



Kalamata Olive (*Olea europaea*)

Life Span:

- Extremely hardy trees that can withstand the harshest conditions and live on for hundreds of years. The oldest know Olive tree that still stands tall and produces olives is located in Crete and is estimated to be approximately 2000-3000 years old.

First Harvestable Fruit:

- Trees produce fruit from very early on especially on grafted varieties however most trees produce a productive harvestable crop after approximately 4 years.

Harvest Time:

- The tree produces flowers in early spring and harvest time is in late summer to autumn depending on conditions and whether Olives are picked green or black depending on preference and usage.

Expected years of productive fruiting:

- Olive trees can be productive for hundreds of years and are often regarded as the most productive tree per length of growing years.

Country of Origin:

- Common olive (*Olea europaea*) is native to southern Europe, northern Africa and western Asia.

Annual average rainfall in the country of origin:

- Precipitation averages from 48 millimetres (1.9 inches) to approximately 500 millimetres.

Latin species name and family:

- Species name: *Olea europaea*
- Family: Oleaceae

Interesting facts and uses:

- The ripe olives are also harvested for processing as food but are left on the trees longer if they are to be used for oil. Six to eight months after the flowers bloomed, the fruit will reach its greatest weight; and 20-30% of that weight (excluding the pit) is oil. Inside each olive, the pit contains one or two seeds; botanists call this kind of fruit with a seed-bearing stone a drupe; plums and peaches are other drupes.
- Olive producers usually manufacture olive oil in addition to the fruit harvest. Another byproduct that is growing in popularity is processed olive leaves. They are made into tea, put in caplets as crushed leaves, and processed as an extract;

or in tablets; all forms are believed to aid blood flow and inhibit viruses and diabetes.

- Waste from olive processing consists of the pits and damaged fruit. The pits are sold as food for pigs, and all other olive waste can be ground and used as organic fertilizer. Some manufacturers return it to their groves to fertilize the olive trees.

Height, width and shape of the tree at maturity:

- An evergreen tree usually growing 2-10 m tall, but occasionally reaching up to 15 m in height when not pruned.
- its oppositely arranged leaves are elongated in shape (3-7 cm long and 0.8-2 cm wide) with pointed or hooked tips.
- these leaves have glossy dark green upper surfaces and silvery, greenish or yellowish-brown undersides.
- its small creamy-white flowers have four petals that are joined into a very short tube at the base.
- its purplish-black oval-shaped fruit (15-30 mm long and 6-20 mm wide) contain a single hard seed (10-15 mm long) surrounded by oily flesh
- Productive trees are usually kept at around 3-4m in height.
- Trunk width/circumference varies with age, with most productive 'young' trees having a trunk with of between 30-45 centimetres.
- Arbour/Canopy width is usually pruned to an approximate circumference of 3-4m.
- Olive trees are described as having an 'Oval' form that is usually pruned in a standardised fashion.

Challenges or special requirements:

- Common olive (*Olea europaea*) is regarded as a significant environmental weed in South Australia, and as an environmental weed in Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT. It was recently listed as a priority environmental weed in at least one Natural Resource Management region.
- It's potential as an environmental weed and should be managed in sensitive bushland and conservation areas.
- A weed of warmer temperate and semi-arid regions, particularly those with a Mediterranean type climate. It becomes naturalised in open woodlands, parks, lowland grasslands, waste areas and along roadsides and waterways.
- Olives flourish where there is good drainage and cool winters, with hot dry summers without humidity. Prefers a humus rich soil.
- Otherwise, the Kalamata Olive is an incredibly hardy tree that will tolerate a variety of conditions and is very drought tolerant.