Olive
Olea europaea 'Lucca'

Form: single or multistemmed tree or large shrub
Seasonality: evergreen
Size: 20-30ft with equal or slightly less spread
Leaves: lancolate, narrow, opposite, to 3in long, stiff, gray-green on top, underside lighter
Flowers: axillary clusters of small creamy white flowers; bloom in spring; allergenic
Fruit: edible olives, 1.5in across; green in late summer maturing to black; drops when ripe
Stems/Trunks: attractive trunk; gray; gnarled, bumpy and contorted
Range/Origin: Mediterranean; in cultivation for millennia
Hardiness: to 15°F, some injury below mid-teens

LANDSCAPE VALUE:
specimen tree
shade
beautiful character

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS:
Exposure: full sun, reflective light
Water: low; none in winter, 1-2 times per month in summer
Soil: deep, uniform
Propagation: vegetative cuttings
Maintenance: high; allergic pollen, flower drop, messy staining fruit drop, pruning of basal suckers

The olive originated in the eastern Mediterranean area, and has been cultivated by man since ancient
times. Trees are extremely long-lived (up to 1000 yr) and tolerant of drought, salinity and almost total
neglect, and so have been reliable producers of food and oil for thousands of years. Earliest references
of olive oil use and international trade date to 2000-3000 BC. The olive was spread throughout
Mediterranean Europe and North Africa very early, due to its ease of vegetative propagation and
cultivation in dry climates. The Romans built on earlier work on olive culture by Greeks, Arabs, and Egyptians, and refined olive oil extraction and improved cultivars used for oil. Today, the industry remains largely confined to Mediterranean countries of Europe, the middle east, and north Africa, where it began thousands of years ago. The California industry began in the late 1800s as settlers planted orchards from cuttings taken from the original trees planted at Spanish missions. By 1900, there were about ½ million trees being grown in California, largely for olive oil production, but shortly thereafter, pickling and canning procedures were developed for producing black olives, the primary olive product from California today.