

Olive

Olea europaea · Olive family

DIFFICULTY Easy
TYPE Evergreen perennial tree
MATURITY 3–5 years to first useful crop



SUN
Full sun



WATER
Low once established,
drought-tolerant



SOIL PH
6.0–8.0



SPACING
6–8m



DEPTH
as per pot

01 Built for dry conditions

Olives are among the most drought-tolerant fruiting trees suited to Australian conditions — once established, they need remarkably little supplementary water.

02 Planting

METHOD	Plant from a potted tree.
SOIL	Free-draining, tolerates poor and alkaline soils well.
TIMING	Plant in spring or autumn.

04 Problems

- **Olive lace bug** — stippled, discoloured leaves; generally manageable, encourage predators.
- **Fruit fly** — net or manage as fruit develops.
- **Peacock spot** — leaf spotting in humid climates; improve airflow.
- **Poor fruiting in overly rich soil or with too much water** — olives generally prefer lean, dry conditions.

06 Companions & rotation

PLANT NEARBY	AVOID NEARBY	ROTATION NOTE
Rosemary Lavender	Overly rich, wet soil	Not applicable — very long-lived perennial tree.



loose stake, first year

03 Growing care

- Water regularly for the first 1–2 years, then reduce significantly.
- Prune in late winter/early spring to maintain an open shape.
- Feed lightly once a year, if at all — olives cope well in lean soil.
- Fruit must always be cured before eating — never eaten fresh off the tree.

05 Harvest & storage

SIGNS	Green olives: full size, still green. Black olives: fully coloured and slightly soft.
METHOD	Hand-pick or lay nets and shake branches gently.
CURING	Requires curing in brine or lye before eating — never eaten straight off the tree.
STORAGE	Cured olives keep for months in brine; oil pressing is a separate process.