



What Do We Plant?

LET'S BEGIN



Why do we need trees? Rank the list below from 1 to 10, where 1 is *least important* and 10 is *very important*. Add more options if you like.

	For building houses.
	For building ships and boats.
	For a clean environment.
	For avoiding soil erosion.
	For making the Earth look beautiful.
	For fire.
	For charcoal and fodder.
	For making furniture.
	For a pollution-free Earth.
	For giving shade to the tired.



What do we plant when we plant the tree?

We plant the ship which will cross the sea.

We plant the mast to carry the sail.

We plant the planks to withstand the gales,

The keel, the keelson, the beam, the knee;

We plant the ship when we plant the tree.

What do we plant when we plant the tree?





We plant the houses for you and me.
We plant rafters, the shingles, the floors.
We plant the studding; the lath, the doors,
The beams and siding, all parts that be;
We plant the house when we plant the tree.
What do we plant when we plant the tree?
A thousand things that we daily see;
We plant the spire that out-towers the crag,
We plant the staff for our country's flag,
We plant the shade, from the hot sun free;
We plant all these when we plant the tree.



Henry Abbey

Glossary

- sail:** strong cloth stretched on poles in boats and ships. It fills up with wind and moves the boat
- plank:** a long narrow flat piece of wood
- keel:** the long piece of wood or steel along the bottom of a boat that forms part of its structure and helps to keep the boat balanced in the water
- rafter:** any of the large sloping pieces of wood which support a roof
- shingle:** a thin flat tile usually made of wood, that is fixed in rows to make a roof or wall covering



- studding(n):** small pieces of wood that are fixed to a surface for decoration
- lath:** a long thin flat strip of wood used to make a structure to support plaster on walls
- crag:** a high rough mass of rock projecting upward or outward
- staff:** the long pole on which a flag is tied

THINKING ABOUT THE POEM

Answer these questions:

1. Would you agree with the poet that trees are mainly planted for the uses that he mentions? Are there other uses?
2. Many uses can easily be met with other materials. Identify those uses where we can use other material (iron, for instance) and thus save the trees.
3. What does the poet mean when he says, “We plant the house when we plant the tree.”?
4. ‘We plant the shade, from the hot sun free.’ What does this line suggest about the importance of trees?
5. How many times is the question, ‘What do we plant when we plant the tree?’ repeated in the poem? Why do you think the poet does this?
6. What will happen if we keep on only ‘using’ the trees?
7. Add three more words of your own to each row that rhyme with the words given:
 - i. tree, three, we
 - ii. ship, tip, lip
 - iii. you, sue, chew
 - iv. shade, made, fade.....
 - v. parts, carts, charts.....



- 9 Chinar tree, the symbol of Kashmir's beauty, has been indiscriminately axed in the recent years. Choose a partner and tell him/her why the Chinar is important in Kashmir, and what will happen if we continue felling down these trees? Also, list five local trees with the help of your partner, and describe their main uses.
10. Find out the origin and uses of a tree found very commonly in your native place.

