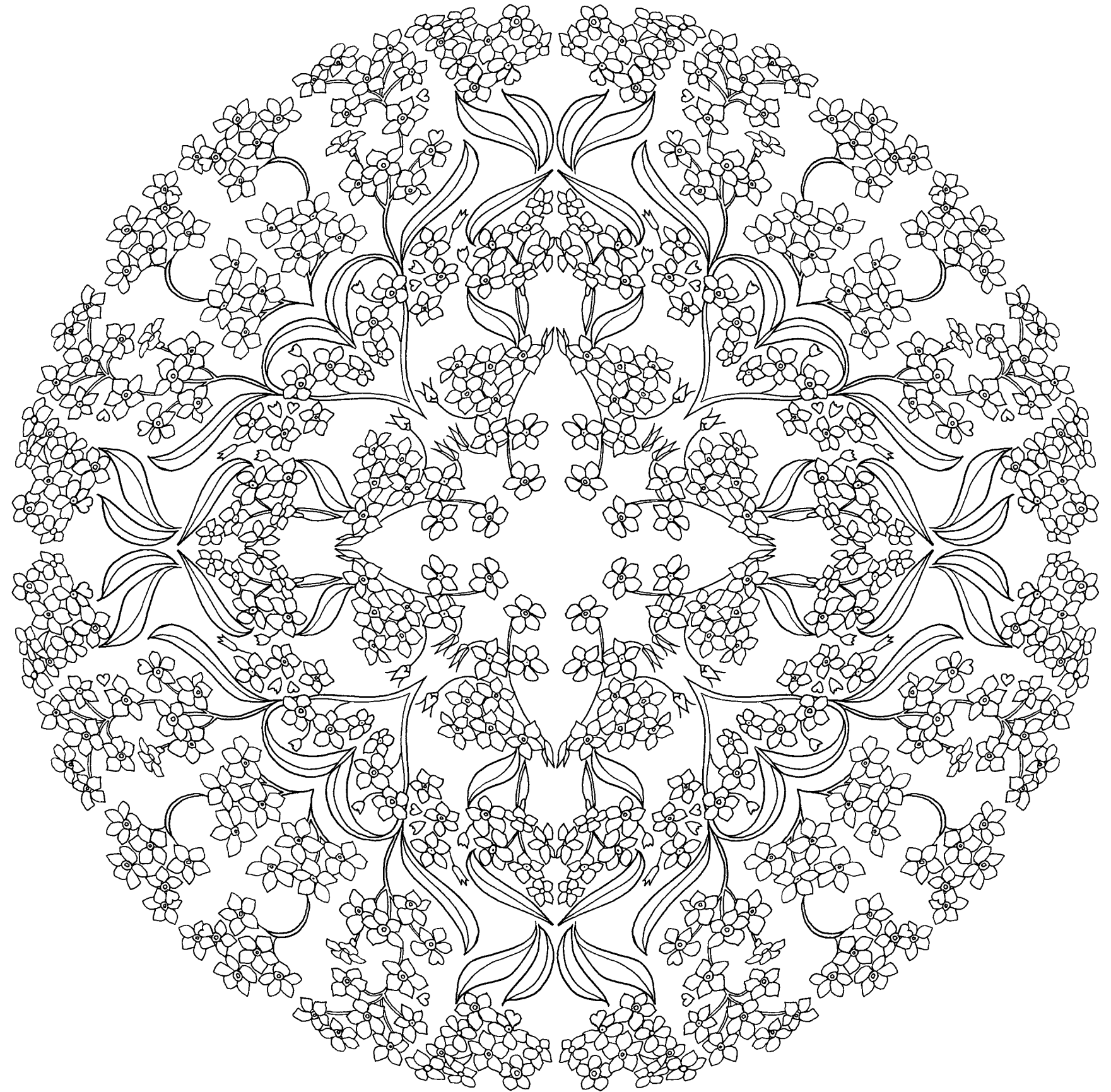


Forget-me-not *Myosotis*

If ever a flower represented faithfulness and enduring love it is the dainty forget-me-not. There are many different species known by the same common name, however the water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpioides*) is native to Britain and has clear blue flowers with tiny yellow or white eyes, atop tall hairy stems. The flowers emerge from pale pink buds each spring, and this resilient little plant will keep flowering all through the summer.

Forget-me-nots have been symbols of love and constancy since the Middle Ages, and have appeared in many works of art and poetry since that time. They were extremely popular on Victorian Valentine cards as the classic floral messenger, while they also make an appearance in DH Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. They are the perfect little flower for creating a meaningful posy.



