



**Apulia Grove Olives
Small Batch Processing Service
Frequently Asked Questions
Season 2020**

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 2020?**

- Very little! For the third year in a row, we are absorbing any increasing costs to us, and not increasing our charges to you. We offer the same prompt, friendly and efficient services as ever.

• **What are your services?**

- We offer an olive oil pressing service for batches of olives between 50 KG and 200 KG for those who have small or hobby groves, or odd amounts of fruit at some point in the harvest, but have difficulty finding an operator who will accept small amounts.
- We can make up batches below 50 KG to our minimum size, with our own fruit, if possible. Please bear in mind that this is subject to our own harvest.
- We can arrange laboratory testing of your oil so you can see if it meets the Australian Standard.
- We can deliver oil to Melbourne.
- If your harvest exceeds 300 KG, we can refer you to other larger operators who may be able to assist.

• **How firm are those batch sizes?**

- Very! Our minimum batch size is 50 KG. Anything less, and you are unlikely to be satisfied with the amount of oil you can get.
- However, if you are happy for us to do it, 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 typically \$10-\$20.
- Above 200 KG is a problem for us as the machine is not really big enough to do large batches. 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. In 2019, they will be the same as 2018.
- We can refer you to a larger processor if you have in excess of 300 KG to press as a single batch. *There is no guarantee that they will be able to fit you in, so please let us know ASAP if you think you might run over 300 KG.*

- 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.
- It is a common misconception that you have to wait until all the olives ripen and turn black. This isn't correct, and in fact in most growing regions in Australia, if you wait for this, it's too late to get really first-class oil.
- **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 1990s 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 in Australia.
- **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, wheelie bins etc. are most unsuitable and should not be used.*
 - These are hard to carry, they burst or break, they speed up mould and are generally to be avoided.
 - Very large containers like rubbish and wheelie bins are a hazard for us to move around due to the bulk and weight.
 - To the best of your ability, don't stand on your fruit and squash it once it's off the tree as squashed fruit in a container promotes mould and general decay.
 - *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 into 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.
 - It's around 120k from Melbourne and you need to bring your fruit to us.
 - We can offer delivery to Melbourne for your processed oil and empty fruit containers within reason. This is one of the reasons we prefer the 25KG baskets and the like—they are far easier to transport when empty.
 - There is an extra charge for delivery. See our scale of charges further on.
 - **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.
 - Glass containers can only be accepted for delivery of your oil back to Melbourne if you also provide a box or basket in which to pack them, and towels/blankets/some other form of packing to go between the glass containers to cushion them from knocks. *All glass containers for delivery MUST have a screw top lid, push on lids will not be accepted under any circumstances.*
 - **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.* In larger processing operations 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, these large operators 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. The trade-off is the yield will most likely be less.
 - Bring them to us ASAP—within 24-48 hours from the start of your harvest at most.
 - We have enzymes that we can add to your batch to assist in the release of the oil from the fruit paste. These are certified organic and leave no residual taste in the oil. *We will always ask if you want us to use them before adding to the batch, but if you know you have a preponderance of table varieties in your batch, we highly recommend their use.*
- 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 between picking and processing costs between 1-2% yield.
 - Harvesting late in the season when the olives are 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*. This includes with the use of enzymes.
- **What about the taste?**
 - Again this depends on your fruit and the timing of the harvest. Earlier picking will have a more robust (peppery and "green") flavour, later harvest will produce a much milder flavour to the oil.
 - 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. If you would like the oil quality confirmed by laboratory testing, we can arrange that for an additional cost.
 - *Above all, get the fruit to us within 24-48 hours!*
- **Can you offer while-you-wait service?**
 - Unfortunately, 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 delivery of 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. Keep

an eye out for fruit that looks like the following examples:

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.
- **So--How much does it cost?**
 - **Season 2019 scale of charges—same as 2018!**

Our charging system comprises a fixed charge for any batch, the 'flagfall', and then a charge per litre that you get back, which is added to the flagfall. This covers our set up and cleaning effort before and after every batch, which is more or less the same regardless of the batch size. It also makes sure that we do the best job we can to maximise your yield, because we benefit too.

Processing

| Flagfall | Per Litre we deliver to you | Surcharge for 200-300 KG |
|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| \$120.00 | \$3.30 | \$1.50 per KG |

All prices excluding GST, which is not payable for this service.

Example 1: You bring a 120 KG batch from which we extract 18 litres of oil

Yield 15%

\$120 flagfall

\$59.40 in per-litre charges

No surcharge

\$179.40

This works out to just under \$10.00 per litre, which for good quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil isn't bad--and it's your own!

Example 2: You bring a 260 KG batch from which we extract 39 litres of oil

Yield 15%

\$120 flagfall

\$128.70 in per-litre charges

\$90 excess size surcharge

\$338.70 or around \$8.68 per litre. Our research indicates that this is very competitive for small-batch processing services.

Multiple batches in one season

We understand that getting your whole crop off can be a challenge in the time available. If you bring us several batches in one year, we reduce the flagfall for each job from the standard rate:

First batch of the season: Normal flagfall, \$120

Second batch of the season: 1/3 reduction, \$80

Third and subsequent batches: 1/2 reduction, \$60

This means that if, for example, you harvest over two or three weekends and bring us the fruit each time, your costs will reduce significantly.

Don't store your picked fruit for three weeks, it'll be unusable!

Delivery to Melbourne

We no longer have a collection location available in Melbourne. However, we recognise that the majority of our customers are from the city, so we're offering delivery for your oil (pressed and in the containers you provide), and the empty containers in which you bring us your fruit to your nominated address. This will be for a flat fee of \$20.00 per batch to cover our time and fuel costs.

We anticipate making a run to Melbourne once a week if the demand is there. You will still need to get the fruit to us to begin with, but this hasn't changed from previous years.

Lab Testing

We can arrange laboratory testing by the NSW DPI at Wagga Wagga. The testing package is the Australian Olive Association Certification Package, which will show whether your oil meets the Australia Standard for Extra Virgin Olive Oil, as well as its essential chemical characteristics. We will package and post it for you (they need a 500 ml sample), and forward the results when we receive them. *Cost is \$140 including GST.* This is the test package we use ourselves, and is valid for any EVOO competition in Australia of any size (e.g. RASV Fine Food Awards).

- **Contacts**

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