



Nichols Garden Nursery

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**Herbs, Seeds & Goods
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Arbequina Olive

Soil: Neutral pH or slightly alkaline soil with good drainage. Grow in full sun. Arbequina olives can be grown directly in the ground or in a container. A half wine barrel will make an attractive planting and your olive can grow in it for many years.

Staking and Pruning: Young trees benefit from staking as new growth tends to be wispy. To quickly develop a sturdy root system loosely tie the central trunk to a stake strong enough to hold the tree in place when buffeted by wind. Pruning is best done in fall after harvest. Prune only to remove dead branches and thin the crown of the tree so all parts of the plant receive adequate light. To train plants

to a



single trunk clip any suckers or branches growing below where you want the branching crown to form.

Water: Plants need regular watering during the winter season to prepare them for vigorous growth and bloom in spring. When fruit has set give an additional watering to develop good fruit size and oil content. If growing in containers water less frequently than a normal vegetable container. Soil should be dry down to 1 to 1.5". Water thoroughly.

Fertilizing: In fall after olives are harvested apply a top dressing of compost or well aged manure and work into soil. This is appropriate for in ground plants and container grown plants.

Pollination and Fruiting: Arbequina olive trees are self-pollinating. Pollination occurs when pollen becomes wind borne. If your container grown plant does not get wind movement, brush the leaves and give the flowering branches an occasional shake.

Insects: Olives can occasionally be troubled with scale. Scale typically can be found on the underside of leaves or on the woody stems. Ants may be an indication of scale which appears as raised brown bumps. To eradicate scale on small trees use a cotton swab or cloth soaked in rubbing alcohol and wipe down the area in which scale appears.

Harvesting: Harvest olives when they are ripe green in September/October and or mature black in November/December. Begin processing within 24 hours of harvesting. The following recipe is for brine cured olives. Other traditional methods include a dry salt cure and lye cures. The brine cures produces a good tasting result and is simple and safe. This recipe is slightly modified from one by Lynn Alley in her excellent book, *Lost Arts-A Celebration of Culinary Traditions*.

Making Brine Cured Olives

Step 1—Place your clean olives in cold water and change the water each day for ten days. During this process weight the olives down with a plate so they are all fully submerged.

Step 2—Make a brine solution of 1 cup non-iodized salt to 1 gallon cold water. Make sufficient brine to cover all your olives which have been drained before placing in brine solution. Allow to sit in brine for one week and then drain and place in a fresh brine solution. Repeat this four times. So that olives over a four week curing period olives are in four fresh brines solutions each week.

Step 3—At the end of four weeks transfer olives to a weaker brine solution of ½ cup non-iodized salt to one gallon water. Flavor of the olives will steadily improve and deepen as they continue curing in the brine, usually they are ready to eat in two to three months. Taste to see if they seem ready to eat. If you want to experiment with additional flavor add four or five bay leaves and several strips of lemon zest to the brined olives.