Creating a Private and Unsearchable Ancestry Family Tree

Creating a tree on Ancestry is a step you can take whilst waiting for your DNA results to be processed. You do not have to have a subscription to Ancestry to start a tree, you can just type names/dates into the boxes – even a tree with just you in it is a start!

Everyone has different reasons for undertaking DNA testing. If you think that your family history contains no great mysteries, but want DNA to confirm and extend your research then the choice between a public and private tree is a matter of personal preference.

However, if you are trying to discover unknown close family, keeping your research to yourself (at least to begin with) is a sensible move. Once you have set up a private tree it is then possible to try out all sorts of theories and connect different branches of your tree to see if anything fits, without fully revealing your thoughts to any other Ancestry members. It would not be a great introduction to your new-found relatives if they stumbled across your tree whilst doing their own research and found you publicly showing your current theory that their brother was your Father...

If you already have a tree on Ancestry and are now looking for a biological parent/grandparent, consider creating a new, separate tree (start at Step 2 below) – or you could alter the settings to make your current tree private/unsearchable (start at Step 8 below).

If you already know one part of your family tree it is worth building that side of your tree in as much detail as you can. You may not really be too interested in finding DNA links to your known family if you are trying to solve a mystery elsewhere in your tree. Nevertheless, if you can work out where your DNA matches fit within your known family you can rule them out of being relevant elsewhere – and you get to see how Ancestry works when it is able to find a connection.

It is only possible to connect your AncestryDNA results to one tree at a time, so if you are looking for DNA connections throughout your biological family having one tree with both your maternal and paternal lines on it is going to give you a fuller picture. If more than one member of your family has tested, it is possible to connect many AncestryDNA tests to one tree.
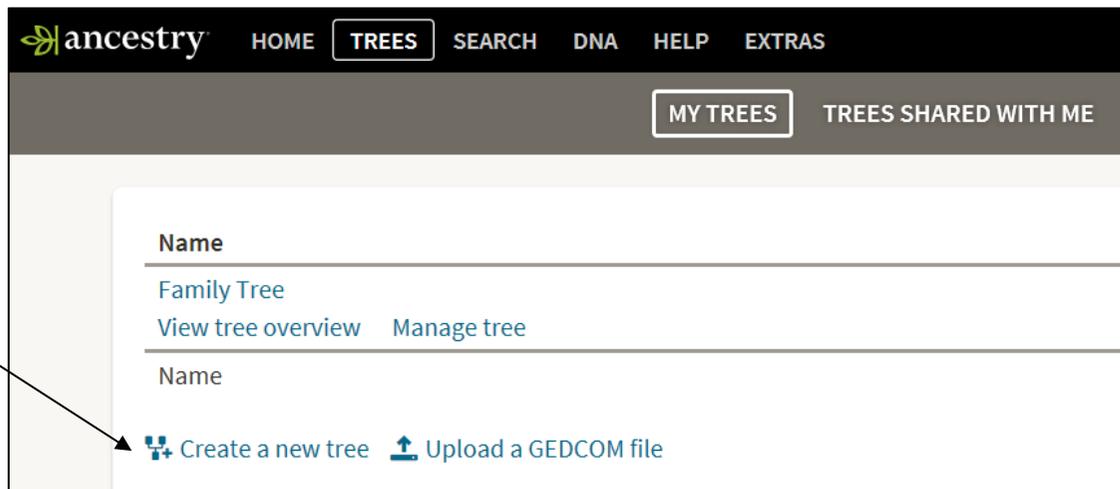
To start a new tree

Ancestry does not limit you to having just one tree. Even though you may have many ideas and theories as to how your DNA Matches connect to you, I would suggest that you **do not** make a new tree for every new idea that you investigate. Instead, I would recommend keeping all your DNA theories within one tree – quite often you may find that later research manages to link two separate branches together.

