

Olive Leaf (*Olea Europaea*) Tara Pierce, M.H.

Olives are native to Asia Minor and Syria, but are cultivated in Mediterranean countries as well as Chile, Peru and South Australia. Olive leaf was first used medicinally in Ancient Egypt and was used to mummify the pharaohs. In the early 1800's, pulverized leaves were used in a drink to lower fevers. A few decades later, green olive leaves were used in a tea as a treatment for malaria. Today, numerous scientific studies have been conducted to investigate the beneficial properties of olive leaf extracts. The reported benefits range from promoting increased energy and healthy blood pressure, to supporting the cardiovascular system and the immune system.

A liquid extract made from fresh olive leaves were shown to have an antioxidant capacity almost double that of green tea extract and 400% more than vitamin C.

Studies have shown improvement with chronic intestinal inflammation, and have shown its antioxidants to be effective in treating some tumors and cancers such as liver, prostate, colon, skin and breast cancer. Another trial done in New Zealand found that olive leaf extract capsules significantly improved insulin sensitivity and pancreatic β -cell responsiveness in middle-aged overweight men.



Research has shown olive leaf to be a true anti-viral compound because it appears to selectively block an entire virus-specific system in the infected host. In other words, it has the ability to directly penetrate infected cells and stop viral replication. Supplemental olive leaf may be beneficial in the treatment of conditions caused by, or associated with, a virus, retrovirus, bacterium or protozoan. Among those treatable conditions are: influenza, the common cold, Candida infections, meningitis, Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), encephalitis, herpes I and II, human herpes virus 6 and 7, shingles (Herpes zoster), HIV/ARC/AIDS, chronic fatigue, hepatitis B, pneumonia, tuberculosis, gonorrhea, malaria, dengue and severe diarrhea. It can also help with dental, ear, urinary tract and surgical infections. Other reported benefits from using olive leaf are: improved psoriasis, normalization of heart beat irregularities, diminished cravings, less pain from hemorrhoids, toothaches and chronically achy joints.

If you live a stressful life, or are particularly susceptible to colds and viruses, you may benefit from a tonic dose of 1-2 cups of whole olive leaf tea (infusion) each day. If fighting a viral

infection such as cold or flu, I would recommend 3 cups a day in combination with herbs such as elder, yarrow, echinacea, peppermint and/or raspberry leaf. For more serious infections as well as parasites, I would recommend taking 1/2 cup of whole olive leaf decoction, 3 times a day. Olive leaf is available in whole leaf, cut leaf, extract, powder and capsule form.

Tara Pierce is a Certified Master Herbalist Graduate from The School of Natural Healing.