

juicy, sweet-sour flesh. When the fruit is ripe, the rinds split open, releasing and distributing seeds. Besides eating, the fruit has other uses. Pomegranate rinds have been used to tan leather; flowers produce a red dye, and roots a black dye. Pomegranate trees are usable for only about 15 years. The author even includes instructions on how to eat a pomegranate.

In folk medicine, pomegranates were used for treating wounds, pain relief, and helping with diabetes, headaches, heart disease, ulcers, depression and many other medical needs.

Today, the juice of the best known pomegranate variety, “Wonderful,” has been shown to be high in anti-oxidants, dietary fiber, and vitamins. It has anti-cancer and anti-HIV properties. It is commonly found in a variety of foods such as ice cream, jellies, salad dressings, soft drinks and many others. The cosmetics industry uses pomegranate in skin care products because of its sun-protection, anti-aging, and anti-inflammatory properties.

Pomegranates are cultivated in many countries including the United States, with California one of the major producers. Interestingly, for many countries the tasty fruit is a source of national pride more as a cultural symbol than for its economic value.

Pomegranates are significant in the mythology of several cultures. The book follows the importance of these fruits in complex, fascinating stories of mythical gods, changing of seasons, secret rituals, masculinity and femininity, and wars. Probably because of the blood red color, the pomegranate often turns up in mentions of blood functions and bloodshed. Pomegranates are found in many of the tales of the Arabian Nights. Other fairy tales from places such as Turkey and Iran feature the fruit in sexually-charged stories of royalty, romance and weddings.

In ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and other near eastern countries, the pomegranate appears in literature in the form of narratives, some of whose texts are sexual allegories. An Egyptian papyrus recommends the use of pomegranates to manage tapeworms. This may have been a fairly effective treatment since the fruit’s alkaline quality would paralyze the tapeworm’s nervous system. A cuneiform document reveals an account of using pomegranates for paying rent. Pomegranates are also found in much of the region’s art. Historical, religious and symbolic activities are seen in seals, friezes, vases, plates, and other creations featuring pomegranates.

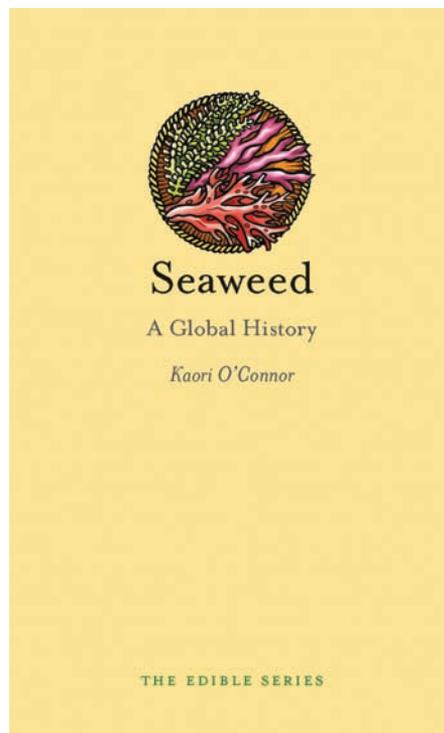
Jewish tradition teaches that the pomegranate is a symbol of righteousness, knowledge, and wisdom. Torah scrolls are usually decorated with a pair of pomegranate-shaped finials. Islamic tradition teaches that people eating pomegranates have hearts filled with light, making them free from sin and able to resist Satan’s temptations.

Many more examples of the pomegranate in history and culture are explained in detail in this book. Even today, pomegranates show up in many cultures. In Azerbaijan, the people hold an annual pomegranate fair that features many events including a pomegranate eating contest. In Iran, the “ruby from paradise” is celebrated with festivities including art displays and pomegranate dances. In American pop culture, singer Katy Perry uses a pomegranate for lipstick in a music video and singer Adam Lambert’s video for “Better Than I Know Myself” shows him crushing a pomegranate with spewing juice coming from his hand.

Though limited in the biological features and heavy on the historic and cultural aspects of pomegranates, the short captivating book is fun to read and is beautifully illustrated with colorful photographs. It is part of a large book series called “Edible,” published by Reaktion Books. Special features are an extensive listing of pomegranate cultivars and a selection of historical and modern recipes for the fruit. The narrative is thoroughly researched, featuring a comprehensive list of references. It also contains a list of print and online resources and a modest index.



Richard Lord  
Retired Biology Teacher  
Presque Isle High School  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
mlord@aol.com



**Seaweed – A Global History.** By Kaori O’Connor, 2017. Reaktion Books (ISBN: 9781780237534). Hardcover. \$14.49.

Seventy-one percent of the earth’s surface is covered by oceans. In all of those oceans are a variety of marine algae, better known as seaweeds. Categorized in three color groups - red, brown, and green - they are not completely classified and their diversity is not fully understood. There are believed to be about 10,000 kinds and “they are essential to the life of the planet,” with 75% of the oxygen we breathe being supplied by marine algae.

