

Pomegranates



Pomegranates do quite well here in the Gonzales area, provided you don't overwater them. They like alkaline soil, and soils that have good internal drainage; they can tolerate hot, dry summers and cold down to about 18 degrees Fahrenheit. Pomegranates make a tall bushy plant that requires a lot of room (about 12' to 15' apart), so give them space to grow in direct sun. They produce fruit three to four years after planting and are easy to propagate. Note that the fruit cannot ripen after it is picked; it must be left to ripen on the tree.

Pomegranates should be pruned annually during their winter dormancy to remove dead growth and interior shoots to maintain primary branches. The pruned wood, especially smaller cuttings, can be treated with rooting hormone and planted in well-drained potting soil. Pomegranates can be damaged by insects and fungus, and the fruit discolored by sun-scald.

Pomegranates carry lovely orange blooms in the spring and are a nesting site for several species of local birds. Some of the best varieties are actually from Russia, but you won't want to hold that against them because even though you may think of Russia as a cold wintery place, parts of it are fairly warm.

We recommend the following varieties:

New Russian 18. This pomegranate bears medium to large fruit with

bright red skin and has very good sweet-tart taste. It also produces at an early age.

Wonderful. An old favorite, Wonderful bears large red skinned fruit. Its flesh is red, juicy and sharp flavored. It is not particularly cold hardy and will not do well in the north Texas but does well in Gonzales. It is grown commercially and the fruit processes well. Some problems with splitting have been reported.