

Song of Solomon 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

Analysis

Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits (shelachaykh pardes rimonim im peri megadim, שְׁלַחַיִךְ פְּרִדִּים רִמּוֹנִים עִם פְּרִי מִגְדִּים)—the term shelachaykh (שְׁלַחַיִךְ, your plants/shoots/channels) likely refers to the bride's body or her productive life. The metaphor of an orchard (pardes, פְּרִדִּים—from which we get "paradise") celebrates abundance, cultivation, and fruitfulness. Pomegranates symbolized fertility and abundance throughout Scripture.

Camphire, with spikenard (keparim im neradin, כַּפְרִים עִם נֶרְדִּים)—camphire (henna) produced fragrant flowers used in perfumes; spikenard was expensive imported aromatic oil. This verse begins a catalog of spices (continuing through verse 14) celebrating the bride's comprehensive beauty and value. The beloved sees her as a cultivated paradise garden producing precious fruits and spices. The Church, indwelt by the Spirit, produces spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) that delights Christ.

Historical Context

Persian loan-word pardes (paradise/orchard) suggests enclosed, cultivated garden—not wild growth but intentionally developed beauty. Ancient Near Eastern kings prized elaborate gardens showcasing rare plants and spices. Solomon himself cultivated extensive gardens (Ecclesiastes 2:4-6). Pomegranates decorated the temple and high priest's robes, symbolizing beauty and fruitfulness. Camphire (henna) and spikenard were luxury items—spikenard so valuable that Mary's

anointing of Jesus with it represented extravagant devotion (John 12:3). The beloved sees his bride as producing precious, valuable fruits—her life yields abundant blessing. Early church fathers saw the Church as Christ's garden, cultivated by the Spirit, producing diverse spiritual gifts and graces. The Reformers emphasized sanctification—believers progressively produce spiritual fruit through the Spirit's work. The Puritans taught that godly character is cultivated, not automatic—requiring discipline, growth, and the Spirit's transforming work.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What spiritual fruit is your life producing—and are you cultivating the disciplines (prayer, Scripture, fellowship) that promote growth?
2. How does Christ see you as His "paradise garden"—a place of beauty, fruitfulness, and delight—rather than wasteland or wilderness?
3. What "pleasant fruits" (Christlike virtues, kingdom works) is the Spirit cultivating in your life for Christ's delight and others' blessing?

Interlinear Text

שָׁלֵחַ יָרֵךְ	פְּרִידָה	רְמוֹנֵי יָם	עֵץ	פְּרִי יָם	מְגֵד יָם
Thy plants	are an orchard	of pomegranates	H5973	fruits	with pleasant
H7973	H6508	H7416		H6529	H4022

כַּפֹּר יָם	עֵץ	נֶכְדִים:
camphire	H5973	with spikenard
H3724		H5373

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 1:14: My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Ecclesiastes 2:5: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

Song of Solomon 6:11: I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.

Song of Solomon 1:12: While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

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