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# Table olive processing: general aspects

There are different processing procedures for the production of table olives, and in setting up a production facility there are a number of considerations that need to be taken into account. Key areas in the processing facility need to be separated, such as raw olive storage and grading areas, chemical storage (both for production and cleaning) and staff facilities. The materials to be used in the production of table olives must be of food grade quality and potable water must be used. The equipment must be made from food grade stainless steel, plastic or fibreglass and the facility must comply with statutory health and environmental regulations. The types of table olive processes used for black table olives, shrivelled black olives, turning colour olives, green-ripe olives, bruised olives and split olives are explained. The chapter also discusses secondary processing and the finished products. The authors have also examined the storage of raw olives prior to processing and have suggested a general protocol for the processing of table olives from receipt of the raw olives to the finished product. The environmental needs of the processing area are also considered with the types of processing to be undertaken. Records of all the processes used in the processing facility need to be kept so that any problems with the final product can be traced back to a specific point in the production line.

## Introduction

Table olive processing involves the transformation of bitter inedible olives into an edible foodstuff. Processing methods also preserve the olives from natural deterioration so that they can be stored for significantly long periods and consumed as required. As well as being palatable, when processed the transformed olives must be safe to eat and have retained their nutritional qualities. Additional preservation techniques such as pasteurisation, heat sterilisation and preservatives are also used for some packaged olive products.