

POMEGRANATE

Punica granatum L.



Punicaceae

Q: I would like to grow my own pomegranates. How much space do the trees need?

A: Pomegranate trees are easy to grow in most of the Bay Area, but good fruit will only develop if you are in one of the hotter inland areas. The small trees resemble shrubs, reaching a height of 12- 20' with an equal spread. They are slightly thorny, which makes them excellent barrier plants. The trees are deciduous, the small oval leaves turning gold before dropping in the fall. They do best in full sun with good drainage. If your soil does not drain well, plant on large mounds. The trees sucker from the base and annual pruning includes sucker removal as well as removing any dead or damaged wood.

If you are next to the bay you may want to grow them as an ornamental shrub for the intense flame-orange blossoms produced in the spring. Occasionally you can find varieties with white or variegated blossoms. Pomegranates are self pollinated, which means that pollen from one blossom on the tree can be transferred by insects to fertilize other blossoms on the same tree. The fruits which ripen in the fall vary in size from 2-5" in diameter, and have skin that ranges in color from white to deep purple depending upon variety. The fruits are technically berries, with each seed surrounded by a membrane inclosing a small explosion of tart-sweet juice. Summer heat is necessary for sugars to develop in the fruit

The most common variety sold in this area is "Wonderful," which is a reliable bearer of bright red fruit.