



“Dark Compact” -
Jurassicplants' own form

Pomegranates – forgotten or forbidden fruit?

by Dr. Zoltán Hámorí, Jurassicplants Nursery



Pomegranates are exceptional ornamental plants with large, exotic flowers and fruits which are known to have huge health benefits. Some studies suggest that the juice contains the highest concentration of naturally occurring antioxidants of any fruit.

An open Pomegranate flower is a breath-taking sight: tissue like, often ruffled petals surround the large, almost fleshy calyx, decorative on its own, with a bunch of yellow stamen in the middle. Imagine a hundred of them within arching branches and shiny foliage. The Mediterranean looking pomegranates are highly underrated ornamental plants and they are suitable for a hot sunny spot against a wall in the garden, perform well on a sunny patio or in a conservatory and are excellent bonsai subjects.

Origins

The Latin pomum "apple" and granatum "seeded" explains the name “pomegranate”, which was known in early English as "apple of Grenada" probably stemming from the old French word for the fruit, pomme-grenade.

The pomegranate is believed to have originated in the area from Iran to northern India, but has been cultivated around the Mediterranean for so long (several millennia) that its true native range is not accurately known but it is historically proven that since ancient times it has been produced throughout the Mediterranean and the Caucasus. Spanish settlers introduced it to the Americas in the 17th century, especially to Latin America and California.

Artistically the pomegranate has been recognized by Cezanne, Raphael, and various other artists and it is even possible that Eve gave Adam a pomegranate instead of an apple in the Garden of Eden, regarding its believed location



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in the Middle-East. Pomegranate is thought to be one of the world's first domesticated crops. But really, there are no easy ways to describe the fruit with words: let this picture speak for itself – see the illustration by Otto Wilhelm Thomé, 1885 (credit: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomegranate>)

Just how popular is the Pomegranate?

Not only in Europe and the Middle East, in Africa, Asia, but even in California and Arizona and Mexico, pomegranate orchards can be found, their cultivation is greatly encouraged by the popularity of pomegranate juice which rose significantly in the early 2000's. It is a super-fruit, undeniably so.

Pomegranate seeds (precisely the pulp around them) get their vibrant red hue from polyphenols which are powerful antioxidants. Pomegranate juice contains higher levels of antioxidants than most other fruit juices and here times more than red wine and green tea. The antioxidants in pomegranate juice can help remove free radicals, protect cells from damage, and reduce inflammation and have a range of other health benefits.

What pomegranates can bring to your garden?

There are two types of pomegranates in European nursery production: flowering and fruiting varieties. The former usually have even larger flowers, up to 4 inches wide, and are more or less double-flowered. Most fruiting cultivars and the main species have single flowers with the most vibrant red colours imaginable. Some varieties have soft, edible seeds, these are also called “seedless”.

These plants branch out well and dry conditions encourage thorn forming on the branches but unless regularly trimmed, the shrubs may grow irregular and somewhat oddly shaped, however this is perfectly natural. The miniature varieties have the most regular, rounded shape with their branches arching under the weight of the flowers and fruits. Its Autumn coloration is also noteworthy, the foliage turns pure yellow in October. The shrubs can be trimmed heavily, making them suitable bonsai subjects. It flowers on the new growth. The plants overwinter well outdoors, being hardy to -15C or so and as a late starter, it rarely suffers from Spring frosts – the flowers will only appear from June but flowering can last several months. The plant is not too fussy about soil conditions and can reach 2m in size in a UK garden or in a pot.

The fruiting varieties will need a hot position against a south facing wall in Southern Britain to have any chance to set and mature the fruit in the garden (the smaller the fruit, the easier to mature), or you need to think about a conservatory or greenhouse. For the fruits to ripen, a long, warm Summer and early Autumn is essential, otherwise the lack of heat has to be compensated by using a heated facility as soon as the flower buds develop as it pollinates much better in warm weather. It is perfectly possible to grow fruit on shrubs of a height 1.5-2m in a large pot, in a greenhouse. Expect to harvest fruit from late October in UK conditions. Small fruits on some varieties may even overwinter on the plant in a greenhouse and mature the following year.

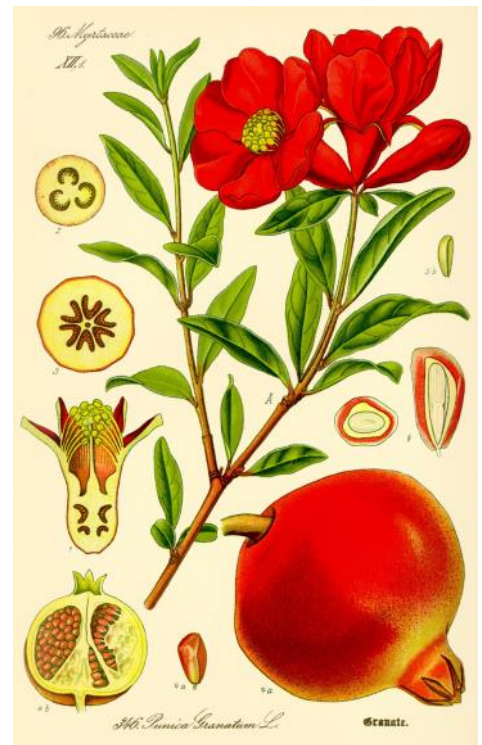
Without a heated greenhouse, or a garden in Central London or the South Coast, you can still opt for flowering varieties if you have a sun trapped garden spot.

