



Negative Attributes/Flavor Defects

FUSTY/MUDDY SEDIMENT

Fusty is the flavor of oil made from olives that have undergone an anaerobic fermentation prior to being milled. This most often occurs when there is delay between harvesting and milling, and also when harvested olives are stored in large bins prior to milling.

Muddy Sediment is a different defect but shares similarities with Fusty, so in the IOC methodology they are scored as the same negative attribute. Muddy Sediment is the result of improper centrifugation during milling or improper storage after milling during which the oil remains in contact with sediment for an extended period of time. It can also be caused by an excessive amount of dirt on olives that were not washed prior to milling. Scientifically-speaking, it is also an anaerobic fermentation.

Detecting Fusty/Muddy Sediment:

The Fusty defect is often described as the aroma of mushy black, brined olives or a sweaty gym locker room. The Muddy Sediment defect is described as barnyard, manure, vomit and decaying salami aromas. Muddy Sediment is often detected along with other defects such as Fusty and Winey.

Preventing Fusty/Muddy Sediment:

- Mill olives within 24 hours of harvesting.
- Use small bins for the collection and transportation of olives.
- Make sure there is cool air circulating around olives in bins. Keep olives in a cool environment between grove and mill.
- Check separator during milling to ensure that it is functioning properly and that most sediment has been removed from oil.
- Consider filtering the oil.
- Rack your oil; make sure oil is NOT in contact with sediment.

Food for Thought - Consider the Consumer Experience:

There has been much discussion about whether or not oil should be filtered. Many producers allow their oil to settle and then pump the oil into a clean storage container, leaving behind the sediment. Other producers feel strongly that the only way to guarantee shelf life is to filter the oil.

Some producers have looked to the wine industry for guidance; unfiltered wines are marketed as a more authentic expression of the grape. However the issue with unfiltered oils is that over time sediment falls out of suspension with the oil, giving the oil a “dirty” appearance.

Over time, the sediment can impart negative flavor to the oil, thus affecting the consumer experience. How quickly does the retailer sell your oil? How quickly does the consumer use the bottle of oil? If a consumer has a negative experience with your oil, they won’t purchase it again. You may have captured the single sale, but will lose the long-term opportunity.