


**Pomegranate  
Production  
& Status In Georgia:  
A Grower's  
Perspective**

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**Introduction**

- Alma, Bacon County, Georgia
  - Located in the Southeast region of the U.S.
  - Latitude – 31°
  - Elevation – 180 ft. (55 meters)




**Introduction**

- Alma, Bacon County, Georgia
  - 40 year history of success with blueberries
  - Blueberries in Georgia originated in Bacon County



**Blueberries in Bacon County**

- Blueberries From a Growers Perspective:
  - We propagate our own plants
  - Harvest with manual or mechanical pickers
  - Process in packing houses
  - Market fresh or frozen berries
- Blueberries in Bacon County
  - 6,750 acres (2,732 hectares)



## Why Pomegranates?

### Blueberries

- Yield in Early Spring
- Grow in new soil (acid)

### Pomegranates

- Yield in the Fall
- Grow in old soil (alkaline)

## Why Pomegranates?

- Blueberries & Pomegranates can share:
  - Labor
  - Farm Equipment
  - Processing Facilities
  - Consumers
- They are good complimentary crops!!



## Current Pomegranate Production

- Pomegranate production is moving from demonstration plots → field production



## Current Pomegranate Production

- Currently have about 15 acres (6 hectares) in commercial production
  - 50 different cultivars
    - Taste: Sweet → Tart
    - Exterior: Dark Red → Pink
    - Seed: Hard → Soft
    - Cold Tolerance
    - Disease Resistance

## Propagation

- Take hardwood cuttings in late January – early February
  - Placed in cooler to hold in moisture
- Stick cuttings in March
  - Use custom mixed potting media
    - Yard Debris Compost + Dolomite Lime (1: ½ ratio)
- Ready to plant into field in 2 years

## Propagation



## Field Preparation

- Bed the field on 10-12" (25-30 cm) raised beds



## Field Preparation

- Plant on 18' x 18' (5.5 x 5.5 meters) spacings
  - Provides better air circulation in field
    - We have a very humid climate that causes disease problems
- We use yard debris compost for mulch

## Irrigation

- Microjets
- Drip irrigation
  - Most efficient
  - We use pressure compensating emitters for uniformity
  - 2 emitters/ tree

## Irrigation

### Microjets



## Irrigation

### Drip irrigation



## Pruning Strategy

- Two types being used
  - Tree type
  - Multi trunk
    - Most likely to be used
    - 4-5 limbs/ tree
- Prune annually in Winter



## Pruning Strategy

### Tree Type



## Pruning Strategy

### Multi-Trunk



## Production Difficulties

- Variety Selection
  - 50 varieties to choose from
- Propagation Limitations
  - Limited number of mature plants to take cuttings from
- Disease Problems
  - Sunburn
  - *Cercospora punicae*
  - *Botryphaeria* spp.
  - Limited Chemicals for use on Pomegranates

## Production Difficulties

### Sunburn



## Production Difficulties

*Cercospora punicae*

*Botrytisphaeria* spp.



## Marketing

- Fresh
  - Demand is greater than supply
  - Disease issues may limit our fresh market potential



## Marketing

- Juice
  - Can compete with imported juice concentrate
  - Most likely our best market strategy
  - Disease issues have not affected fruit interior



## Marketing

- Fresh Arils
  - New potential market in the U.S.
  - Processing facilities need an affordable aril separator
  - Separated arils will be both packaged fresh & used to juice



## Conclusion

- Yield/acre is not yet known for Georgia
- Expected Returns

Cost/Acre	\$2,500
Gross Return/Acre	\$4,200
Total Return/Acre	\$1,700

- **Good Potential For Profit!!**