

Friday, May 12, 2023

## The olive tree

La Concepcion was originally an agricultural estate, and olive trees still grow on many of its slopes. The section of the garden dedicated to Mediterranean plants is home to one magnificent 400-year-old specimen with a 3.30-metre perimeter that was brought here from Velez-Malaga. Known scientifically as *Olea europea*, the olive tree is a member of the Oleaceae family and has been cultivated in our region since time immemorial both for its fruit and for olive oil production, which is one of Andalusia's most important industries.

Apart from being a source of food, the olive tree is also vital to the craft, cosmetics and fuel industries, as well as to the manufacture of religious items. Its hard, heavy wood is also ideal for making solid furniture, usually of the rustic variety, as well as walking sticks and various utensils, while its leaves help lower cholesterol and blood pressure. The olive branch is a symbol of peace and is of enormous significance in the Roman Catholic religion.

**Interesting fact:** the olive tree is closely linked with the first Olympic Games in Greece, where the winners wore a crown made from wild olive branches, the equivalent of the gold medals awarded today.



Olea europaea