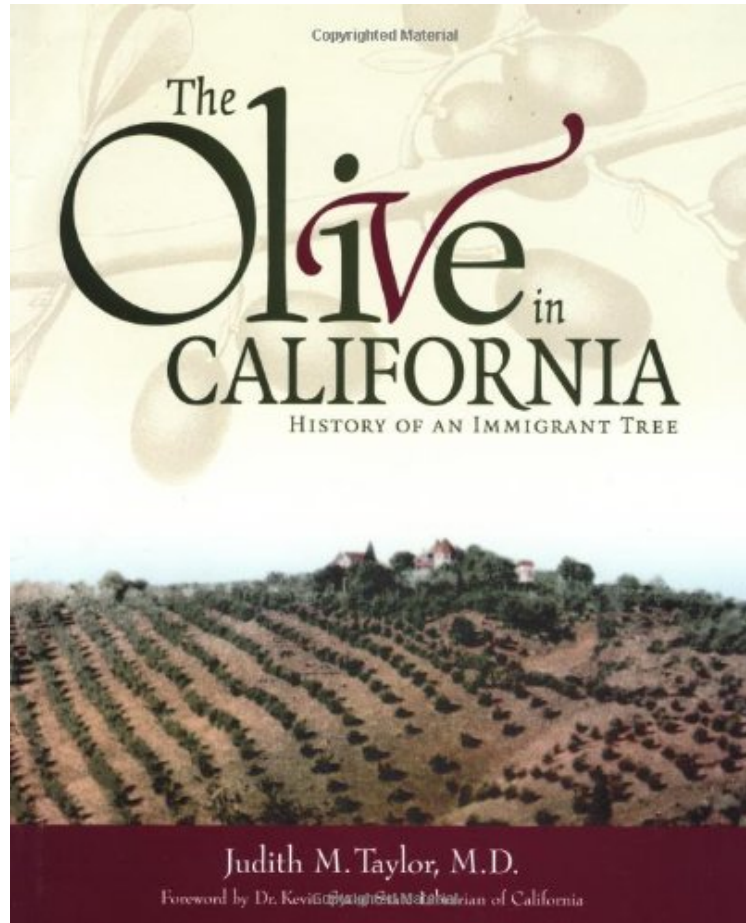


## The Olive in California: History of an Immigrant Tree

Judith Taylor MD

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**Judith Taylor MD : The Olive in California: History of an Immigrant Tree** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Olive in California: History of an Immigrant Tree:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book, Needs Map By E. S. This is a wonderful book and I am devouring it slowly to absorb all the wonderful history. I soon found that each chapter should be viewed as separate books in a way because just when you think you are in modern times, the next part takes you back to the late 1800s and you start all over again with the chapter's subject. Some facts seem to contradict each other. But I do love this book. The only BIG improvement that could be made, would be to include a very simple map of California showing the counties by name and the valleys by name, for easy and interesting reference while reading. I have no clue about California's layout and sure I could get out an atlas but if the book had a simple map, it surely would help so much for the reader. And make it alot more interesting. 3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Shallow Perspective By reflexivity This book has good information. Yet I frequently found myself staring at the pages in disbelief. The author states that in 1848 the population of California was several hundred. In fact there were thousands

of Native Americans (tho many would be subsequently killed by white newcomers). This genocidal oversight admittedly caused me to cast a critical eye on the rest of the book. Still, with all the objectivity I can muster, the writing to me seems stodgy and halting, formal and uninspired, like someone published a research report. That's how the content feels too: the dots might be mostly there but few seem connected with analysis, commentary, or sense of humor. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Readable history that focuses on the developers

By Dennis Littrell  
This is an interesting and handsome history which focuses on the people who initiated and developed the olive oil and canned olive industry in California from pre Junipero Serra times into the 1990s. There are drawings and black and white photos, a chronology, a couple of lists (with comments) of olive oil makers and olive processors in California from 1869 to the present, a list of olive cultivars imported into California (and some synonymous names for the types), a listing of nurseries that provided the trees from 1872, and a solid bibliography. The material was thoroughly researched by Dr. Taylor and written in a style accessible to academics, professionals, and interested consumers or hobbyists such as myself. She tells the story of how the olive came to California, how the industry developed and how California producers competed with the giants in Spain and Italy, and how the canned ripe olive became, after a scary bout with botulism in 1919, the most important product of the California olive growers, up to the near present day when boutique and upscale California olive oil has become something of a rage--although a major part of this growth has taken place since this book when to publication in 2000. Taylor captures the feel of California's mission days, the rancho days, the gold rush days, and the great growth thereafter through an olive-colored lens. She writes about how the trees were cultivated, how the fruit was picked and processed, and how the product compared and compares to the European competition. I got interested in olive trees after discovering some long abandoned groves in and around the Sacramento, California area. What surprised me was how abundant the fruit even though the trees were untended and overgrown, and had been that way for decades, and even though they were crowded by other types of trees, such as scrub oaks, wild figs, digger pines and others. In many places, including on and around the UC Davis campus, the shady trees heavy with fruit in the fall are like stately ornaments of California's past. But what a waste to see the dark, ripe olives just fall to the ground to become black greasy spots! Why is this? The main reason is known to anyone who has ever plucked a ripe olive off the tree and taken a bite. It tastes awful! Olives have to be processed, usually in brine with many changes of water before they become edible. And to press the oil from the olive requires equipment, knowledge and skill. Although this book does go into many aspects of processing, it does not go into enough detail to help the beginning olive enthusiast. I'm still looking for the book that explains the processing techniques explicitly, especially for small producers.

A symbol of peace, strength, and nourishment, the olive tree has been imbued with a sense of history, place, and charm since its earliest cultivation in the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean. From the first Spanish ships to touch California's shores to the rise of a thriving industry with hundreds of olive growers and oil makers, *THE OLIVE IN CALIFORNIA* traces the path of this sturdy, life-giving tree as it developed into a California agricultural phenomenon. With a foreword by Dr. Kevin Starr, State Librarian of California, Dr. Taylor's book is endorsed by the California Historical Society.

From Booklist  
Just as the Mediterranean region is associated with the olive tree, so too is California's landscape enhanced by the tree's handsome profile and fruitful production. Taylor delves deeply into the history and mythology of this influential plant, tracing the cultivation of olive trees as well as their place in the agricultural life of the Golden State for more than two centuries. With great attention to detail, she recounts the olive-growing businesses that prospered, and the endeavors of the olive-oil trade up to the present day. The botulism outbreaks of the 1920s are likewise examined, as is the involvement of the University of California in the olive industry's development. A revealing account, complete with extensive supplementary appendixes. Alice Joyce  
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A "fascinating historical survey" and "particularly helpful in preparing this (California cuisine) issue."  
-Saveur  
About the Author  
DR. JUDITH TAYLOR is a retired physician who spent the last several years traveling up and down California researching the olive. Born in London, she now makes her home in Tiburon, California.