

NEWSLETTER
Issue 93 - April 2021



Notes from our Chairperson – John Pearson

We are now at the busiest and most important time of the year when we are harvesting our olives. Most groves seem to be harvesting earlier this year and this may be the way things are for the future. It would be interesting to see the varying techniques that are used for harvesting. On our small grove of 120 trees we have 2 mechanical harvesters run off 12v batteries plus hand rakes. Our method is to call on friends and family each year, try to get about 15 of us and we pick madly for one day, always a Saturday. What we get is what we get and off to the press the next day. This year we are picking on the 17th April and expect the harvest will be well down from last year, probably about 400kg. We try and make it a reasonably fun day and then when all done, showered and rested, we all have the harvest meal at night with a few bottles of wine. I will endeavour to put a video on the WhatsApp chat channel of our harvesting. On that note, for those that are on the Oliveti chat channel, how about a short video of your harvest to show how you go about it and how well you went. What is the yield both in kg and oil % in your harvest? This will be good information and tips for all of us. We are all leaning.

As you are all aware, we had our AGM on the 28th March at Paparoa. Although those attending were small in numbers everyone made a significant contribution with some good ideas. These were mainly around marketing our organisation more effectively so that we can attract more members. Derek Holland is heading this up. So, a big thanks to Derek. We are also promoting the Olive Awards held each year. We expect to see an increase in numbers this year. The Olive Awards is not a competition, but each olive oil is judged on its merits by 3-4 highly regarded judges. Any Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are awarded against a national standard, not against each other. There is however a "Best in Show" which has been awarded to Duck Creek Olives (Derek & Sally Holland) for 2 years running – a remarkable effort.

After our AGM we were treated to an informative and technical report on our "Healthy Soils Healthy Trees" programme which Oliveti is partially funding. Peter Crelinsten has and is putting a huge amount of research and effort into this project and for those of who attended, really got a lot out of the talk. Sometimes more questions than answers but that seems to be the way of olives. So, thank you Peter for all your hard work.

We then travelled to Ban & Guy's Olive Grove just out of Paparoa where they have around 120 trees. Their grove is well established which some very large trees so a lot of the discussion was about the level of pruning that should take place.

A big thankyou to Ban & Guy for hosting us at their Olives on Porter Grove, Paparoa.

Well, that is it from me, have a great harvest for those yet to harvest and for those who have we would love to hear and see how it went.

Stay safe.

John Pearson



AGM - Highlights Sunday 28th March 2021

Held in the Paparoa Memorial Hall and attended by an enthusiastic group of members, we discussed at length the current annual membership fee of \$50 and that there was a need to increase that to cover costs. You will note from the Treasurer's report that we are going slightly backwards and that our financial position is likely to deteriorate further in the coming year if we don't increase revenue. We also discussed the need to better recover the costs of the Olive Awards (currently \$30 per entry) which was subsidised by Oliveti to the tune of \$640 last year. After much debate, the decision was made to increase the Annual Sub to \$85 **but that would include one free entry to the Olive Awards**. Any additional entries (ie more than 1x olive oil entry) would be a cost of \$40. (By comparison **Olives NZ** subs are \$272.50 for 101-250 trees, and \$545 above that. Their Olive Awards entry cost is \$250.) This decision will put us on a much more viable footing and hopefully increase participation in the Oliveti Olive Awards.



A separate discussion was on the need to increase the attendance at Field Days. The recent Field Day/AGM attracted only 12 attendees. Probable reasons for this low turnout are that with the Covid enforced delay, the late March date moved it into harvest time and consequently, many members were harvesting. Also, the location did not suit many Northland growers. Members felt spreading the venues around both Auckland and Northland regions could increase participation.

The need to increase membership was also discussed. We believe all existing members can help by simply contacting any neighbors in their region who may have established a new olive grove or have purchased an existing property. All you would need to do is **inform them of the benefits of joining Oliveti Northland Inc.** (A new "Benefits" brochure is being produced.)

Greg Scopas (Salumeria Olive Press) will be handing out this new Oliveti information brochure to all who use his press and we will be approaching other press operators in the region to gain their support as well – ie., Olivado etc.

We have re-elected the same committee as last year with the addition of Les Woodhams who has a grove at Kaipara Flats. Thankyou Les for joining our team and thankyou to the past committee members for rejoining for this year.