Fruiting varieties (also make stunning ornamentals)

Some popular fruiting varieties include several colours: Mollar de Elche (seedless, orange), Acco (sweet, bright red), Wonderful (juicy, purple) and ‘Dark Compact’ (sweet, aubergine). All but the latter are good medium sized shrubs (our dark selection is compact with a height of 0.8-1m) bearing medium to large fruits (300-400g).

‘Mollar’ is an orange/pale red skinned cultivar with soft seed-coats (not developed seeds) in the flesh, making the whole fruit edible. One of the sweetest pomegranate now on the market, even the soft “seed-leftovers” are sweet inside the flesh. Lovely numerous red flowers with a semi-compact habit (ultimate height is 1.5-2m). Medium sized fruits.

‘Acco’ is of Israeli origin, with a very colourful fruit both externally and internally and ripens early. The fleshy seeds are ruby red, pleasant to eat with a very sweet flavour. It is even sweet when not fully ripe, which is good news for



UK gardeners!

'Wonderful' is a well fruiting variety, selected from cuttings in Florida in 1896 often planted for the juice industry. Large, red fruits with purple flesh, tangy, less sweet but very juicy.

'Dark Compact' – our selection. Aubergine skinned, dark fruits on a shrub with a compact habit. Very cold tolerant.

More than a dozen other varieties are planted from Turkey to Mexico, including the popular 'Ahmar', 'Aswad', 'Halwa', 'Paper Shell', 'Provence' and the seedless (soft seeded) 'Bedana' and 'Kandhari' and more than a hundred locally selected cultivars/forms exist.

Flowering ornamental varieties with a little story

The best known flowering pomegranates are:

'California Sunset' (aka 'Mme Legrelle' or 'Legrelleae') - Carnation-like, double coral-red flowers bordered and streaked with creamy white. Delicate petals are like tissue paper. Fruitless variety. Foliage is bright glossy green and the shrub is densely stemmed.

This plant was first known as a gift from a Mme Parmentier (Belgian horticulturist, living in the US) to Madame Caroline Legrelle d'Hanis who lived near Antwerp and ran a nursery. This lithograph appeared in 1858, and may be the first illustration of the plant (credit: <http://www.anarkalilove.tumblr.com/>). It appeared in the most important Belgian horticultural periodical entitled *l'illustration horticole, journal spécial des serres et des jardins* by Charles Lemaire (editor), published by Ambroise Verschaffelt. They first exhibited it in London in 1866 and the variety is very popular to this day.

'Flore Pleno' has a vigorous habit with large, double orange-red flowers and the creamy yellow 'Luteum Plenum' reaches similar size but both can be kept in a large pot, too. The dwarf 'Chico' is worth a try, too and there are numerous new varieties available, like 'Faye's Paintbrush' (recently selected in El Paso, Texas) with peachy, ruffled petals and an almost white edge – this one is an ornamental and a fruiting variety in the same time.

If you lack space, then don't give up on them as there are a few dwarf varieties available, the fruiting 'Nana' or "var.





"Chico"



"Nana" fruits as well as flowers

nana", 'Nana Gracilissima' and the double flowered (not fruiting) 'Chico'. We have selected two forms with a semi-compact habit (ultimate height is 1-1,5m) with smaller leaves and smaller but numerous flowers: our 'Dark Compact' (darker stem, deep purple to dark brown fruits) and 'Semi Compact' (light orange coloured fruits) selection are well suitable for small gardens and the patio/conservatory. The dwarf fruiting forms are capable of bearing between 50 and 100 fruits at a time on a 70-80cm tall and wide plant. These smaller fruits need less hot days to mature so actually they are more suitable for outdoor fruiting. In conservatory conditions, you certainly can achieve a good crop from these.

We have carefully selected nine vibrant Pomegranate varieties available for you to purchase or why not try one of our starter collections which include both flowering and fruiting cultivars which are available at Plant Hunters Fairs events or on our website www.jurassicplants.co.uk.

Jurassicplants are a family run nursery based in North Wales specialising in unusual and hard-to-find ornamentals, edible trees and shrubs and living fossils.

JURASSICPLANTS, WAEN, ST ASAPH
DENBIGHSHIRE LL17 0DY

Phone: 07909 100 255

www.jurassicplants.co.uk

Zoltan will be at these Plant Hunters' Fairs in 2019:

Sun 10 Mar National Memorial Arboretum Sat 16 Mar Carsington Water Sun 17 Mar Alderford Lake
Sat 23 Mar Sugnall Walled Garden Sun 24 Mar Ness Botanic Gardens Sat 30 Mar Patchings Art Centre
Sun 31 Mar Middleton Hall Sat 6 Apr Hoghton Tower Sun 7 Apr Bramall Hall Sat 13 Apr Sandwell Valley
Park Fri 19 Apr Whittington Castle Sun/Mon 21/ 22 Apr Dorothy Clive Garden Sat 11 May National
Memorial Arboretum Sun 12 May Adlington Hall Sat 18 May British Ironwork Centre Sun 26 May
Pottertons Nursery Sat - Sun 1 - 2 Jun Hodnet Hall Sat 22 Jun Arley Arboretum Fri - Sat 28 - 29 Jun
Henbury Hall Sun 7 Jul Sugnall Walled Garden Sun 21 Jul Middleton Hall Sat 27 Jul National Memorial
Arboretum Sun 28 Jul British Ironwork Centre Sun 4 Aug 1620's House Sat 10 Aug Carsington Water
Sun 11 Aug Southwell Minster Sun - Mon 25 - 26 Aug Dorothy Clive Garden Sat 31 Aug Bodenham
Arboretum Sun 8 Sep Weston Park