



Oleaphen

JULY 2026



THE QUIET SEASON

The hard work of the year is behind us, until harvest. The olives set well, they have grown, and the pit inside each one has now hardened. That last part matters more than it sounds. Once the pit is hard, the fruit is durable, and the heatwaves and hot winds that could have ended the harvest back in spring can no longer touch it. In a sense the dice are now rolled. What the tree has built into the fruit is largely built.

So this is the still point of the year. The families are not pruning, not harvesting, not fighting the weather. The trees are simply standing in the full heat of a Cyprus summer, doing the slow, invisible work of filling out the fruit and holding the polyphenols they have laid down. We observe, and little else.

That leaves us room this month to tell you something we have been saving: where these groves actually are, and why the ground beneath them is unlike anywhere else on the island.

Nick Schizas and Nicolas Netien Founders

COMPOUND OF THE MONTH

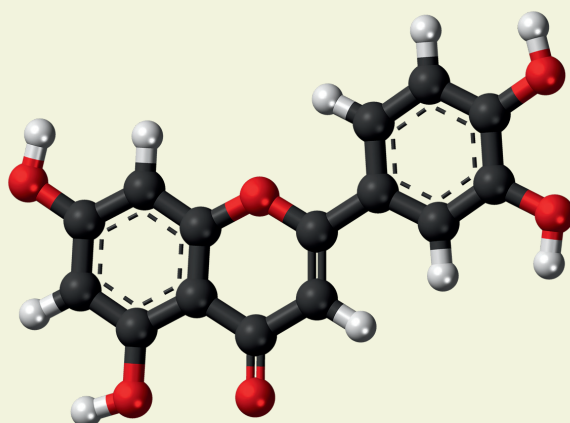
LUTEOLIN

Over recent months we have worked through the two families of compounds that dominate a high phenolic olive oil: the secoiridoids, such as oleocanthal and oleacein, and the simple phenols they break down into, tyrosol and hydroxytyrosol. Luteolin belongs to a third group, the flavonoids, and it earns a place in a July letter for a reason written into the season.

Flavonoids are, in part, a plant's sunscreen. Olive trees produce luteolin and its relative apigenin in the skin and flesh of the fruit and in the leaves, where these compounds absorb ultraviolet light and help protect the tissue underneath from oxidative damage. The harder the sun, the more reason the tree has to make them. It is the same principle that has run through this whole series. The stress the tree meets is part of what drives the chemistry we are after.

In the laboratory, luteolin has been studied for antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity, and researchers have examined it in models of neurological and metabolic function.

This is early-stage work, and none of it establishes an effect in people who consume olive oil. What can be said plainly is that luteolin is one more compound in the full spectrum our 2025 harvest carries, working inside the same natural matrix of oil, squalene and vitamin E that makes any of it available to the body at all.





THE SCIENCE IN ACTION

MONTHLY STUDY HIGHLIGHT

This month we step back from any single compound and look at the wider picture.

In March 2025, the journal Clinics and Practice published a scoping review by Liva and colleagues titled "High Polyphenol Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Metabolically Unhealthy Obesity." A scoping review does not run a new experiment. It gathers a decade of existing research and maps what the evidence, taken together, appears to show.

The authors screened studies published between 2014 and 2024 and settled on twenty-one, drawn from both animal models and human trials. The through-line is consistent. Across these studies, high phenolic extra virgin olive oil was associated with much more favourable results than ordinary extra-virgin olive oil on a range of markers, including inflammation, blood glucose regulation, oxidative stress and blood lipid profile. The review notes that these differences appeared to track the polyphenol content specifically rather than the fat, since the comparison oils shared the same fats and differed mainly in their phenolics.

One detail is particularly worth noting. The review defines a high phenolic oil as one carrying at least 250 milligrams of phenols per kilogram, and most of the human trials it cites used oils in the range of roughly 360 to 580 milligrams per kilogram. Our 2025 harvest was at 2,231 milligrams per kilogram of the phenols counted under the European standard. That places it several times above the oils used in the studies themselves.

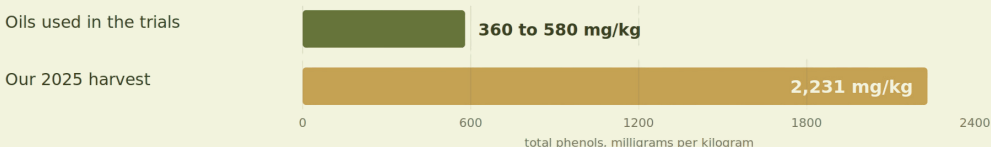
WHAT THE REVIEW FOUND

Liva and colleagues, Clinics and Practice, 2025. A scoping review of 21 studies in animals and people, 2014 to 2024.

Compared with ordinary olive oil, high phenolic olive oil was associated with more favourable results across four groups of markers:



How concentrated were the oils?



FROM THE GROVES



With the crop protected and the pit hardened, the work now is staying vigilant. We keep sticky traps at set points through the groves to count the olive fruit fly week by week rather than guess. If the numbers climb, we expect to spray zeolite once more in early August, the food grade mineral film we have written about before. For now the traps are quiet and the trees are simply in the sun.

Which brings us to the ground beneath the trees. Our plots are small and scattered across the slopes of Mount Stavrovouni, in the southeast of the island. Stavrovouni means Mountain of the Cross, and the name is not decoration. Saint Helena founded the monastery on its peak around 327 AD and left there a fragment of the True Cross, which it holds to this day. That relic is where the mountain takes its name, and it is one of the oldest monasteries in the world.

The real story, for an olive tree, is the rock. Most of southeast Cyprus is soft limestone. Stavrovouni is not. It is an outlier of the Troodos ophiolite, a piece of ninety million year old ocean crust pushed up out of the sea, dark iron-rich igneous stone you do not meet on the surrounding plain. The grove faces southeast, catches the sea wind, and sits on this completely different soil. It is a large part of what makes a place good for this kind of oil.

The 2026 harvest remains on track for September and October. If the summer passes without a shock, the five families believe this could be the strongest crop they have produced. Existing customers will hear from us first, with access opening ahead of the general waitlist.

Between now and then, there is nothing to do but let the trees work. We will write again next month, most likely from the same quiet groves, with more of the story of this place while the olives take their time.

Thank you for reading, and for your patience while the trees do their work. Nature sets our timeline, not investor expectations.

Nick and Nicolas