Your Executive for 2021 is:

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------|--|
| Chairperson: | John Pearson | 021902330 | info@oliveti.co.nz |
| Secretary: | Pauline Young | 027 288 0462 | secretary@oliveti.co.nz |
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| | Peter Crelinsten | 021 1740134 | ta_peter@hotmail.com |
| | Les Woodhams | 0274 129344 | leskaywoodhams@gmail.com |

Following the formal AGM, Peter Crelinsten gave us an elucidating and very well-illustrated talk on the benefits of improving microbial soil life and the factors effecting soil and plant nutrition and progress to date on the Healthy Soils – Healthy Trees program. Great effort Peter. Thank you.



Field Day Visit at Olives on Porter

Just 5 minutes from Paparoa Township in the Kaipara district, Ban and Guy's **Olives on Porter** grove is situated high on a hilltop adjacent to an old heritage track once used by the early settlers and their horses. The grove overlooks a beautiful rural setting on one side and the Kaipara Harbour on the other.

Guy and Ban purchased their grove in April 2018, just in time for their first harvest. Three harvests on in 2020 they received an Oliveti Gold award for their EVOO. This was unexpected and quite a surprise but made them incredibly happy.



Guy is not sure what cultivar their olive trees are, but they appear to be J5 (*editor*) and although standing proudly for 25 years were neglected by previous owner for many of those years. Ban says that when they took over the grove, it was very overgrown and largely used as grazing land - but they recognised the potential.



They were passionate about their trees and set out to revive the grove and restore its former glory. As there was no accommodation on site their first task was to build a place to stay when they travel up from Auckland. They constructed "The Cabin" and now have a modest but lovely small place to stay on their weekend visits.

Next, they started buying grove equipment and planting some new young olive trees and considered how best to revive their massive old trees. Guy says they didn't really know where to start with the pruning but prune they did. A number of the trees have been heavily pruned, but most are still very tall.



Ban says "we know there is a lot still to do but at the same time, we are heartened to see continuous changes and improvement every time we visit. This year will be our fourth harvest and we were happy to see that the yield has considerably improved. Last year we were delighted to be awarded and Oliveti Gold medal for our Porter Olive Oil and are looking forward to entering this year awards too. I also love going to markets. Markets for me are such a vibrant place and I enjoy meeting customers and chatting to others about their products,

experiences etc... I think I enjoy going to markets as much as I enjoy going to Oliveti's workshops and grove visits." *Thank you Ban.* Editor.

**The Kiwi Family
Olive Grove**

Ernie Ellett

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Once the harvest season is over, Ban and Guy will shift their focus to soil improvement and tree management to increase yields and improve the quality and polyphenol count of their Oil.

Guy says "The height of our trees was the main topic of conversation among Oliveti members on the Grove visit and we received many helpful suggestions on pruning techniques and a multitude of ways we can increase our output".

"Based on the comments received, we have decided to put a long-term plan in place and start implementing better tree management - plant more trees improve soil nutrition etc... Exciting times, and we will update as we go."



Ban and plan to eventually move onto the grove fulltime and become self-sufficient, living off-grid. For this to be viable, they must consider their livestock which have the potential to be a major earner for them, so any changes they do make will have to factor the livestock as well.

Looking ahead, Ban says "our extra virgin olive oil production is really going to be the icing on the cake".

UPDATE ON HEALTHY SOIL – HEALTHY TREES PROJECT

John Bishop - 13th April 2021

Well - it should lead to bigger crops, but Mother Nature can always throw a gigantic spanner in the works when inclined. In the main, this season, she has certainly done that. In general, the harvest has been a shocker. I cannot recall one so bad and it is not anything we might or might not have done.

Peter and I are still convinced that what we are doing is heading in the right direction, despite this setback and with so much positive information pouring in from overseas, the amount of airtime devoted to regenerative programs in place - (just think of Country Calendar), and the significant numbers of countries banning an ever-growing list of insecticides, herbicides, etc.

So, our planned timetable is currently as follows:

Next few weeks (weather permitting!!!) we will be spraying Kocide.

Spreading 100 - 125kgs of STOCKMATE - the Humic acid product produced by Southern Humates around each tree. This contains 40% of Humic Acid and between 1- 2% of Fulvic acid plus a complete range of all the trace minerals needed – INCLUDING BORON – please never forget how vital BORON IS for Olives. This will hopefully be spread on the ground around each tree in late April/early May and repeated in October.



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June or probably July we will restart our Fish Oil soil drench PLUS another drench in late November (again weather dependent), and we will follow that up with another more targeted program of Kocide spray.

In July, another Foliar Spray of BIO-SEA produced by the Nelson based company. This contains seaweed and Bacillus Subtillis which is supposed to help counter both Peacock Spot and Anthracnose. We will repeat the Foliar spray 3 – 4 times perhaps 3 to 4 weeks apart – again all depending on the weather.