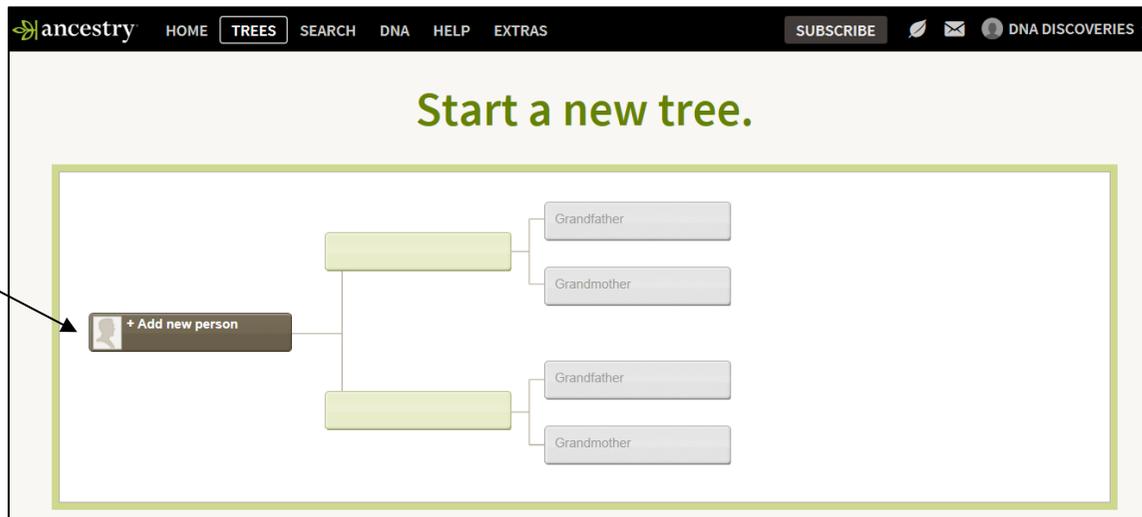1   Click on **TREES,** then click on **Start a New Tree**
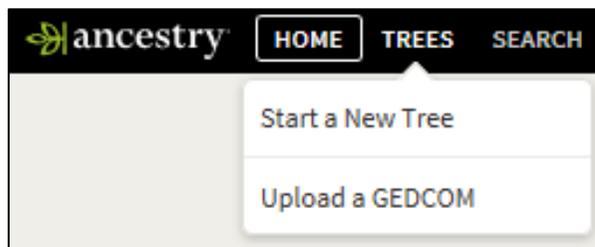
2   If you already have a tree and wish to add a new tree the options will be different – click **Create & Manage Trees**

Click on **Create a new tree**

3   You will then be prompted to **Start a new tree**.

Click on the box to **+Add new person** (usually the first person in the tree will be the person who has taken the DNA test):

4   Fill in the details about the person. If this person is an adoptee it is up to you if you wish to enter the name they are currently known by (although a woman would normally be entered with her maiden name) or their name at birth (if known).

Ancestry automatically shows any living person (ie, one who is not marked as "Deceased") as Private, so full details will not appear, even on a public tree:

It is also advisable to set the tree to be private and unsearchable (see Steps 6 and 8), so the entire contents of the tree cannot be found by other Ancestry members.

Click **CONTINUE.**

5   The first person will appear on the tree and you can now click to **Add Father** and/or **Add Mother** - this will bring up a box similar to that shown in Step 4 where you can add details and then **SAVE**.

Of course, the whole point of DNA testing and tree building might be to find out who your parents are, so you can't add any further people to the tree. If that's the case, click on **Add Father**, don't add any further details (you'll find that Ancestry automatically gives the Father in the tree the same surname as you gave yourself) and click the **SAVE** button to move on to the next step.
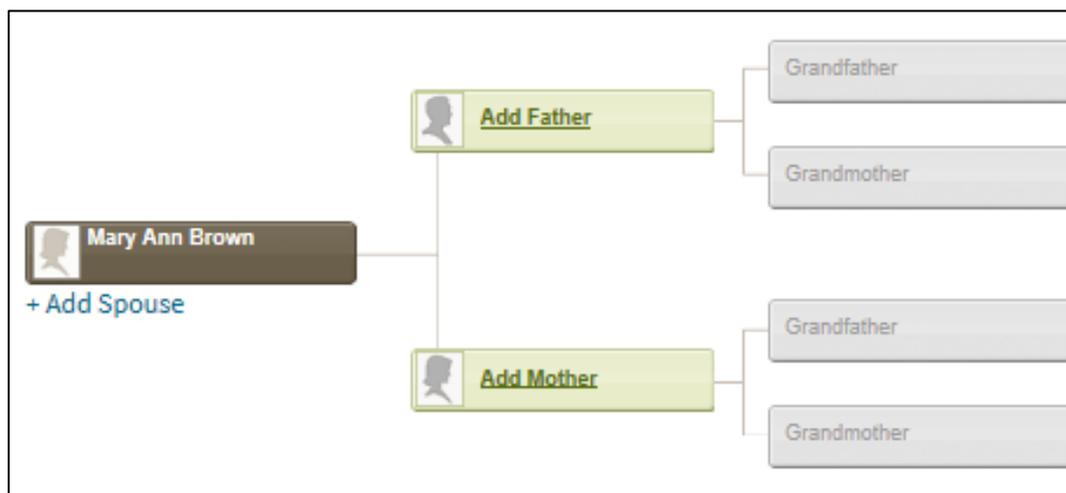
6   Now it's time to **Name Your Tree**. Ancestry suggests a name, based on the surname of the first person you added to the tree.

