



## BUCHANAN'S NATIVE PLANTS



# Olive Trees for Houston

### Arbequina Olive

This variety will exhibit a spreading, somewhat weeping canopy. It is self-fertile and bears fruit earlier than traditional varieties. Prized for its mild buttery oil, the Arbequina olive is small and yields a very aromatic and fruity flavor that is low in bitterness. Good in container or in the garden. Cold hardy.

### Arbosana Olive

Picturesque, evergreen tree with 2" bright green, silver dusted leaves & small to medium, purple-brown, late season fruit. Good in container or in the garden. Like Arbequina, Arbosana is self-fertile. Frost hardy in Houston and north to USDA zone 8.

## PLANTING

Olive trees require a well-drained soil and a sunny position. Choose a site that receives at least six hours of direct sun per day. Full sun is ideal. Avoid sites where water stands during rainy periods. Plant your tree at the depth it has been growing in the pot. Do not amend the soil other than to add **expanded shale** to improve drainage.

## WATERING

Once established, olive trees are among the most drought-resistant trees in the world. That does not mean they prefer to suffer for water. You will have to water sufficiently to get your tree established and thereafter as necessary during dry periods. Monitor your soil moisture by digging down a couple of inches. Water when the subsurface soil becomes dry to the touch.

## PRUNING

Olive trees may be pruned to the desired shape and size. Some people prefer a tree form; others like a rounded shrub. Keep in mind that olives bear their fruit on the previous year's new growth.

## FERTILIZING

Fertilize with **MicroLife 6-2-4** twice a year, once in the spring and once in mid-summer. If you have soil with a pH below 7.5, add **dolomite** lime when you fertilize.



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### PLANTING IN POTS

Olives make beautiful potted trees. As long as you have a sufficiently large pot, the tree can live up to eight or nine years in it; longer with careful root pruning. Keep the pot in full sun.

The pot should have ample drainage holes and should be propped up on blocks to ensure the holes are not obstructed. Potting soil is usually too acid for olive trees. This can be adjusted by adding **dolomite** lime to the soil according to package directions.

Potted trees will need to be watered more often than trees planted in the ground. Allow the soil to dry somewhat before watering, then water until the soil is soaked. Many people prefer to feed container plants with a liquid fertilizer. Apply **MicroLife "Ocean Harvest"** monthly.

### HOW LONG BEFORE I GET FRUIT?

That is a function of cultivar. Arbequina and Arbosana trees fruit at an early age (about 3 years). Other cultivars do not make fruit until they are five to twelve years old.

### FUN FACT

A healthy olive tree will live about 100 years. Some have lived well over 1000 years!