

# Olive Trees

DID YOU KNOW  
KINGS AND  
PRAISED ATHLETES  
WERE ANOINTED WITH  
OLIVE OIL IN ANCIENT  
GREECE?

## CAN I GROW OLIVES?

Olive trees thrive in climates with mild winters and warm summers, typically growing in zones 8-11. Olives are native to the Mediterranean, Africa, Europe, and Asia but can also grow in climates that resemble that of the East. In addition to being a great-tasting food, olives are high in Vitamin E, and are an excellent source of antioxidants, which are great for your the health of your heart.

## HOW TO PLANT OLIVES

Olive trees can be grown in a variety of soils, but you should avoid heavy clay. We recommend spacing your trees at least 20 feet apart. The best time to plant is in the fall/winter (when the plant is dormant) or in the spring before it has leafed out for the season. To plant, dig a hole twice as wide and deep as needed. Mix a combination of 25% compost with 75% of your soil. Fill the bottom half of the hole around your plant with enough of your soil mix so that the surface of the root ball is flush with the ground. After planting, backfill the hole with the rest of your soil mixture and add more water to prevent air pockets.



## MAINTENANCE

After planting, be sure to water your olive tree every few days for the few weeks. Once your plant has been established, it will only need to be watered when the soil has dried out. Be sure not to overwater your tree as that can result in the roots becoming waterlogged. Olives should produce fruit once the tree is 4-5 years old under proper growing conditions. Wait to prune your olive tree until early spring to protect against freeze damage. Even then, they will only need a small amount of pruning. Simply remove any dead or unproductive branches to free up more room for growth.

## COMMON PESTS AND DISEASES

As with any other plants, olive trees are susceptible to several diseases and pests which you will need to be on the lookout for. It is important to check your olives regularly to identify and treat any developing diseases or infections.

### Leaf-footed Bugs

Leaf-footed bugs can attack the fruit of olive trees and cause damage to the leaves of your olive tree. To kill leaf-footed bugs and control their spread, spray your tree with an organic insecticide such as neem oil or spinosad soap.

### Cotton Root Rot

Cotton root rot is limited to the south-central and the southwestern United States. This fungus will be more dangerous to your olive if there are other plants or weeds in the area competing with your tree. If you take care to plant your olive tree in an area with prime growing conditions and healthy soil, it won't be as prone to cotton root rot.

## COMMON VARIETIES GROWN IN TEXAS

**Arbequina** - Heavy producer, large oil concentration. Self-fruitful.

**Arbosana** - Smaller olives, heavy producer. Needs an Arbequina for pollination.

**Mission Olive** - Small fruit, great for oil production. Self-fruitful.

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