

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.

Planting timing varies significantly by Australian climate zone. Set your zone above (or use the Find My Climate Zone tool) for guidance tailored to your own area.

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.
PRESERVING	See Dehydrating (drying grapes and similar fruit) or Canning & Bottling (jams and preserves) for ways to keep a harvest surplus.