

4th Primary School of Kamatero
"Dimitrios Nanopoulos"

Olive's story



Ελιά /elia´/ Olive tree

Historians consider the Mediterranean basin to be the place where olive trees first appeared. The history of the olive tree is connected with the people of the Mediterranean Sea, their everyday life and habits.



The famous olive oil is produced by crushing the olives. The olive is the most popular crop in Greece, from which excellent quality products have been produced for decades and are in high demand all over the world. The by-products of the olive tree have been used in the field of medicine and beauty since ancient times.



1. What does it look like?

It is an evergreen tree, with dark green leaves on the upper surface and silvery on the lower. Its flowers are whitish and very small. Its fruit is the olive. The famous olive oil is produced by crushing the olives.



Europe

2. Where does it grow?

Historians consider the Mediterranean basin to be the place where olive trees first appeared. Greeks were the first people to cultivate the olive tree in the European Mediterranean area. The olive tree is a tree that loves the sun and the sea, it grows in barren soils and has great resistance to drought.




3. How long does it live?


The normal lifespan of an olive tree is 300 to 600 years but there are olive trees that are more than 1,000 years old. Archaeological research carried out in the Cyclades islands found fossilized olive leaves, which were estimated to be 50-60,000 years old!




4.Facts!



The most famous ancient myth about the olive tree is the one that considers the tree a gift of ancient Greek goddess Athena, the goddess of Wisdom. It all started with the dispute between Athena and Poseidon, god-ruler of the Sea. The winner of this competition would be the one whose contribution would be valuable to the city. Poseidon lifted his trident and nailed it to the sacred rock of the Acropolis. Salt water began to gush and flow to the roots of the rock. While Athena planted an olive tree. Within a short time it had sprouted and its silver-green foliage had impressed everyone. That was it. Such a tree did not exist until then in the world. Now, people could enjoy precious oil in their cooked food, or they could enjoy an illuminated night, since the oil became the most advanced lighting medium of the time. The other gods considered Athena's gift to be priceless and the city was named after goddess Athena, Athens.



Today the cultivation of olives is very widespread in Greece and the consumption of the fruit and the olive oil is a key element of a healthy diet, the famous Mediterranean diet.



The olive wreath, also known as kotinos (Greek: κότινος), was the prize for the winner at the ancient Olympic Games.





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4. Other facts

- The myth says that ancient goddess Athena, offered the olive tree to the people of Athens as a present.
- The olive wreath was the prize for the winner at the ancient Olympic Games.