



Have your own olive tree in Israel

Few plants conjure images of Israel more than the olive tree.

For decades, Blue Boxes for coins have been ubiquitous in Jewish homes around the world, with the proceeds buying trees to establish forests in Israel.

Now, those two traditions are combined for all those who love Israel, with the opportunity to adopt an olive tree in Israel and benefit from it.

My Tree in Israel is a program through which an olive tree is adopted, and then after the year's harvest, olive oil is processed from that grove and six bottles of personal-label olive oil is shipped to the sponsor.

Kobi Assaf, who founded My Tree in Israel, envisioned it as a way that people from around the world could connect with Israel in a personal way, and to promote and support Israeli farmers.

Yishai Gelb, vice president of marketing, said over the decades, Israel has been the recipient of donations. While donations to all sorts of causes in Israel are still important, "Israel today is a prosperous nation, a successful nation," and "we want people to enjoy what Israel has to offer."

Individuals or groups can adopt an olive tree. Cur-



rent partners include schools, churches and synagogues, Jewish Community Centers and families. Some even create a partnership fundraiser. Trees can be adopted as a memorial or as a gift, and have been adopted by people throughout North America, Europe and Africa.

The olive grove is near the Jezreel Valley. When someone adopts a tree, a farmer takes care of it and cultivates it year-round. The harvest happens in November, and high-quality kosher extra virgin boutique olive oil is produced from that grove. Six bottles are sent per tree, and the labels can be personalized in whatever manner the sponsor chooses.

The sponsor then has the opportunity to continue sponsoring the same tree for the next year.

It is a "unique and personalized product," Gelb said.

As a way to further personalize it, a dedication plaque can be obtained for the tree, and when visiting Israel, one can go to the grove and see his or her tree.

Gelb said a highlight for him is seeing the reactions that come from those involved in the program, and how much having roots in Israel means to them — not to mention the special olive oil they receive.

More information is available at mytree.org.il.