



RCW NURSERIES

Pomegranates for Houston

Pomegranates originated in hot, dry parts of western and southern Asia. They were brought to the Americas by Spanish missionaries during the sixteenth century. They are well adapted for the Gulf Coast area, if you take the time to properly prepare the planting location. Choose a sunny location, provide good drainage and you're a pomegranate farmer.

Some varieties are suitable to train into a tree form, but it is more common to grow them as a large shrub. Some varieties are thorny, so if you have children it could be an issue, but some things in life are self limiting and children learn quickly. Since pomegranates readily grow suckers from the crown, removing them is necessary if you desire to train yours into a tree form. Annual pruning and thinning of suckers or branches may be done in the summer. Pomegranates begin to ripen in summer and continue through the fall. The fruit can last for up to 6 months in the refrigerator and only get sweeter as time passes.

Pomegranates are usually pest free but can suffer from a fungal disease that causes leaf drop and fruit splitting. Good air circulation and spraying with a copper fungicide can alleviate this problem. We recommend you apply an organic fertilizer after the growth begins in the spring and then quarterly after that. pH does not seem to be an issue.

If you're looking for a fruit that is good for you, this is truly it. Pomegranates have more antioxidant activity than red wine or green tea. They contain some Vitamin C and potassium and fiber. One word of warning...Pomegranates will stain and have been used to dye cloth. The peels are dried and produce a yellow dye that is moderately colorfast.

The age of the fruit affects the color of the dye: the less ripe the fruit, the greener the yellow.

Ambrosia has the largest fruit of any pomegranate, without having lost any of the intense flavor, juice or seeds. So if you're into Texas-sized fruit, this is the pomegranate for you. The pale pink skin contrasts with the large, dark red seeds and has a tart-sweet flavor. This one needs very good drainage. Requires 150 chill hours and is self-fertile.

Angel Red is a new variety that has created a lot of excitement. It matures in early September, bears heavy crops and has small, soft seeds that may be chewed and eaten. It also has very high juice content. Demand is high and supply is low...don't hesitate to get one if you see them available anywhere. Requires 100 to 200 chill hours and is self-fertile.

Garnet Sash grows into a small tree (15'-20') and will set loads of small to medium sized fruit in the first year. Large seeds produce a sweet-tart juice. 150 to 200 chill hours and is self- fertile.

Granada resembles Wonderful but produces about a month earlier. Dark red skin and seeds and darker red flowers make this variety a great choice as an ornamental as well. A little less tart than Wonderful, on a 20' tall tree, 150 to 200 chill hours and is self- fertile.

Pink Satin, as its name implies, has pink to red skin with pink seeds in a medium to large fruit. Light-colored, refreshing juice that is non-staining has a sweet fruit-punch flavor. Requires 150 to 200 chill hours and is self- fertile.

Red Silk has large, firm yet edible seeds and a sweet, well balanced berry-like flavor. Large crops of medium-large sized fruit with a brilliant red, silky exterior. This small tree tends to spread but is easily kept in check. 150 to 200 chill hours and is self- fertile.

Sharp Velvet tells you all about itself in its name. A tangy start with a smooth finish gives the juice an unusual twist. Dark red fruit, inside and out, on a very upright, super productive tree that grows best in areas with hot summers (sounds oddly familiar). Requires 150 to 200 chill hours and is self- fertile.

Wonderful is our standard in the Houston area. Gaudy red-orange flowers develop into large purple-red fruit with a delicious, tangy flavor, which is prized all over the world. Leave the fruit on the tree until Halloween and the fruit will get sweeter. Long lived and drought tolerant once established. It requires 150 chill hours and self-fertile.