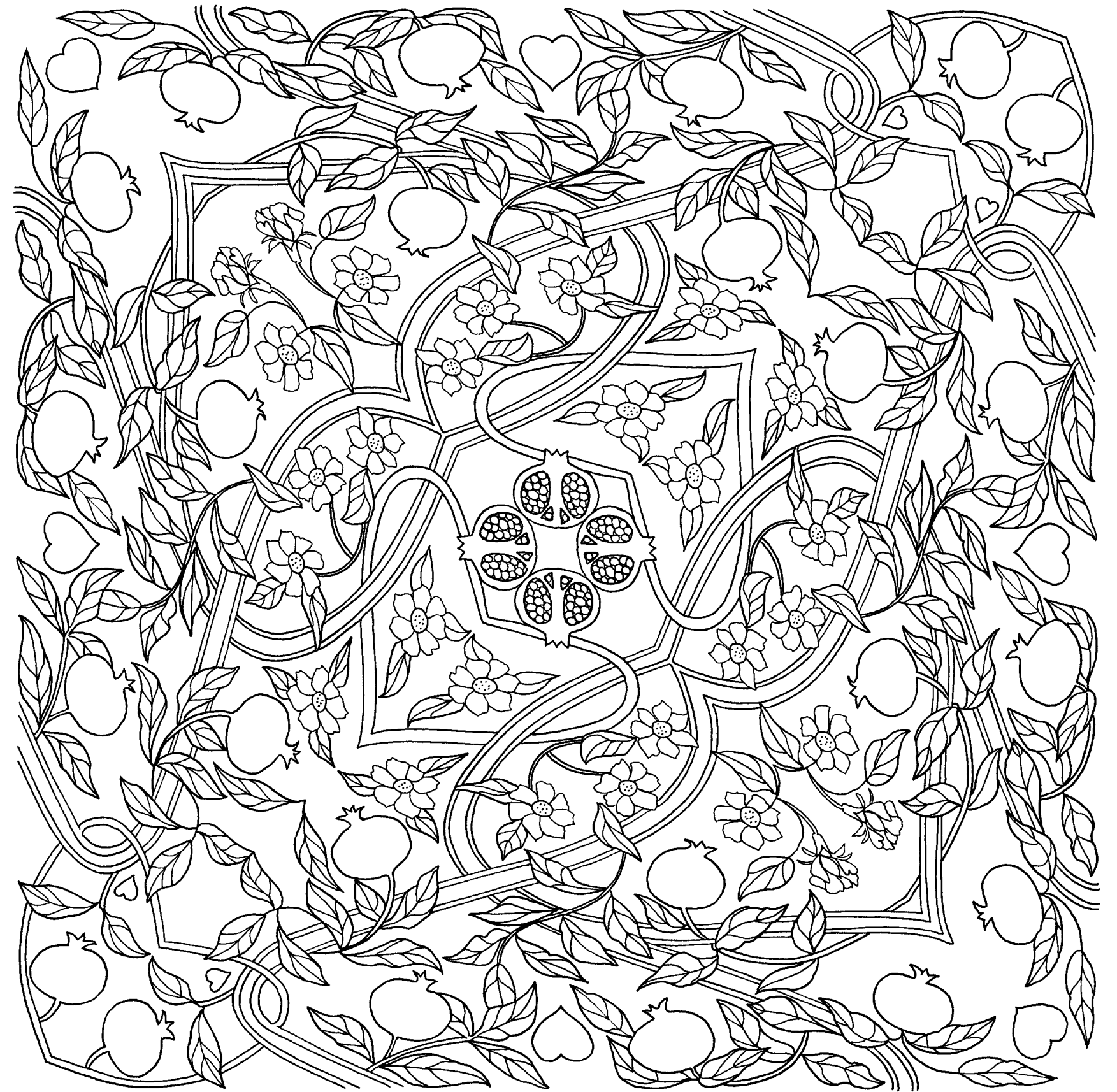


Pomegranate

Punica granatum

The sweet and juicy pomegranate is surrounded by legend. Their stunning ruby-red flesh made them a powerful symbol of life and abundance. In Greek mythology, the goddess Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the god of the underworld. Her mother, Demeter, goddess of the harvest, mourned for her and all crops and plants on Earth ceased to grow. Zeus commanded Persephone's return, but as she had eaten six pomegranate seeds while in the underworld she was condemned to spend several months each year with Hades. This was the Greeks' explanation for the seasons as the return of Persephone meant the beginning of spring. Today, the pomegranate still has strong symbolism in Greek culture. On important religious days pomegranate dishes are served and the fruits given as gifts. At Greek weddings it is traditional to break one on the ground.

Many authors have used the symbolism of the pomegranate, including William Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the red colour of its flowers and fruit helps relay their passion. Pomegranates also represent fertility and plenty in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions.





Love apple (tomato)

Solanum lycopersicum

When the tomato first arrived on British shores from Mexico in the 1500s, it was thought to be highly poisonous as it looked similar to its relative the deadly nightshade. The fruits were nicknamed 'golden apples' because the first arrivals were large and yellow in colour. Their popularity was slow to spread throughout Europe and many people simply grew them as ornamental plants.

In the 1600s however, some people tried to give the tomato a reputation as an aphrodisiac and nicknamed it the 'love apple' instead. Most were not convinced and it was not until the 1800s that tomatoes began to be widely eaten.

While herbalists of the past experimented with medicinal uses for tomatoes, today we know that they are a great ingredient in a healthy diet. Through years of breeding, their flavour and nutrition has increased, so that now they are packed with antioxidants and vitamins. The lycopene found in tomatoes is thought to help reduce the risk of certain cancers, while they are also thought to help keep your heart healthy. Perhaps they are 'love apples' after all.

