



**Apulia Grove Olives  
Small Batch Processing Service  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Season 2017**

**First things first: please call us BEFORE you pick!**

Olives must be pressed when they're fresh off the tree, as soon as possible. The last thing you want is to call us after you've picked, only to find that we can't fit you in because of other jobs. You are safer leaving the fruit on the tree for another few days, than letting it sweat and deteriorate in containers. We won't be able to press it after it's gone bad.

Play it safe: call us first.

• **What has changed for season 2017?**

- Our minimum batch size is now 50 KG. Anything less, and you are unlikely to be satisfied with the amount of oil you can get.
- We have an extra service as a result. If you have less than 50KG, we can make up the difference using our fruit, which we'll need to pick. The cost for this is \$1 per KG of fruit that we add to your batch so obviously, no more than \$50, and most likely \$10-\$20.

• **What is your service?**

- We offer an olive oil pressing service for batches of olives between 50 KG and 200 KG for those who have small or hobbyist groves, or odd amounts of fruit at some point in the harvest, but have difficulty finding an operator who will accept small amounts.

• **How firm are those batch sizes?**

- Our machine is a Rappanelli Mini-70 so we can do batches below 50 KG if you insist. However, you won't get much oil as there is inevitably some paste which gets wasted. If you really, really want to press less than 50 KG we will do it.
- Above 200 KG is a problem for us as the machine is not really big enough to do large batches and we only have the one. If your estimate is a bit out, we will press up to 300 KG but there is a surcharge per KG in excess of 200 KG. Our full scale of charges is at the end of this document. We revise these every year.
- We have scales in our processing centre and we'll agree on the amount of fruit before starting.

- **When should I pick my olives?**

- Ah, the tricky questions! In Central Victoria and Melbourne metro area, start thinking about this around Easter. On the peninsula or in Gippsland, it may be a few weeks later.
- Look for this kind of thing in your fruit:



Once between 60-70% of the fruit have turned or are turning purple, you should pick for the most robust and healthiest oil.

- You can also test the ripeness by squeezing a few selected olives between thumb and forefinger. If they're very hard or impossible to squeeze this way, the fruit is underripe and could most likely wait a little longer. If it's very squashy and soft, your window is closing and you should call us and then pick.
- **What sort of olives do I have?**
  - If you're in metro Melbourne, odds on you have table varieties. These will press into delicious oil just fine, but do not yield vast amounts of it in most cases.
  - Do not necessarily believe what a previous owner has told you. In many cases, nurserymen before the 90s were either misinformed by importers, or guessing, and many trees have been planted which are not what was on the label.
  - The only way to know for sure is DNA testing of the trees, and we've been unable to find a lab that does this specifically for olives.
- **What do I need to know about picking and storing my fruit?**
  - VERY IMPORTANT: organise your processor BEFORE you pick the fruit. Olives start to degrade immediately they come off the tree. You should bring them to us within 24-48 hours of being picked. Any longer and they lose flavour and go mouldy. We will not accept mouldy fruit--it contaminates our machine, and your oil won't taste good!
  - You are better off leaving them on the tree than picking them and trying to store them. Cold storage doesn't help much.
  - Use baskets which allow the air to circulate around the fruit. Example:



These are 25 KG baskets which nest when not in use and stack when they're full--very clever!

- Carboard boxes, buckets, plastics bags etc. are most unsuitable and should not be used.
  - These are hard to carry, they burst, they speed up mould and are generally to be avoided.

