



POMEGRANATE TREE GROWING GUIDE

Congratulations on becoming an owner of a new pomegranate tree!

Below is a quick start guide to getting your tree established as well as some tips for how to avoid common problems. More information is available at fourwindsgrowers.com. Now that you have unpacked your tree, be sure to remove the plastic bag that keeps the soil in place during shipping.

Location:

Pomegranate trees will grow the best if you plant them in the warmest, sunniest spot in your yard. While pomegranates are not necessarily picky when it comes to soil types, but you will want to plant the tree in well-draining soil for the best results. Certain varieties can get quite large if left unmanaged so try to keep this in mind when selecting your final location.

Pomegranates are tough trees and will tolerate temperatures as low as 0°F. Though, areas with long winters and more than 200 chill hours will see a lack of fruit set as the excess cold temps will damage the blossoms unless otherwise protected.

Planting:

To plant your pomegranate tree in the ground, dig a hole deep enough to cover the root ball. We recommend digging a hole in a cone shape and planting the tree to the center of the cone. Plant so that the top of the root ball is flush with the native soil level. If your location has heavy clay soil create a mound about 12" above the native soil line with a better draining soil mix of compost and mulch.

For container growing, you will want to create a soil mix that is 5-parts coarse bark, 1-part coarse perlite, and 1-part premium potting soil. This soil mix is designed for maximum drainage which reduces the chances of root disease.

When transplanting check for roots collecting at the bottom of the pot. Gently loosen up the roots at the bottom to help them quickly extend into the surrounding soil.

Tamp (pack) down soil several times while backfilling the hole to avoid air pockets. After planting, water the tree to settle the soil firmly around the roots. Make a basin for future watering. By the end, you should have your tree planted so that the top of the root ball is level with the native soil level.

Watering:

How often to water will vary on the environment and depends on soil porosity, tree size, and temperature. Allowing the top of the soil to dry out between watering is recommended. A simple moisture meter, available at garden supply stores, can be used to determine moisture down to about a 9" depth. Generally, when the meter indicates a root moisture level of about 50%, (center of the dial) it is time to water. Always store your moisture meter dry between uses to keep it functioning properly. New plantings need sufficient water to thrive and get established. Thereafter established pomegranates only need watering about once every 2-3 weeks during the dry season. Soils with ample organic matter have better water holding capacity.

Fertilizing:

Pomegranates benefit from rich fertile soils, especially during their first few seasons of growth and establishment. Fertilize with a balanced fertilizer when you water in the spring being sure to keep away from the trunk. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when fertilizing your trees to prevent nutrient burn. Organic plant foods like worm castings, compost, and compost teas are great ways to feed your trees as well. Again, be sure to feed your tree at least 6" away from the trunk.

Pruning:

Pomegranates can be pruned as a shrub or tree. For tree shape, when it reaches 2 feet tall the young tree should be cut back to the point where only 4 or 5 shoots are allowed to develop, taking care to maintain a balanced form. Remove suckers and unwanted shoots as they appear. If selected branches are about a foot from the ground the resulting tree will have a short and well-defined trunk. Fruits are produced on new growth tips. If trees' branches are cut back annually for the first three years, selected branches will grow many side shoots, thus producing a tree with maximum fruit productivity and appealing form. After initial pruning and shaping in the first three years, only occasional suckering and dead branch removal will be necessary. Remove all spoiled fruit from the tree to avoid potential pest & disease issues in the future.

Mulch:

Use of mulches will conserve precious water and help inhibit weed growth. A 2-3-inch layer of wood chips, fir bark, compost, or other organic matter can be very helpful for water

retention. "Living mulches" such as nitrogen-fixing clovers can also be planted between trees in an orchard. To avoid root diseases, always keep grasses and other vegetation away from the root collar area. Keep all mulches at least six inches away from the base of the trunk. For growers in cold climates, an extra thick 8"-10" layer of mulch around the base of the tree just before winter acts as a layer of insulation that will help keep your roots alive over winter.

Tree Health:

Pomegranate trees are quite easy to grow given the correct climate. Most pomegranate trees prefer a climate that is mostly dry with hot summers and dry winters. For growers in more humid regions, you will need to consider a winter fungicide program to maintain a healthy tree. This mostly affects growers in the southeast where the fruit set is unreliable due to the humid climate. That said, pomegranates will still grow into beautiful ornamental plants with their breathtaking blooms.