



from the UA harvest. With the finished product almost in their grasp, members of the LEAF team are working to schedule an opportunity to unveil the olive oil.

**Olive project leader Angela Knerl shows off the olive harvest in November 2013.**

Photo by Melanie Lenart

## Nearly 400 pounds of UA olives harvested

By Lisa Van Wagenen

If you've ever walked around the University of Arizona campus in late fall, you might have noticed mature olives that have shriveled and fallen, tarnishing the sidewalks. This year, things were different.

In November, the UA branch of Linking Edible Arizona Forests (LEAF) hosted an olive harvest, headed by two graduate students and an undergraduate intern, on campus. They focused on the "Green Belt" of olive trees lining Park Avenue just north of the Main Gate.

The harvest gained much support on the campus and in local media outlets, which attracted dozens of participants. On the big day, Veterans Day, students and Tucson community members alike came together, rearing and ready to glean some olives.

More than 40 people participated, collecting about 392 pounds of olive in 5-gallon buckets. The interns then brought the olives to Queen Creek Olive Mill just south of Phoenix, where specialists pressed them into olive oil.

Besides donating their effort on processing, Queen Creek Olive Mill owners Perry and Brenda Rea also contributed 5.5 gallons of their own oil from other Arizona olives to supplement the 2.5 gallons of oil produced

## Green Fund supports LEAF for another year in 2014-15

The Linking Edible Forests on the UA Campus will be able to continue its efforts – which involve making students more aware of the local food around them, and teaching them skills for harvesting and preparing fruit harvested from campus trees – thanks to renewed support from the UA Green Fund.

The 10 student volunteers who comprise the Green Fund committee agreed the LEAF project deserves another year of support – at roughly double the amount provided during the 2013-14 academic year. The UA LEAF project is scheduled to receive about \$39,000 for its work in the 2014-15 academic year.

Most of the funding will go to cover student salaries, including one graduate student to work half time on helping to lead the project, and three undergraduate interns scheduled to work roughly third-time on various aspects of the project.

The UA LEAF project will continue to focus on harvesting olives and citrus, and marketing the products from fruit from campus trees. Along with conducting harvests, doing outreach, and producing a variety of publications to help interested people take advantage of the food growing around them, the team will be devoting

effort and research to make the campus harvesting efforts more economically sustainable.

In addition, some of the undergraduate will work with the Iskashitaa Refugee Network on off-campus harvests of fruits such as dates, carob and pomegranate, in part to prepare best-practices publications and consider whether and how these products might be harvested on campus at a future date.

Interested students should contact Project Manager Melanie Lenart ([melenart@email.arizona.edu](mailto:melenart@email.arizona.edu)) for information on the candidate search, which begins in mid-April.

The LEAF project is based in the Department of Soil, Water of Environmental Science, with key partners in the Iskashitaa Refugee Network and the Campus Arboretum. Other collaborators include Facilities Management, Dining Services, the UA Bookstores, the Queen Creek Olive Mill and the Arizona-wide LEAF Network.

### For more information

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Contact **Melanie Lenart**, project manager for LEAF on the UA Campus, at 520-465-6877 or [melenart@email.arizona.edu](mailto:melenart@email.arizona.edu), or **Barbara Eiswerth**, director of Iskashitaa Refugee Network, at [eiswerth@iskashitaa.org](mailto:eiswerth@iskashitaa.org).

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**LEAF on the UA Campus website**  
<https://arboretum.arizona.edu/student-projects/leaf-linking-edible-arizona>

**LEAF Facebook Page**  
<https://www.facebook.com/UALEAF>

**Iskashitaa Refugee Network**  
<http://www.iskashitaa.org/>



Linking Edible Arizona Forests on the UA Campus