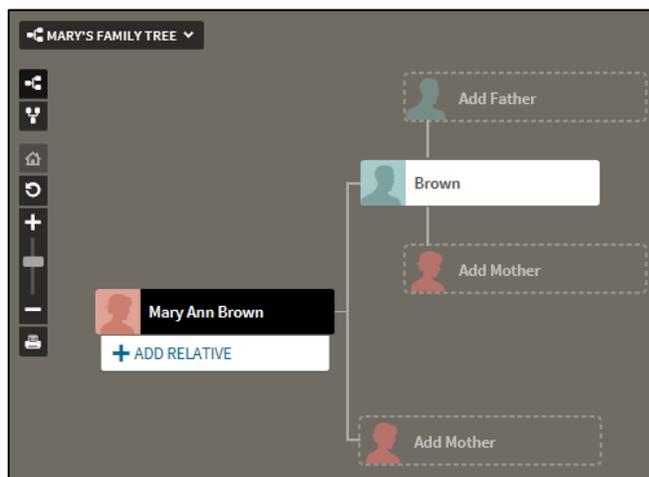You can change the name of the tree to whatever you want – again, in the interest of anonymity it makes sense to use a general name – My Family Tree or Mary's Tree, rather than "Mary Ann Brown searching for birth father from Texas".

Click next to **Allow others to view this tree** to remove the tick – this means that your tree is not visible to other members.

Click **SAVE**.

Save Your Tree

It's *free* to save, add to and share your tree with family and friends.   * indicates required fields

Name Your Tree ★

Brown Family Tree

✅ Allow others to view this tree (people marked "living" are hidden).
   Show how will this help me ⌄

What can I do with my free family tree?
Add stories, photos, audio files, and video files.
Preserve my family history information and access it from the Internet.
Share my tree with family members.
Discover more about my ancestors through Ancestry tree hints.

SAVE or Cancel   🔒 We value your privacy Read our privacy policy.

By saving your family tree, you're agreeing to the terms and conditions of Ancestry.

7   You then have the start of your tree:

◄ MARY'S FAMILY TREE ⌄

Add Father

Brown

Add Mother

Mary Ann Brown
+ ADD RELATIVE

Add Mother

If you have ended up with an extra relative that needs to be removed, **click on the name of the relative**, then click on the **Tools button** and click on **Delete this person** from the drop-down list.

