

Pomegranate by Patty Hamilton

Botanical Name: *Punica granatum*

Family Name: Lythraceae

This may be one of the most unusual shrubs/trees that you will find in our Hampton Roads area. I always thought Pomegranates were a tropical fruit or could be only grown in areas such as Florida and California. The first plants were probably introduced into the southeastern United States by early Spanish settlers to their colony at St. Augustine, FL.

Not only will they bear fruit in the Hampton Roads area, but they are a beautiful ornamental shrub/tree that will grow 12-20 feet tall. The ones in my neighborhood are about 10 years old and have some of the most beautiful brilliant orange flowers I have ever seen and are blooming now in July. Hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers, which can vary from scarlet-red to white depending on the cultivar. They are deciduous (rarely evergreen). The first year, they flower sporadically and bear well after about 3 years. They are cold hardy Zone 8-10 and some newer hybrids up to Zone 6. They may get some die back if we have a harsh winter (temp below 10F) but will re-sprout from the crown.

It is best to plant two, as cross-pollination increases fruit set. There is also a compact form of pomegranate, that will do well in a container. They prefer full sun and will live in slightly brackish water. They are easy to grow and require little maintenance, once established. Some live to be 200 years old, but their vigor declines after about 15 years. If you want something different, you might want to try a pomegranate shrub/tree.



'Wonderful' is the most common pomegranate cultivar and the standard by which others are judged. It has red flowers followed by large red fruit that ripen in September. It reaches 8 to 12 feet tall at maturity. For a full list of cultivars and more growing information, visit:

<https://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheet/pomegranate/>



Flower and Plant Photos by Patty Hamilton
Pomegranate Fruit by Karen Russ, ©2009 HGIC, Clemson Extension
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