

GROWING POMEGRANATE

Once considered a fruit for royalty, the pomegranate is a delicious addition to your backyard orchard or edible landscaping. Its beautiful, showy, red-orange flowers become decorative fruit in autumn, filled with juicy arils for you to enjoy all year long!



Getting ready to plant

Pomegranates are best grown from cuttings to ensure the quality of the fruit produced. There are many varieties of *pomegranate trees* to choose from, including the ever-popular *Wonderful*, yummy *pink Sweet*, and unique non-staining *Eversweet*. Starke Ayres Garden Centres only stock the *Wonderful* variety.

Set out plants grown from rooted cuttings in late winter or early spring. Named cultivars such as 'Wonderful' produce better quality fruits than pomegranates grown from seeds.

Select a location with full sun, sheltered spot.

Requires lots of heat to ripen fruits. Allow space for your tree to grow into, unless you plan on keeping it smaller by pruning.

Single Plants: 3m each way (minimum)

Rows / hedge: 3m with 3m row gap (minimum)

Pomegranates grow into tall, dense shrubs that shade out other plants.

Pomegranates are adaptable to many soil types,

though they grow best in loamy soil with good drainage.

The ideal climate is short, mild winters and low humidity.

Pomegranates tolerate cold to -12°C.

They may be grown in containers. Frost is not a factor in Cape Town. The trees we stock at our Garden Centres are grafted so any suckers should be removed from rootstock.

Pomegranates have relatively low water requirements, and can survive drought conditions for several years (although during that time, the harvest will be smaller). Too much or uneven amounts of water, either from irregular or over irrigating, heavy summer rains, or high humidity, can result in fruit cracking, decreased fruit production, and other problems.



It is not necessary to **prune your pomegranate trees**, but it can help with ease of harvest, better fruit, and for a shapelier tree. Prune in spring. Remove dead, broken or crossing branches as well as any suckers that have appeared at the base of the plants.

Pomegranates naturally grow in bush-form, and produce lots of suckers. This is ideal for hedges or living walls, but not for most other



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situations. When your tree is a year old, select one to six trunks to keep; prune the rest at the ground because they will produce fruit sooner, need less care, and recover quicker if damaged by frost. When doing maintenance pruning as the tree grows, prune lightly, and never trim all the branches in the same year.

Pomegranates fruit on short new shoots that come from wood that is more than one year old, so pruning all new growth back at once can result in nothing to harvest the following seasons.

Fertilise with a high potassium fertiliser for flowering and fruiting like Talborne 3.1.5 - the best as it has 3 months residual, is organic, will not burn and 1 handful covers 1 sq meter in November and March.

Harvest Time!

Harvest when ripe, which is usually in early autumn. Your pomegranates can begin to fruit within a year of planting. However, don't be worried if the first few years' fruits mature late, or drop before maturing. It will take 5 to 6 years for the tree to mature and produce large harvests.

Fruits can be harvested as soon as they reach their mature skin color, feel heavy, and sound metallic when tapped. If left on the tree too long, they will split open; they may also split if it rains during harvest season. If this happens to your fruit, you can still harvest and enjoy it, but it cannot be stored whole.

Fruit should be harvested with secateurs, and not pulled from the branch. The fruit stores well in cool place for several weeks or can be stored whole in a refrigerator for 3 months. For longer storage, you can de-seed and the 'jewels' can be frozen.

You can also extract the juice by running the arils/'jewels' through a food strainer or a blender and straining out the seeds; the juice can be frozen for up to 6 months or made into a variety of canned foods such as syrup (also called grenadine), jelly, and more. **REAP THE HEALTH BENEFITS of Pomegranate!**

*Make Pomegranate Molasses:

- 1: Place 2 cups pomegranate juice, 5 T lime (or lemon) juice and 100 g golden castor sugar in a saucepan, stir and bring to the boil.
- 2: Simmer until reduced by two thirds. Transfer to a container and cool – the molasses will thicken further as it cools.

Pomegranate molasses is delicious with roast lamb, salmon, whisked into salad dressings or drizzled over roast vegetables.

Pan Roasted Pomegranate Glazed Salmon



Ingredients

500g brussels sprouts, halved
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
kosher salt and pepper
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses*
2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce
2 tablespoons pomegranate juice
3cm fresh ginger, grated
1 clove garlic, minced or grated
1 pinch red pepper flakes
500g salmon
fresh basil for serving

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 220°C.
2. On a large rimmed baking sheet, combine the brussels sprouts, olive oil, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Toss well to evenly coat. Place in the oven and roast for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine the pomegranate molasses, pomegranate juice, sweet chili sauce, ginger, garlic, and a pinch each of red pepper flakes and salt in a small bowl.
4. Remove the brussels sprouts from the oven. Add the salmon to the center of the pan. Spoon the pomegranate glaze over the salmon. Transfer to the oven and roast for 10-20 minutes or until the salmon has reached your desired doneness.
5. Top the salmon with pomegranate arils and fresh basil. Enjoy!