- Don't stand on your fruit and squash it once it's off the tree, squashed fruit in a container promotes mould and other nasties.
- Don't pick olives up if they're already on the ground before you start harvesting. The longer they've been there, the more likely they've gone bad.
- Try to make sure you don't include dead leaves, garden waste and other rubbish off the ground when you collect the fruit and pack it in the baskets.
- Try to include as little as possible of olive leaves and branches as they have to be picked out anyway.
- **Where are you?**
  - The processing service is located at 40 Tranter Rd Toolleen 3551. If you're using Google Maps, they may have mis-spelled it as Trantor Rd.
  - It's around 120k from Melbourne and you need to bring your fruit to us.
  - HOWEVER, we have a base in Melbourne and we can bring your finished oil and empty baskets back for pickup from there.
- **What about containers for the oil?**
  - We do not provide containers--you will need to provide those yourself. They should be either new every year or THOROUGHLY cleaned with soap and hot water, and rinsed free of soap and oil residue otherwise it spoils the taste and means you'll most likely be wasting your money. We cannot clean your old containers for you.
  - You should provide 20 litres capacity for every 100 KG of olives and you won't go far wrong.
- **What sort of yield should I expect?**
  - This depends a lot on the olive variety, timing and amount of rainfall, tree health and feeding, pruning, sunshine received by the tree, and yearly variations in general that we cannot account for in any other way.  
20 litres per 100 KG ('20%') is about the maximum you will ever get. Typically you should see 5-10% yield from table varieties, and 10-15% from oil varieties, in an 'average' year. We will always try to do better than this, but cannot guarantee any particular yield.
  - Small batch processing cannot ever achieve the same efficiencies as large batch operations, where very big, complex and expensive mills run more or less continuously with huge amounts of the same type of olives from the same place. On the other hand, if you don't have at least 200 KG in one batch, they won't even talk to you and many have a higher limit than this.
  - If you want to maximise your yield:
    - Pick for optimum ripeness. Ideally you should bring the fruit when around 60%-70% of them have turned or are turning purple on the skin, and when they are reasonably easy (not too easy!) to crush between your fingers. In general, picking earlier can give a more robust flavour.
    - Bring them to us ASAP—within 24-48 hours from the start of your harvest at most.
  - Things that might reduce yield:
    - Rain just before harvest--means there's more water in your olives and less oil.
    - Delaying too long in getting the olives pressed. Every day costs 1-2%.
    - Harvesting late in the season when they're all black or even starting to fall. You may have heard that you should not pick olives until they're all black. This is just plain wrong for oil processing. You will still get oil, and it will still be OK, but earlier is better.
    - Harvesting very early in the season. You may get very robust oil if the fruit are all green, but less yield.
    - Manzanillo olives are notorious for low yield. You can expect 5-10% yield from

these at most. We do not use talc or enzymes.

- **What about the taste?**

- Again this depends on your fruit. If you follow our guidelines here, you'll get the best oil that our care and skill can extract for you. Our process is a cold, first press only and makes only Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
- Above all, get the fruit to us within 24-48 hours!

- **How much does it cost?**

- **Season 2017 scale of charges: no change from last year!**

Start up fee	Per Litre we deliver to you	Surcharge for 200-300 KG
\$115.00	\$3.20	\$1.20 per KG

All prices excluding GST, which is payable for this service.

Example 1: We get a 120 KG batch from which we extract 18 litres of oil

Yield 15%

\$115 startup

\$57.6 in per-litre charges

No surcharge

\$172.60 plus GST--total \$189.86

This works out to around \$10.50 per litre, which for good quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil isn't bad--and it's your own!

Example 2: We get a 260 KG batch from which we extract 39 litres of oil

Yield 15%

\$115 startup

\$124.8 in per-litre charges

\$72 excess size surcharge

\$311.80 plus GST--total \$342.98 or around \$8.80 per litre. Our research indicates that this is very competitive for processing services. We must charge a flagfall since set-up and clean-up is the same amount of work for us regardless of the batch size.

- **Can you offer while-you-wait service?**

- No. We don't have facilities or staff to entertain guests at the moment, and a large batch could take hours to run. Also, we may need to settle and/or filter the oil after pressing, so it may not even be ready for a day or two.
- Ours is a working farm and not only are we very busy, farms can be dangerous places for unsupervised visitors, especially children.
- We can arrange for you to pick up your oil in Melbourne if needed.
- If you're not from Melbourne, we can make other arrangements.

- **Other considerations**

- Our decision as to whether to reject a batch of fruit is absolutely final. We will only do this for good reason, which we will explain to you fully.
  - If your fruit is mouldy or diseased, we cannot accept it. It will contaminate our machine and possibly let diseases get loose on our grove.
  - The two most common olive diseases are anthracnose and Peacock Spot. We look out for this in fruit which is brought to us; if you have this, we cannot accept it. We are expecting to see at least some of this in 2017 due to the warm, wet conditions

which promote such diseases.

Anthracnose:



Peacock Spot:



- We cannot dispose of unusable fruit for you, or accept that or discarded packaging as rubbish. We run our farm on strict environmental and plant health principles and we are not a waste transfer station.
- Please follow these guidelines and you will never be disappointed!
- Our facility is council-approved and compliant with the regulations for a food processing service of this size.
- **Contacts**
  - **Charles: [charles@apulia-grove.com.au](mailto:charles@apulia-grove.com.au) 0409 258 471**
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