So, despite the very disappointing crop this season we are determined to continue and despite some of the setbacks the trees are looking better and healthier.

We cannot express enough our sincerest thanks to Marie and Joe for allowing us to embark on this journey, and to continue to support this plan for the 5 years both financially and their belief in the process.

As an aside Julia and I are currently in the lower half of the South Island to catch the Autumn colours as well as visit the whole area now it is essentially free of hordes of overseas tourists.

We have noticed that in some areas there is a renewal of interest in planting olive trees. We saw this in the central Otago wine, fruit and nut areas. Nothing major but this is a definite new trend.

Lastly and for the 1st time in 3 weeks of sublimely sunny warm weather, we are holed up in Gore. Now for those of you who know Gore, it is NOT in any way an area you would connect with olive growing, yet just a few kms out of Gore there is grove of 75 odd trees that are positively groaning with plump olives, PLUS the weirdest thing of all is the number of very healthy-looking olives in the town itself and those running down the main streets as a middle feature. Again, most of them look as if they are carrying a very good crop. BUGGER!



Regards

John Bishop

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INFUSED (FLAVOURED) OLIVE OILS

In order to produce flavoured olive oil there are 3 basic methods.

- 1. Agrumato**, sometimes referred to as fusion, where the flavour is extracted directly from the fruit. With this method, the essential oils and flavour components of the desired plant product (usually citrus), are suspended in the olive oil, while the pulp, rind, seeds, stems, water and other solids are discarded along with the olive Pomace.
- 2. Naturally Flavored/Additive**, where an oleoresin, extract, essential oil, or other natural ingredient is added to olive oil. With this method, the quality of flavour and aroma are variable, and dependent upon the processing of the plant product. Some are very good and very authentic in taste, while many are fair to poor and taste artificial. Note: the word "infused" is used throughout our industry to refer to an olive oil that has the flavour added.

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3. Infusion is the process of extracting chemical compounds or flavours from plant material into olive oil, allowing the material to remain suspended in the oil over time (a process often called steeping). Infusions are the least favourable method for olive oil, since heat is generally needed to extract the flavour from the plant product, and heat can damage Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Additionally, with an infusion you cannot control the leaching of undesirable secondary flavours while extracting the flavour you want.

But beware: there are safe and unsafe ways to make infused olive oil.

The **unsafe** way is to put anything in the oil that contains any trace of water or moisture. For example - fresh garlic, lemon peel, fresh peppers, or any fresh herbs and spices. Whilst the oil will not support bacterial growth... the water contained within the herbs, garlic or lemon rind will. **Botulism bacteria can grow in this type of environment, even in a sealed bottle.** If you do want to use this method, Mix all the ingredients, refrigerate them and use them within a week then discard. It is much safer and advisable to use only dried herbs as these still contain the essential oils but have no moisture content.

The way Infusion is done commercially is to first preserve the "water-containing" garlic, herbs, etc. with a strong brine (10%) or vinegar solution, then put them in the oil. The vinegar solutions used commercially are up to 4 times stronger than the vinegars you find in the supermarket and many of the herb mixes available have both salt and vinegar which helps prevent bacterial growth.

Agrumato is a method of making flavoured olive oil where the whole ingredient is crushed directly with the olives in the press. This releases all the essential oils and flavour components together creating a harmonic combination of the ingredient and olives. The original agrumato flavoured oils were always citrus which is where the name comes from: 'agrumato' in Italian literally means 'citrus'. Citrus trees love the Italian climate and the strong essential oils in the fruit's peel makes them perfect for this whole fruit method. Nowadays the same method is used to create other flavoured oil such as Chili and various herbs.

The **Agrumato** method itself originated in Italy's famous olive oil region, Abruzzo. As the process is more time consuming and expensive than making extra virgin or infused olives oils, Farmers of the Abruzzo region would create a limited amount of Agrumato oil that was reserved as special gifts for family and friends.

Typically, you need fresh picked lemons, oranges or limes and extra virgin quality olives. When they arrive at the press house, like your olives, the citrus fruit needs to be thoroughly washed. Once the fruit is all clean, it is poured into the press whole simultaneously with the olives, so they are all crushed together. For the best Agrumato oils, it would not be unusual to find that up to 20% by weight of the total crush was citrus fruit. The exact ratios will vary based on the plant product being used, the degree of ripeness, as well as varietal and other seasonal factors.

The whole fruit is used so all the flavour is released from the flesh and skin, and all the citrus oil combines with the olives oil. From here the olives and lemons are as one in the malaxer and continue the process of making extra virgin olive oil . The citrus and olive sediment are mixed to release all of the oils from the flesh and is then pressed to separate the remaining oil. The water contents is then centrifuged (separated) off and the remaining oil filtered to remove any remaining sediment for a clearer citrus oil result.

