves that make this variety an excellent landscaping tree in addition to producing excellent fruit. It grows best in full sun, adapts well to any soil, and is self-fruitful. The skin of this pomegranate is pink while the arils are ruby red - a beautiful contrast of colors. The fruit can grow up to 4 inches in diameter. This is probably the hardiest pomegranate we offer. It has been selected for production in Central Texas and the High Plains. **200 chill hours**