

# Family Trees



**Who**

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"It's so rewarding," says Deena Raphael (right, with Lauren Adlam last month at the first Trees for Mum site in Flatrock Gully, Sydney). "People thank us for giving them the opportunity."

## For two motherless Sydney daughters, remembering Mum is a growing thing

**A** few weeks before Mother's Day in 2002, colleagues Deena Raphael and Lauren Adlam were in the tea room of their Sydney dot-com workplace kicking around positive ways for motherless children to celebrate Mother's Day. "Everyone spends Mother's Day with their mum. It's a difficult day when your mum's gone," says Adlam, 29. She and Raphael both lost their mothers to cancer, and, says Raphael, 34, "I wanted to reach out to that group in an affirmative way. There's so much to celebrate about your mother."

And thus the seeds of Trees for Mum were sown. Although neither had a green

thumb, they organised a communal planting of 100 trees in Sydney's Manly. Last year, 1,000 trees were planted in other parts of Sydney, and this year the program has spread to Fremantle, Canberra, Melbourne and several NSW country sites. "There's emptiness for a lot of people on Mother's Day," says US-born Annandale resident Raphael, who worked in marketing before the birth of her daughter, 9 months. "They're so grateful to have something to do on the day. That's the best feeling—to be able to give that to someone."

With the assistance of local councils (they "have to plant the trees, anyway, under their Bush Care programs," says

Adlam), families and individuals have taken part in the Mother's Day morning ritual. "Some take an hour to plant their tree. Others a minute," says Adlam, a marketing account manager from Sydney's Mosman. "Some bring a picnic."

"Lots of people sit and ponder and have a little chat to their tree," says Raphael. She has planted "trees all over Sydney. We encourage people to come back again. It's something to do to acknowledge all the gifts your mother brought into your life."

■ JULIETTA JAMESON

*Locations, times and registration are at [www.treesformum.com](http://www.treesformum.com). Planting is free; donations go to the National Centre for Childhood Grief.*