In New Zealand more and more growers are now producing "Flavoured" oils and for us, it seemed logical as not only did we inherit one hundred and forty 1-year old olive trees when we bought our Kumeu property back in 2010, we also had a large number of citrus trees. Hence our decision to produce Agrumato style Vernazoni Citrus Olive Oil. To make our Agrumato oil, we manually harvest our J5 olives along with our own lemons and limes which we are now supplemented with locally grown fresh citrus fruit from our neighbour 3 doors up Oraha Road. The morning after the harvest we truck the olives and citrus up to Kerikeri where Olivado crush and press them simultaneously and then after three months – bottle it for us.

A note about terminology: You cannot call a flavoured olive oil **Extra Virgin**. By definition and in conformance to the established national and international standards for chemical and sensory analysis, there cannot be anything added to Extra Virgin Olive Oil. **Once a flavour is added, it is no longer Extra Virgin**, and must be called olive oil.

Murray Thoms Feb 2021

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“Olivado is open for pressing again for the 2021 season and we are already receiving fruit and achieving a 16% yield on average and nice tasting oil.

As always, please get in contact with us if you have any questions, especially around small harvest volumes and timing. We will always do our best to accommodate your pressing.

Olivado is planning to move to a new, purpose built, factory at Ngawha in late 2021 to ensure we keep up with international food certification requirements and also to increase our production capacity for all of our activities, including olive oil production.

You will be pleased to know that your olive waste will be utilised to produce Biogas at our new facility. Along with our avocado waste and local dairy farm effluent, your olive waste will be incorporated into our purpose-built Biogas digestors. The output is a truly Green gas (methane), soil conditioner and liquid fertiliser. So, along with Olivado’s products your oil can also claim to be making use of any waste product to produce energy and return nutrients back to the growing cycle locally.

We plan to have this ready for the 2022 olive season and will keep you updated with our progress from time to time.

Remember we will contract press for you and bottle your oil and / or purchase your olives for pressing ourselves.

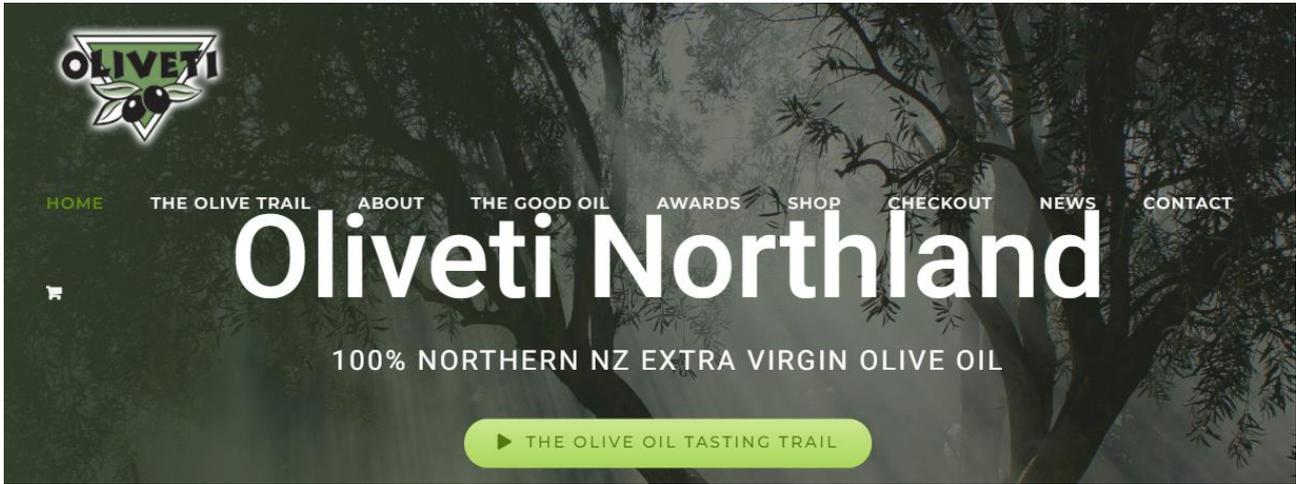
Please get in touch for up-to-date pricing and options for your olives.

Editor’s Note: Please support our Sponsors

**The next OLIVETI FIELD DAY is going to be held at
Paihia - Bay of Islands
Sunday 20th June 2021**

**Please Diary this date and join us at John and Caroline Nicolas’s
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Full details of the days programme will be advised shortly.



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