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Orchard Management in Pomegranate Crop

*Sunit Bhadarge

Ph.D. Scholar, Horticulture (Fruit Science), Department of Horticulture,
School of Agriculture, ITM University, Gwalior - 475001 (M.P.) India

*Corresponding Author's email: drsunitthorti@gmail.com

Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) is an important commercial fruit crop grown in tropical and subtropical regions due to its adaptability, drought tolerance, and high market demand. Proper orchard management is essential to ensure consistent yield, superior fruit quality, and long orchard lifespan. Pomegranate orchards require systematic planning from site selection to harvesting. Good management practices include:

- Selection of suitable soil and climate
- Use of healthy planting material
- Proper spacing and planting techniques
- Balanced nutrient and irrigation management
- Scientific training and pruning
- Effective pest and disease control
- Flower regulation (bahar treatment)

Since pomegranate bears flowers and fruits almost throughout the year under suitable conditions, regulated cropping is practiced to obtain better yield and quality. Efficient orchard management helps in minimizing problems like fruit cracking, pest infestation, and bacterial blight, which are major constraints in commercial cultivation. With scientific management practices, pomegranate orchards can remain productive for 15–20 years, providing high economic returns to farmers

1. Climate & Soil Requirements

- Climate: Subtropical to tropical; optimum temperature 25–35°C.
- Rainfall: 500–800 mm annually (excess rain during flowering causes fruit cracking).
- Soil: Well-drained loamy or sandy loam soils.
- pH: 5.5–7.5 (tolerates slight salinity).

2. Propagation

- Mainly by hardwood cuttings (20–30 cm length, pencil thickness).
- Also by air layering or tissue culture (less common).
- Treated with rooting hormones (IBA 2000–5000 ppm) for better rooting.

3. Planting

- Spacing:
 - ✓ Normal: 4.5 m × 4.5 m
 - ✓ High density: 3 m × 3 m
- Pit size: 60 × 60 × 60 cm.
- Fill with:
 - ✓ Topsoil + 10–15 kg FYM
 - ✓ 1 kg SSP
 - ✓ Neem cake (optional)

Best planting time:

- Monsoon (June–July) or
- Spring (Feb–March) in irrigated areas.



Fruit – Pomegranate



Pomegranate Orchard

4. Training & Pruning

- Train plants to multi-stem system (3–4 main stems).
- Remove suckers regularly.
- Light annual pruning after harvest.
- Remove dead, diseased, and crossing branches.

Proper pruning improves:

- Air circulation
- Sunlight penetration
- Fruit size and quality

5. Irrigation Management

- Young plants: Irrigate every 7–10 days.
- Bearing plants: Every 10–15 days (depending on soil).
- Drip irrigation is highly recommended.
- Avoid water stress during:
 - ✓ Flowering
 - ✓ Fruit development

Irregular irrigation causes fruit cracking.

6. Nutrient Management (per plant per year)

Age	FYM (kg)	N (g)	P (g)	K (g)
1 year	10	250	125	125
3 years	15	500	250	250
5+ years	20	625	250	250

- Apply FYM in December–January.
- Split nitrogen into 2–3 doses.
- Micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B) through foliar spray if deficiency observed.

7. Bahar Treatment (Flower Regulation)

Three flowering seasons (India):

- Mrig Bahar (June–July flowering)
- Hasta Bahar (Sept–Oct flowering)
- Ambe Bahar (Jan–Feb flowering)

Select one bahar depending on water availability and market demand.

Steps:

- Withhold irrigation
- Root exposure
- Pruning
- Resume irrigation + fertilizer

8. Weed Management

- Manual weeding or hoeing.

- Mulching (organic/plastic) recommended.
- Pre-emergence herbicides if necessary.

9. Major Pests & Diseases

Pests:

- Fruit borer
- Aphids
- Mealy bugs
- Thrips

Diseases:

- Bacterial blight
- Anthracnose
- Wilt

Management:

- Sanitation
- Pruning infected parts
- Recommended insecticides/fungicides
- Use resistant varieties where possible

10. Harvesting

- Fruits mature 5–7 months after flowering.
- Indicators:
 - ✓ Change in fruit color
 - ✓ Metallic sound on tapping
 - ✓ Hard rind
- Yield:
 - ✓ 10–15 kg/tree (young)
 - ✓ 20–25 kg/tree (mature)

11. Post-Harvest Handling

- Grade fruits by size and color.
- Store at 5°C and 90–95% RH.
- Shelf life: 2–3 months under cold storage.

Conclusion

Effective orchard management in pomegranate cultivation is the key to achieving sustainable production, superior fruit quality, and higher profitability. Scientific practices such as proper site selection, balanced nutrition, efficient irrigation, systematic training and pruning, regulated flowering (bahar treatment), and timely pest and disease management greatly influence the overall performance of the orchard.

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