



OLIVE TREES

OLEA EUROPAEA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When should I plant my olive tree? | Spring is the best time to plant an olive tree, ideally after all threat of frost is over. This will ensure optimal root establishment so that your tree is ready for cold weather when it sets in. If you do purchase later in the season (anytime after mid-July) keep the olive tree in its nursery pot through the winter in a protected outdoor area (such as a covered porch or patio, or under your eaves on the west or south side of your house) and plant into the ground the following spring. Consider using mycorrhizae when planting your olive. This beneficial bacteria will help with root establishment by encouraging more vigorous, fibrous roots. This is helpful with all plants but especially our olives which need a hearty root system to for cold hardiness.

Where should I plant my olive tree? | Choose a sunny south- or west-facing location as olive trees need at least 8 hours of intense light each day. The more sun and heat you can give your olive tree, the better! Protect your tree from high winds if possible. Make sure your olive is planted in a location with good drainage as they do poorly in soggy, wet conditions. Plant your tree so that the soil level within the pot is flush with the surrounding soil, making sure the crown is above soil level. Treat the surrounding soil with lime per manufacturer's instructions to help neutralize our typically acidic soils. Olive trees do best in neutral to slightly alkaline soil.

How often should I water my olive tree? | Give your tree a good soak after planting, as this helps ensure that the soil makes good contact with its roots and eliminates any air pockets. Water regularly until the rainy season. Bear in mind that olive trees do not like wet feet and need good drainage. If you have experience growing lavender, olives share the same watering (and growing) needs which makes them ideal companions!

When should I fertilize my olive tree? | Olives do not prefer excessively fertile soil as they originate in the hot, dry and porous soils of the Mediterranean. Over fertilizing can lead to poor fruiting. Only feed your olive tree a couple of times during the active growing season (May-July), using a fruit tree fertilizer. Apply according to the manufacturer's instructions. Fertilizing too early or too late in the season can lead to cold damage. If you like, you can amend the area around your olive tree with organic compost once a year to improve our clay soil's structure and increase drainage.

When should I prune my olive tree? | Giving your tree three to four years to establish before you begin your pruning regimen would be ideal. The more leaves your olive tree has, the more energy it will have to produce the roots needed to become cold hardy. Spring pruning can begin after the threat of frost. Open wounds during freezing weather, especially on young trees, can greatly damage them. Begin by pruning out any dead, damaged and/or crossing branches. Keep your olive's center open so that its fruit is more accessible to light. When pruning for aesthetic purposes, keep in mind that your olive's branches initiate their flowers in November, and fruit on one-year-old shoots, usually the first 8-12" of it's branch. Pruning too much may decrease the amount of fruit your tree will produce.

Do I need more than one variety of olive tree in order to produce olives? | Some olive varieties are reputedly self-fertile while others need another variety of olive in order to cross-pollinate. We have found that even self-fertile olive trees will produce a larger olive harvest when another variety is introduced. As olive trees are not heavy-producers in the first place, we highly recommend planting two or more varieties if your goal is to harvest fruit. All olives are wind-pollinated and should be planted within 20' of each other, making sure no major obstructions (i.e. buildings) are in between.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

When do I harvest my olives? | Unripe olives are green, whereas fully ripe olives are black. The best time to pick your olives will depend on the preservation method you choose. All olives need to be cured or pickled before consumption. It is important to harvest your olives before a hard freeze sets in which can deteriorate the fruit quality. We typically harvest our estate-grown olives in early to mid-November for milling our olive oil. Bear in mind that it takes around 6,500 olives (depending on varietal) to produce one gallon of olive oil. Home growers rarely, if ever, will produce enough olives for oil needs. Fortunately, we know a wonderful destination for delicious olive oil!

Will my olive trees survive our winters? | The olive varieties we offer are specifically chosen for their high tolerance to cold weather and are test-grown on our property (either in the orchards or our landscape) so we are confident of their ability to survive our winters. We are continually testing new cultivars for our PNW climate. Keep an eye out also for our “Northwest Select” olive trees which are propagated here at Durant from some of the toughest, oldest trees in our orchards. Just remember that growing olives in Oregon is still considered experimental. We would love for you to try one and help us with the experiment!

Can I grow my olive tree in a pot? | Absolutely. Olive trees can grow well in pots indefinitely. Choose a pot large enough to allow for multiple years’ growth, ending with a pot 24-30” in diameter (roughly half wine barrel size). Choose a regular to coarse potting mix for your container. Growing trees in pots will restrict their growth, making it a great way to add olive trees to small spaces. Follow the guidelines above with the exception of watering. Let your container-grown olive trees dry out 1-2 inches below soil level, then soak thoroughly until water drains out from the bottom.

Can I grow my olive tree indoors? | Olive trees thrive outdoors. They are ancient plants that need cool weather as part of their growth cycle and wind to bear fruit. While we wholeheartedly recommend growing olive trees outside, we realize that bringing them indoors as houseplants has grown in popularity. If you do choose to take your olive tree indoors, make sure you transition it during warm weather. If you transition one of our nursery-grown olive trees indoors once the cooler evenings set in, you risk stressing the tree and may cause it to defoliate. Avoid placing your tree in the path of any forced air vents or drafts. Ideally, locate it near a west- or south-facing window where it can receive as much direct, intense light as possible. Once the first two inches of soil have dried out, soak until you see water drain out from the bottom. Please note that your olive tree will not bear fruit indoors.

What's wrong with my olive tree? | Compared to Europe and California, we deal with far less and far less serious pests and disease on our olives. When issues with the two do arise, they are easily taken care of with organic methods.

Peacock Spot: this is a fungal issue that presents itself as a large-ish spot, reminiscent of a peacock feather, which leads to a yellowing mottled appearance on the leaf. If untreated, it interferes with trees ability to photosynthesize. Treat by removing affected leaves and completely disposing of them, (instead of just letting them fall to the ground as it can reintroduce the issue) and using a copper sulfate fungicide according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hard Shell Black Scale: the most telling sign of this pest is a sooty covering on the trees leaves and branches. This is a fungus (sooty mold) that is attracted to the excitement of the scale. Turn over affected leaves and look in and you will most likely see a hard black bump which is actually the scale. Treat by washing off the sooty mold with warm water and a gentle soap and remove any scale found then use an organic pesticide, we use Neem oil, per manufacturer's instructions. Treating your tree for the scale will prevent any sooty mold from appearing.

DURANT

5510 NE Breyman Orchards Road • Dayton, OR 97114
503.864.2000 • info@durantoregon.com

DURANTOREGON.COM