

Olea (*Oleaceae*)



europaea, Olive tree

Origin: Mediterranean basin. One of the longest living evergreen trees (up to 2000 years) which very slowly grows to the height of 9m with a width of 5-7m, even wider if it has enough space. When the plant is young the trunk is straight and covered in a smooth, silvery-grey bark. Later the trunk becomes twisted, knobbly, dark and often with cavities. Leaves: evergreen, opposite, leathery, oval or narrowly oval, glaucous green and smooth on the upper surface, paler and covered in a silvery tomentum on the underside. Flowers: they open from April to June and are white, not very showy but fragrant, joined in clusters at the leaf axil. Fruit –

Olives: botanically speaking they are ovoidal drupes which contain one seed (the stone), they are green and turn black when they ripen in autumn. Olive oil is produced by pressing the olives. Cultivation: the Olive tree loves the sun and does not like excessive moisture. It requires deep, dry, permeable soil, if possible a south-facing position protected from strong winds. Tolerates drought. Hardiness: botanists place it in Zone 9 but experience has taught us that in the last 20 years the Olive tree can withstand temperatures of -7/-10°C, more or less occasional, without suffering damage.

Olea

**europaea "Frangivento"
(*O. europaea* "Pyramidalis")**

Olive tree with pyramidal habit that looks like a Cypress tree. Upright branches, very close together. Evergreen leaves, lanceolate, narrow, 4-6cm long, 1 cm wide, vivid green on the upper side, silvery on underside. Fragrant white flowers, followed by ovoidal fruit, medium sized, reddish-blue when ripe, very good for olive oil. Withstands strong winds. Recommended for ornamental hedges. Can also be formed into a standard tree.

