



Rural Development • Rural Business-Cooperative Service • Rural Business Development Grant

Georgia Grown Pomegranates, Beyond ‘Wonderful’

Sought by health enthusiasts for delivering nutritional benefits, antioxidants and fiber, pomegranates are established in the marketplace with products like Pom Wonderful® brand juices, arils and teas. But although pomegranates are common in back yards throughout South Georgia and research and development has proven success for California with the Wonderful variety of pomegranate, the Wonderful cultivar performs very poorly in Georgia.



Different pomegranate cultivars will have varying levels of juice yield, color and antioxidant content. The optimum processing conditions that affect these quality aspects vary depending on the cultivar.

Humid growing conditions of South Georgia vary greatly from the desert climate of the San Joaquin Valley, California, where the Wonderful cultivar research and development led to market success. Humid conditions cause infestation of fungal leaf and fruit diseases. Georgia Pomegranate Association research supports the potential for pomegranates as a viable high value cash crop in Georgia with registration and labeling of pesticide and fungicides for specialty crops that will make fungal leaf and fruit diseases manageable.

Additional research on aspects of tree productivity, fruit quality, storage potential, and consumer visual and taste appeal is needed. To help, USDA Rural Development is teaming up with the Georgia Pomegranate Association, researchers, developers and agricultural experts to provide grant funding. In 2013 Rural Development helped the emerging market significantly in steps toward extending use and shelf life with a \$150,000 Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to purchase machinery to separate the juicy arils from the pomegranate’s leathery skin. To keep the industry moving forward the de-seeding process needed to move quicker.

In 2015 a \$99,500 RBDG funds additional market research such as orchard management, pruning, disease control, pest management and research on which varieties of pomegranates yield the most desirable fruits and fresh arils specific to the Southeastern U.S. "It takes a lot of research in place to get this going, we could not do it without support of grants like these," said John Tanner, spokesman for the Georgia Pomegranate Association.

Watch a video about this project at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=iMirKYf2GJM&sns=em>

Obligation Amount:	\$99,500 Rural Business Development Grant	\$150,000 Rural Business Development Grant
Date of Obligation:	Obligated 8/12/2015 (Fiscal Year 2015)	Obligated FY2013
Congressional District:	Representative Allen, District 12; Senators Isakson and Perdue	
Partners:	Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council, Georgia Pomegranate Association, University of Georgia Extension	
Demographics:	StrikeForce Region, Appling County	
Impact:	Providing infrastructure and resources to support the development and marketability of an emerging agricultural product.	