A message will appear, checking that you really do mean to delete this person – click **DELETE**.
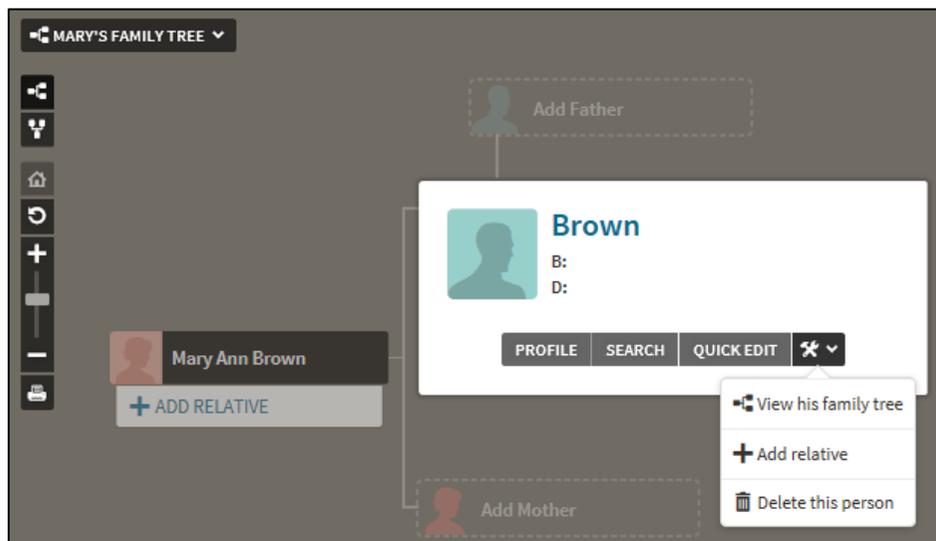
8   There is one more step to ensure that the contents of your tree remains closed to other Ancestry users.

Although you have already made your tree private, records on people within your tree can still be shown as "hints" to other members when they search for information. From the hint it is possible to access your tree. To prevent this happening:

Click on the **name of your tree**, then click on **Tree Settings.**
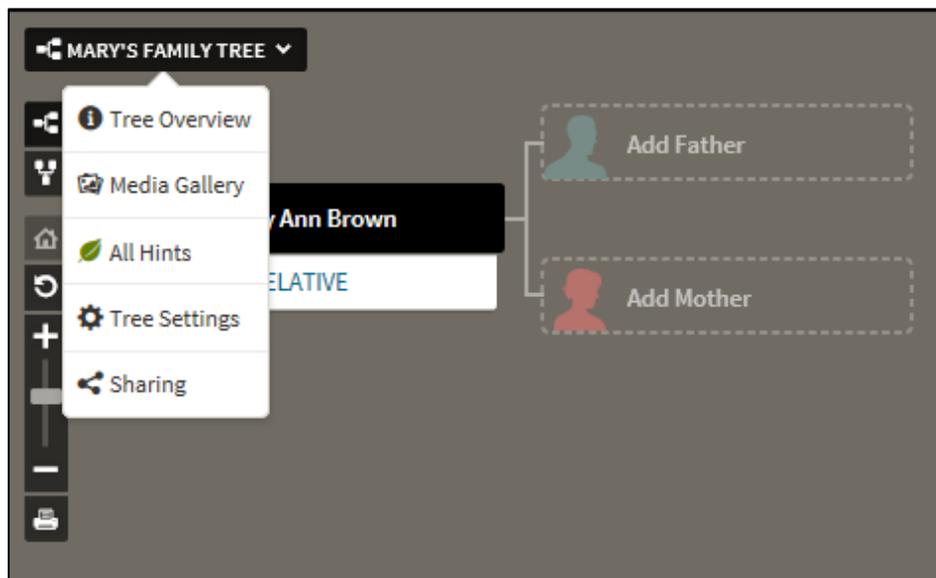
Click on **PRIVACY SETTINGS** on the next screen, then scroll down (there should be no "dot" next to Public Tree as you have already set the tree to be private).
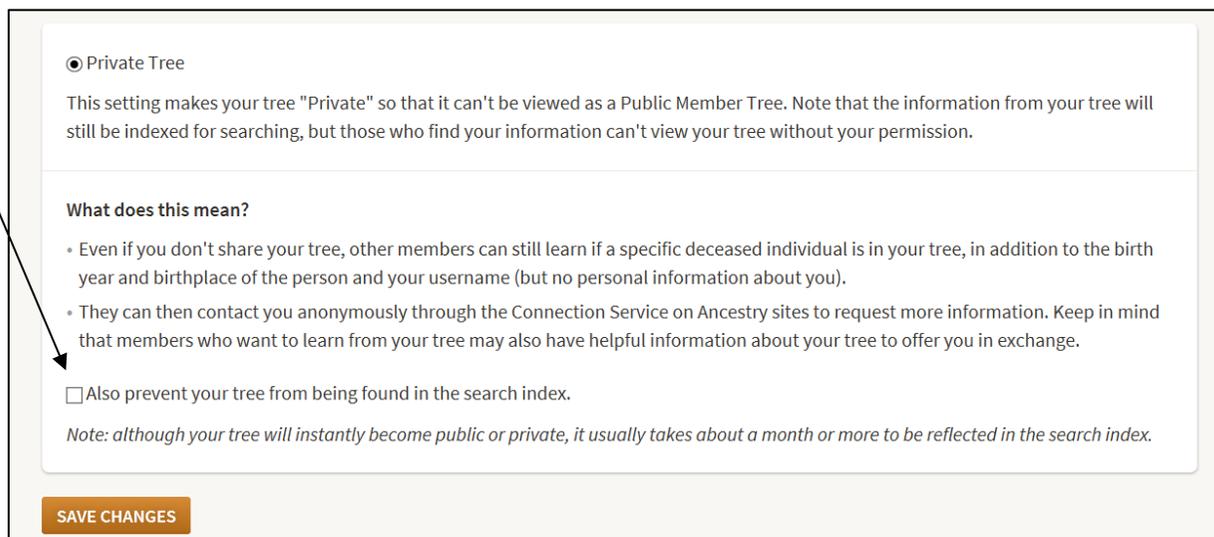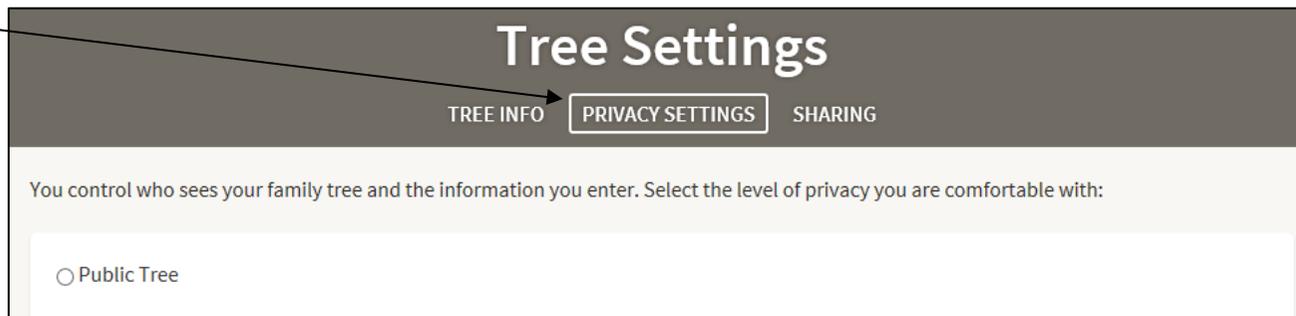
If you are editing an existing public tree and would like to make it private, scroll down a little further, then click next to the option labelled **Private Tree**.

