

## Growers bring record amount of olives to Il Fiorello for milling day

By **Susan Hiland**

SUISUN VALLEY — The large white containers held hundreds of pounds of green and black olives Sunday for Il Fiorello's final Community Milling Day of the season.

The event was a record for the company, with 15,000 pounds of olives delivered.

Geneviede Monks of Fairfield brought a modest amount of olives – 13 pounds – for her first time taking part in the milling days.

"I wanted to see what kind of olive oil I could get from it," Monks said.



Olives are shown prior to milling during the final Community Milling Day of the season at Il Fiorello Olive Oil Company in Suisun Valley, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2019. (Susan Hiland/Daily Republic)

Her companion, John Keifer of Fairfield, thought it would be pretty neat to get a bottle of the oil for cooking.

"It's interesting to watch and I'm looking forward to seeing what we got," Keifer said.

Ann Sievers, Il Fiorello's owner, was enjoying the morning as she noted several different types of olives coming in from just last month's Community Milling Day.

"People are bringing in tons, and they are happy," Sievers said.

She noted that the olives were gorgeous and clean, something she said she was happy to see.

Sievers said she expects to milling to take place daily for the next month, which is great because the power outages really didn't help the business.

"We lost revenue, time and food," she said. "It did give me a chance to clean my freezers out, so I guess that is good."

The olives for Community Milling Day are milled as one batch. The percentage of olives contributed is the overall total represents the amount of olive oil each contributor gets to take home. The pulp and pits are reused for mulch at Il Fiorello, or sold to farmers to use as feed for animals.

The state-of-the-art mill was purchased in 2012 from a company in Italy. Il Fiorello gradually upgraded from older mill equipment until the company grew so much it needed a bigger mill for processing.

The mill processes the olives through a mixing and centrifuge process that separates the pits and skins from the oil. The pits are crushed and can be used in a variety of ways.

When the olives are too watery or too dry, it will affect how much oil will be taken out of the fruit.

Dayna Burgeson of Newcastle usually had a friend with whom she milled olives for their own olive oil, but he got rid of his equipment a few months ago, she said. She still had olives and didn't want them to go to waste.



E.J. Agcaoili dumps olives brought in by customers for Community Milling Day at Il Fiorello Olive Oil Company in Suisun Valley, Sunday, Nov. 24, 2019. (Susan Hiland/Daily Republic)

“They are little olives so they are hard to see but we got about 100 pounds this time,” Burgeson said. “It is a lot of work to get them off the trees.”

Burgeson said last month’s olives were green and flavorful. She noted some people might find the taste a little strong.

“This time it will have a different flavor and I can’t wait to taste it,” Burgeson said.

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