

## **Growing Olives in Texas**

Olive trees prefer to be in areas with mild winters and long, dry summers. They set flower buds after winter climates consist of warm days and cool nights. This warm day/cool night vernalization is necessary for fruit bud development. Olive trees also need well-drained soil that is neutral to alkaline. (pH of 6.5-8.0) They like fine-textured soils that are a sandy loam to a silty clay loam. Although drought tolerant, they provide a much greater yield if they are watered regularly. The first harvest of the olives usually is approximately 4 years after they have been transplanted into the ground. Olives begin green and mature to black, some varieties are chosen before they are completely mature for color and taste. The following varieties are recommended for the South Texas area:

### **Spanish varieties**

*Arbequina*: Produces a high quality oil made from a small fruit. Its oil has a delicate, buttery-almond taste. Harvest when olives are black. Early production in 2-3 years after transplanted to ground.

*Arbosana*: An old variety that has become popular again. Its oil is strong and often mixed with milder oils to give them more flavor and improve their shelf life. Harvest when the olives are black. Produce early in 2-3 years after transplanted to ground.

*Empeltre*: Produces a fine flavored oil with an underlying hint of apple. Harvest when olives are black. Used as an oil and for pickling (table fruit). Drought tolerant.

*Manzanillo*: World's #1 table olive! It also makes a delicious oil. The fruit is harvested early when it is green. Excellent flavor and texture. Very cold tolerant.

*Picual*: Produces an intense, full-bodied oil. High-yield and cold tolerant. Long shelf life. Harvest when black.

### **United States varieties**

*Mission*: A California cultivar that is great for pickling (table olives) and for oil. Harvest green or black for pickling and black(or brown-red) for oil processing. Contains a high oil content. Early production in 2-3 years after transplanted in ground.

### **Italian varieties**

*Frantoio*: High-quality oil and table fruit that has a nutty flavor. Self-fertile and sets fruit early. Fruit should be picked when it is purple-green. (Mature fruit is purple-black.)

*Leccino*: Hardy and disease resistant. Grown for oil and table fruit. It is harvested when the fruit is purple-green. (Purple-black at maturation.) It is self-sterile and needs a pollinator. A fine oil but commonly blended with Frantoio.

*Maurino*: Early maturation. Produces a good quality oil. Harvest when the fruit is purple-black. Can take colder, humid areas. Self-sterile and needs a pollinator.

*Moraiolo*: A high quality oil. Harvest when fruit turns from green to deep, purple-green. (Purple-black at maturation.)

*Pendolino*: Used mostly as a pollinator but contains 20-22% good quality oil. Cold tolerant. Harvest when black.

### **Greek varieties**

*Koroneiki*: Produces an oil that has a delicious flavor and wonderful aroma. It has a small fruit but has a high yield. It has a distinguishable green-gold oil. Early producer in 2-3 years after transplanting in ground.