At the bottom of this screen there is the option to **Also prevent your tree from being found in the search index** – click the box to add a tick.

NB   Making your tree unsearchable takes time to come into effect, so it is worth changing this setting as soon as you can, even before you have received your DNA results.

Click **SAVE CHANGES**.

Tree Settings

TREE INFO   PRIVACY SETTINGS   SHARING

You control who sees your family tree and the information you enter. Select the level of privacy you are comfortable with:

○ Public Tree

◉ Private Tree

This setting makes your tree "Private" so that it can't be viewed as a Public Member Tree. Note that the information from your tree will still be indexed for searching, but those who find your information can't view your tree without your permission.

What does this mean?

- Even if you don't share your tree, other members can still learn if a specific deceased individual is in your tree, in addition to the birth year and birthplace of the person and your username (but no personal information about you).
- They can then contact you anonymously through the Connection Service on Ancestry sites to request more information. Keep in mind that members who want to learn from your tree may also have helpful information about your tree to offer you in exchange.

☐ Also prevent your tree from being found in the search index.

Note: although your tree will instantly become public or private, it usually takes about a month or more to be reflected in the search index.

SAVE CHANGES

Your tree is now ready to use – you can add more people by typing in their details if you know them, if you take out a subscription you can then use the information from records available on Ancestry to help extend your tree.

The next step will be to connect your DNA test to yourself in this tree.

For further help discovering your DNA family, <u>visit the website</u>   or   <u>Find us on Facebook</u>