

# Olive case study

## Type of Farming System

Biological with minimal use of chemical fertilisers, no pesticides.

## Products used in trial







## Background

Grassy Spur Olives had made a commitment to produce quality olive oil sustainably under a chemically minimised program. The olives are handpicked and cold pressed then blended or left as individual variety oil.

There were health issues in the orchard with a foliar pathogen 'Peacock Spot' causing leaf drop and in extreme cases tree defoliation. Peacock Spot can infect fruit and fruit stems significantly reducing yield and oil. It was therefore critical to maintain the foliar spray program to control infection, even though the spray program has been in place in previous years that Peacock Spot was a significant issue reducing yield.

Grassy Spur Olives were looking for organically based products to:

- improve tree health;
- improve yields and oil quality and quantity; and
- increase sustainability, understanding that improved soil health will improve tree health.

Bactivate at 25 grams per tree was applied in Spring 2010 and re applied 45 grams per tree in March 2011. Fertiliser was not reduced as the effects on Peacock Spot and the soil health were being assessed.

The Bactivate Program was adopted and has been in place since the beginning of the growing season of 2011.

**Farmer's Name:** Helen & Peter Wright

**Business Name:** Grassy Spur Olives

**Crops grown:** Olives, Approximately 1300 trees, Picual, Frantoio, Coratina, Picholine, Barnea, Kalamata Pendolino, Arbequina and Leccino varieties

### Farm Data

**Location:** Stony Creek, South Gippsland, Victoria

**Area:** 7ha

**Established:** 2005

100% of the farm is under the Bactivate Program



Early fruit set at Grassy Spur Olives

## Outcomes and Benefits

The adoption of the Bactivate Program has produced outstanding results with increases in yield and fruit quality. Yield increases of 250% were experienced and oil had an improved buttery characteristic.

In 2011 Grassy Spur Olives won Gold Medal at the Annual Australian Olive Association awards for Class 1 Picual Oil.

Peacock Spot has been reduced by 75% even though the 2011 season was a very wet season with 45-50" of rain where it was expected it would be a high pressure year for foliar diseases.

The property owners have commented on the increased flowering which has led to increased production. Helen has indicated to us that the initial flower set this year is estimated to produce in excess of 6 ton of olives which is an amazing result in only 2.5 years of work on the farm.



Peacock Spot

