

The Olive

Studying this versatile fruit can yield many insights into our Savior's sacrifice.



Mediterranean Olive Trees

Plant name: *Olea europaea*

Plant type: evergreen, angiosperm (flowering)

Propagation: from softwood cuttings or seeds

Process for extracting oil: cleaning, crushing, and pressing



Facts about Olives

- Olive trees can live a very long time. Some olive trees in the Near East are thought to be more than 2,000 years old.
- If an olive tree is chopped down, it does not die, but new shoots come up from the roots.
- Olive trees keep their leaves all year round.
- Olive oil was used anciently for lamp oil, cooking oil, food, soap, religious ceremonies, and ointment for treating wounds.

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” **Matthew 26:36.**

Example of an Olive Press

AXIS

CRUSHING STONE

HANDLE

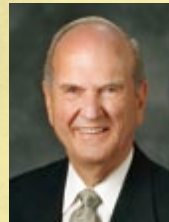
GROOVE

CRUSHING BASIN



What We Can Learn

SYMBOLS OF THE ATONEMENT



“Olive trees are special in the Holy Land. The olive branch is universally regarded as a symbol of peace. This tree provides food, light, heat, lumber, ointments, and medicine. It is now, as it was then, crucial to life in Israel. It is not a deciduous tree, but everbearing—always green. Even if the

tree is chopped down, life will spring from its roots, suggesting everlasting life. Jewish tradition often refers to the olive tree as the tree of life. To me it seems to prefigure the Resurrection.

“Jesus came to the base of the Mount of Olives to effect the first component of the Atonement. This He did at the Garden of Gethsemane. The word *Gethsemane* comes from two Hebrew roots: *gath*, meaning ‘press,’ and *shemen*, meaning ‘oil,’ especially that of the olive.

“There olives had been pressed under the weight of great stone wheels to squeeze precious oil from the olives. So the Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was literally pressed under the weight of the sins of the world. He sweated great drops of blood—His life’s ‘oil’—which issued from every pore. (See Luke 22:44; D&C 19:18.)

“... Remember, just as the body of the olive, which was pressed for the oil that gave light, so the Savior was pressed. From every pore oozed the lifeblood of our Redeemer. Throughout the joyous days of your mission, when your cup of gladness runs over, remember His cup of bitterness which made it possible. And when sore trials come upon you, remember Gethsemane.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Why This Holy Land?” *Ensign*, Dec. 1989, 17–18.