Seaweeds are significant in the history and culture of numerous countries, with some references going back thousands of years. They appear in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, where Gilgamesh weighted himself down with stones to reach the bottom of the sea where he secured a plant (seaweed) that he believed would make people immortal. But the seaweed was stolen and consumed by a snake, which now can shed its skin and grow a new one. People can’t do this, so they must die because Gilgamesh lost the seaweed.

Ancient Greek societies were suspicious of the ocean and feared seaweed. The Greek sea god, Pontus, was portrayed with hair consisting of seaweeds that trapped and drowned sailors. But not all Greeks feared seaweed. Pliny the Elder wrote that seaweed applied to the body could relieve gout and lessen ankle pain and swelling. Ninth century Arab physicians also used seaweeds medicinally to treat cancer, cirrhosis, kidney problems, arthritis, hemorrhoids and other conditions. Arabs also covered their ships with a non-flammable brown seaweed extract, thus saving the ships from being burned by enemies.

In Japan, seaweeds are considered “our way of eating.” Some people eat seaweed at every meal, with the most popular species being wakame, nori, and kombu. Ancient Japanese poetry is filled with references to seaweed. In China, use of seaweed started historically as a medicine. A complex system, *Huangdi Neijing* (Classic of Internal Medicine), has changed greatly since its origin about 200BC. The author of *Seaweed* provides an interesting explanation of normal health and how medicines, including seaweed, are used to treat illness in this complicated system. Additionally, a table provides a description of the “Eight Main Methods used to Prepare Seaweed in China.”

The examples given are just a few of the fascinating stories about seaweed in this book. Other interesting accounts include ways that seaweeds impacted history and culture, e.g. When Columbus crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, 23 days of his 35 day voyage were spent in the Sargasso Sea, where the “floating seaweed was so thick it

# Call for Nominations

## The 2018 Nominating Committee is looking for your recommendations for NABT Leaders.

The candidates for president-elect alternate from the college/university community one year and the pre-college community the next. Candidates from the Two-Year College Level are sought for the 2018 election. Candidates for NABT Office should have: (1) evidence of active participation in NABT such as previous service as an elected officer, committee chairperson or member, section or affiliate leader, etc. (2) at least five years of continuous membership in NABT; and (3) five years experience teaching biology, life science, or science education.

### Nominate yourself!

Who else knows your interests and qualifications as well as you do?

### Nominations accepted online at

<https://www.nabt.org/About-Leadership-Opportunities>

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE IN 2018

**President-Elect**

**Director-at-Large**

**Region II (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA)**

**Region VI (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, PR)**

**Region VIII (CO, ID, MT, NV, UT, WY)**



### Don't delay!

The deadline for nomination is **March 15**

resembled meadows." The Wampanoag of Massachusetts, alternating between land and seashore, prepared *apponaugs*, seafood feasts where seaweeds were used in the cooking. In 17<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, the *Crith Gablach*, a set of hospitality rules, required that, if people of status came to one's home, dulce was to be offered to them. Seaweed was an important part of the diet on coastal Scandinavia and it was a valuable provision on Viking voyages.

An afterword to the book suggests that "the future is seaweed." Already seaweeds are used in the cosmetics and toiletries industries, food processing, furniture care products, paints, dyes, fire-fighting foam, soil conditioners, and bioplastics. Possible future uses of seaweeds include agricultural products, pharmaceutical products, and perhaps even a source of "green energy." An article in *New Yorker* magazine stated that "seaweed could be a miracle food - if we can figure out how to make it taste good."

Though limited in the biological features and heavy on the historic and cultural aspects of seaweed, the short captivating book is fun to read and is a treasure trove of fascinating information. It is part of a large book series called "Edible," published by Reaktion Books. A special feature is a selection of recipes for various seaweeds. The narrative is thoroughly researched, featuring a comprehensive list of references. It also contains a list of print and online resources and a modest index.



Richard Lord  
Retired Biology Teacher  
Presque Isle High School  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
rnlord@aol.com

AMANDA L. GLAZE is an Assistant Professor of Middle Grades & Secondary Science Education at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. In addition to science teacher education, she has taught courses in biological sciences for grades 7–12 and undergraduate students over the last ten years. Her interests include evolutionary biology, science and religion, and the intersections of science and society—specifically where scientific understandings are deemed controversial by the public. Glaze holds degrees in science education from The University of Alabama and Jacksonville State University. Her address is Department of Teaching & Learning, Georgia Southern University, PO BOX 8134, Statesboro, GA 30458; e-mail: [aglaze@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:aglaze@georgiasouthern.edu).