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12346

Ölbaum

## Common Olive

Olea europea

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The evergreen Common Olive is the most typical cultural tree of southern Europe and can reach an almost biblical age of some hundred years, during which the significant trunk becomes even more gnarly. It can easily be cultivated as a carefree tub plant and likes to be kept outdoors during the summer. Even in a large pot it can become quite tall, but it will grow more slow and rather bushy. The oval-shaped longish leaves have a white-grey colouring on the bottom side and create the silvery shimmer of the tree. In summer, the *Olea europea* produces yellow-white flower panicles, and later on, its fleshy stone fruits that are green coloured while unripe and turn black when full matured.

**Natural location:** The *Olea europea* has been cultivated in the Mediterranean region since the 4th millennium B.C.

**Cultivation:** Seed propagation indoors is possible throughout the year. To increase its germinability, you can slightly roughen the hard seed with a soft file or a piece of sandpaper and place it in warm water for about a day for priming. Then, plant the seeds about 1 cm deep in moist potting compost, put some compost earth on top and cover the seed container with clear film to keep the earth moist. Don't forget to make some holes in the clear film and take it every second or third day completely off for about 2 hours. That way you avoid mold formation on your potting compost. Place the seed container somewhere bright and warm between 25°C and 30°C (for instance near a heater) and keep the earth moist, but not wet. It usually takes four to twelve weeks until germination.

**Place:** You can keep your Olive tree indoors throughout the year at a place with enough sun. Ideally however, the Common Olive likes to be kept in the garden outside or on your balcony during the summer.

**Care:** See that the earth is always moist. Waterlogging can damage the roots, but if it is too dry, the tree will cast the leaves. During the growth period between April and Mid September, you should give fertilizer for tub plants every two weeks. The best time for repotting with standard soil is during spring, even that is only necessary every five years for older plants due its slow growth. You can prune the tree from time to time to cultivate a nice and bushy plant.

**During the winter:** Even though the Common Olive can resist frost up to -10° Celsius when properly protected, it is still best, to keep it in a bright place indoors with temperatures between 5° and 10° Celsius. If really necessary, you may as well bring your plant in the cellar for hibernation, but in that case, it will cast the leaves and has to be pruned to sprout again next spring.