

Olive (*Olea europaea*)

Fact sheet

What do they look like?

Olives are erect evergreen trees that can grow to 12 m tall, but generally range in size from 0.5 – 8 m. The leaves are a glossy dark green colour on top and a silvery colour on the underside. The leaves are undivided and range in size from 3 – 8 cm long. Olive trees have tiny cream flowers that form in late spring which later bear fruit during autumn. Olive fruit are oval in shape and can range in size from 1.5 to 3 cm long and one plant can produce hundreds of seeds. The fruit ripens during late autumn or winter and when ripe they are dark purple or black in colour. Each fruit also contains a viable seed that can germinate.



What are my responsibilities?

Olives are declared under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*. Therefore all landholders must control olive trees that are not maintained for harvesting (i.e. if the fruit are not picked), including the control of any seedlings.

Why should Olives be controlled?

Olives are native to Europe but are now established in many parts of Australia. Olives grow well in most environments and soil types and are consequently a high risk for invading native vegetation on the Eyre Peninsula.

Olives are prolific seeders and birds and animals including foxes eat the fruit and disperse the seeds in their droppings. It is important that all olive orchards harvest their fruit to prevent birds from eating them and spreading seed. Olives can invade, out-compete and suppress native vegetation; and invade ungrazed land such as roadsides and fence lines.

Olives are also highly flammable due to their high oil content, increasing the fire risk on your property.

What are the best ways to control Olives?

Control techniques differ depending on the size of the olive. Plants must be actively growing (between August and December) when controlled in order for the trees to absorb the herbicide.

Chemical and manual control options are detailed below.

Olive seeds can remain viable in the soil for a long time, so follow-up control will be needed annually.

Chemical control

Basal bark: Basal barking involves completely saturating the trunk and any branches protruding from the trunk to a height of 12 times the diameter of the trunk. For example, if your trunk is 100 mm wide, you would spray the trunk, lignotuber and other branches up to a height of 1.2m. The trunk should be dry and no rain forecast within 24 hours of treatment.

Chemical formulation: Diesel (or vegetable based oil (biosafe Oil)) & Triclopyr.

600g/L + Triclopyr 1:30L of diesel or vegetable based oil (Biosafe oil).

Drill & Fill: Suitable for basal stem diameter ≥ 5 cm. Lower branches may need to be trimmed to allow access to the base of the tree. Drill holes ~ 15 cm deep angled downwards and sideways ~ 3 cm apart into the base of the stem and lower trunk (lignotuber) around the entire circumference of the tree. Use a drill bit of 6 mm or more in diameter. Fill holes immediately with herbicide using a squirt bottle applicator. Re-fill holes with herbicide at least three times for maximum herbicide uptake.

Chemical formulation: Glyphosate (Round-up) 1:4. In 10 L of water + 2.5L Glyphosate.

Frilling: This can be done with a tomahawk/axe on smaller trees or with a chainsaw on larger ones. Starting low down on the tree, make your cuts around the trunk at a 45° angle. Once two rings around the trunk have been completed, saturate the cuts with the herbicide. Then continue up the trunk, adding two rings and applying the herbicide each time. Smaller trees may only need two rings at approximately hip height.



Chemical formulation: 1L of glyphosate (with no surfactant ie. Roundup CT) + 4 L of water.

or

200ml of Triclopyr (Garlon) + 6L diesel.

Manual control

Small olive seedlings can be hand pulled when the ground is wet and therefore best done in winter.

Alternatively using a Tree Popper to remove larger olives up to 60 mm in stem diameter can work well. A Tree Popper comprises a lever/handle with a rubber grip and a foot piece firmly held together by a circlip. These two basic parts form a plier-like jaw which is used to grip the plant stem. Pushing down on the handle exerts leverage pressure on the tree and pops it out of the ground.

Grow me instead

Olives can be replaced with native species such as Native Apricot or Quandong.

Do you have Olives?

If you think you have olives on your property, the Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board can provide further advice on control and management.

More information

Email: ep.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au

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www.landscape.sa.gov.au/ep