

POMEGRANATE

Punica granatum

SCRIPTURES:

Exodus 28:31,33; 39:24 – Pomegranates used in textile designs on priests' robes
Deut. 8:8 – Pomegranates are a desired feature of the promised land
I Samuel 14:2 – Saul and his men rested under a pomegranate tree
I Kings 7:18,20,42 – Pomegranates were a decorative feature of temple pillars
Song of Solomon 8:2 – Solomon drank wine made from pomegranate juice

PLANT LOCATION:

The pomegranate is indigenous to Persia, but grew in the near east. It was known to be in Egypt. It was one of the trees grown in the hanging gardens of Babylon.

PLANT DESCRIPTION:

It is a semi-tropical tree or bush and can get up to 20 feet tall. Pomegranates were not a staple article of diet, yet they have been cultivated from early times. Soft pulp around the seeds was either eaten raw or used in a special spiced wine.

It's hard, thin-rinded, apple-shaped fruit contains many seeds, each in a pulp sack filled with a tangy, sweet amethyst-colored juice.

The slender, spiny-tipped branches bear opposite, oblong or oval-lanceolate, shiny leaves about 2" long. One to five large red or orange-red flowers grow together on the tips of the shoots. The brownish-yellow to red fruit (size of an orange) is a thick-skinned, several celled, many-seeded berry. Each seed is surrounded by red, acid pulp.

NUTRITIONAL FACTS:

The whole pomegranate contains 105 calories and is rich in vitamin C, vitamin B6 and potassium.

MEDICINAL AND OTHER USES:

The rind of the pomegranate is used for yellow and red dyes. The rind is also used for tanning leather. The seeds were used to get rid of tapeworm.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Consider the Lilies* (John and Katherine Paterson); *Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary*; *The Flowers and Fruits of the Bible* (John Chancellor); *Food at the Time of the Bible* (Miriam Feinberg Vamosh); *Encyclopedia of Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs* (Heinemanns).