



An Olive Orchard Produces More Than Just Olives

By Sandra Winokur

As the saying goes about pigs, "You can use everything but the squeal!" The same can be said about olive trees, except for the squeal. Indeed, like a pig, every part of an olive tree can be put to good use.

FRUIT

Growers either pickle their olives or press them to make oil. According to an ancient proverb, "Olive oil makes all your aches and pains go away." Ancients actually had many uses for olive oil in addition to curing ailments. To name a few, they used it as a form of money, as fuel for lamps, and even to grease axles. While you probably won't be greasing any axles in the near future, keep in mind that you can use olive oil to grease hinges on doors or on your butcher block and wooden cutting boards to keep them in top condition. Of course, we're all well aware of the health benefits of cooking with and eating olive oil. However, it may be news to some that olive oil has been used for centuries as a cosmetic to promote healthy skin. Soap made with olive oil has long been prized for its benefits to the skin. Creams, lotions, salves and scrubs made with olive oil provide those same benefits. For the myriad uses of olive oil refer to our link [From the Kitchen to the Spa](#).

LEAVES

Fresh or dried leaves produce a tea that is not only delicious, but also touted for its curative powers. Olive leaves have twice as many antioxidants as green tea. Folk cures include olive leaf tea as a remedy to reduce fever and to lower blood pressure. Here at Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, we make olive leaf jelly, and we consider crushed olive leaves and olive leaf tea essential ingredients in our soaps and other skincare products. We also sell the leaves for tea.



WOOD

Through the years, carvers and sculptors have prized the fine grain wood of olive trees for its beauty. The results are exquisite furniture, bowls and objects of art. Larger pieces might be used to fashion a traditional *bulto* (Mexican devotional sculpture), while even the slenderest branches can become durable wooden spoons, salad servers, butter molds, or the *molinos* which churn Mexican hot chocolate to a froth. So, when you prune your trees, or cut them back to let new shoots sprout from the stumps, or gather dead-wood knocked down by storms,

save the wood and stack it carefully to season. You might want to create a masterpiece, or in today's worrisome world, who knows to what uses the traditional olive branch can be put, perhaps as a symbol of Peace?

POMACE

Don't forget about the pomace! After crushing and draining the oil from the pomace, the remaining pulp can be used either in bulk or in cakes. In many countries, dried olive pomace cakes serve as briquettes for grilling. Growers often use bulk pomace as a fertilizer. But, hold onto your hats, cowboys and cowgirls, did you know that both pomace cakes and bulk pomace make excellent cattle feed? We tried it, and our cows absolutely love it!

So, until some agricultural wizard comes along and develops an olive tree that squeals, rest assured that not a single part of the olive tree is useless.

At Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard we're always exploring new possibilities for using olive trees and olives. Our products are available [online](#), at our gift shop, or at any of the upcoming events you'll see listed on our calendar of [events](#) page on our web site.