

2.1

## Cherry Tree

(Textbook page)

**Introduction :** This poem is by Ruskin Bond. He is a widely loved writer of poems and stories. Cherry Tree is a poem of struggle against adverse conditions. It inspires one to fight against even those who deliberately try to destroy one's effort to achieve one's dream. The struggle, though long, in the end will bear fruit and bring great joy.

**ICE BREAKERS**

- \* (1) Trees are revered because :
- Ans.

- (1) They give us joy.
- (2) They give us food, medicines, wood, besides many more useful things.
- (3) They provide shade and shelter to fauna.
- (4) They absorb toxic carbon dioxide and make the air clean.
- (5) They prevent soil-erosion and help rain-cloud-formation.

- (2) Column A shows your involvement in growing a tree, as well as the stages in the life of a tree. Column B shows the feelings you experience at all the stages.
- Match them appropriately.**

(The answers are given directly in Column B.)

A	B
1. You planted a sapling -	You wanted to make a humble beginning.
2. You watered the plant -	You cared for it.
3. You saw the shoot for the first time -	The new experience brought excitement to you.
4. You fenced the plant -	Your motive was to protect it.

A	B
5. The plant gradually had lush green leaves grow on it -	The colour, symbolizing life, gave you a feeling of hope.
6. The tree had buds too -	Gave you a feeling of joy to see the promising future.
7. Birds made a nest on the tree which was fully grown and laden with flowers.	You were happy and satisfied because you experienced what you had often heard, that small beginnings can lead to great achievements.

**Paraphrase**

The poem begins with the poet recalling that eight years ago he had 'placed' a cherry seed in the grass. He remembered he wanted to have his own cherry tree. He had watered the ground where he put the seed and forgotten about it.

The cherry tree, in spite of his carelessness had survived. At the end of that summer the poet noticed a small cherry plant where he had placed the seed, growing among the tall, wild grass. No one had known about it nor cared for it, but it was a tiny five-month-old sapling. It was unnoticeable in the grass. Goats grazing there ate its leaves and a grass cutter hacked it with the sharp cutting-blade. In the monsoon, disease withered the little cherry sapling.

Yet the next spring, the poet saw that the plant was not only alive but had three new shoots. It seemed eagerly pushing upward towards the sunlight and air, struggling to somehow stay alive.

Now that the poet knew the plant was alive, he was impatient to see it grow further. But he could only wait as the young sapling took its time through the seasons. He felt it was miraculous that the plant was alive and thriving.

He went away to Kashmir and returned after some time had lapsed. He himself came back thinner, not having much money. But he was thrilled to see that the cherry sapling was now a six feet tall tree. He felt so proud of *his own* cherry tree! And he couldn't believe that there was actually a ripe, red cherry hanging from a branch. The next year the tree bore delicate pink cherry – blossoms. The beautiful flowers were so dainty that they would fall at the smallest breath or slightest breeze.

The poet returns to the present after thinking back on how the tree came to be there. He is lying on the grass under the tree looking up at the evening sky showing between the branches and leaves overhead. He watched the birds darting about and bees hovering over the sweet flowers. As the sun set and stars appeared, there was the noise of crickets. Moon-moths flew about, and his heart sang with joy thinking of his cherry-tree planted so many years ago.

### FACTUAL UNDERSTANDING, POETIC DEVICES, APPRECIATION AND POETIC CREATIVITY

**Q. 1. Read the given extract and do all the activities that follow it :**

#### Extract 1 (Textbook pages 66 and 67)

Eight years have passed  
Since I placed my cherry seed in the grass.  
“Must have a tree of my own,” I said,  
And watered it once and went to bed  
And forgot; but cherries have a way of growing,  
Though no one’s caring very much or knowing.  
And suddenly that summer near the end of May,  
I found a tree had come to stay.

It was very small, five months child,  
Lost in the tall grass running wild.  
Goats ate the leaves, the grass cutter scythe  
Split it apart and a monsoon blight  
Shrivelled the slender stem..... Even so,  
Next spring I watched three new shoots grow,  
The young tree struggle, upward thrust  
Its arms in a fresh fierce lust  
For light and air and sun.

**Glossary :** **scythe** – a long-handled tool with a long curved blade to cut grass and grain. **blight (noun)** – a plant disease caused by fungi. **shriveled** – wrinkled and shrunken. **thrust** – push forcefully. **fierce** – aggressive. **have a way (phr)** – to do something well. (*here*) growing well. **running wild** – growing uncontrolled. **slender** – slim. **lust (n)** – longing, desire.

#### A1. Factual understanding :

##### \*(1) Complete the following :

(*The answers are given directly and underlined.*)

- (1) The thought which prompted the poet to plant the cherry seed. ....

**Ans.** The poet felt he wanted to have his own tree.

- (2) (1) Goats (2) The grass-cutter's scythe. (3) A blight (plant-disease in the monsoon) were threats.

##### \*(2) State whether the following statements are true or false : **Ans.**

- (1) They destroyed the Cherry tree. False  
(2) The Cherry tree had an instinct to survive. True

##### (3) Find from the extract, proofs for the following :

##### \*(i) The poet has mentioned different seasons.

**Ans.** ‘And suddenly that summer near the end of May..’, and later in the same stanza, ‘...and a monsoon blight

Shrivelled the slender stem.’ The poet observes next spring the plant’s further growth.

\*(ii) The poet's minute observations of the steady growth of the cherry tree.

**Ans.** The poet describes the young plant as a 'very small, five months child.'

Later in the next spring the poet observed that the plant now had three new shoots.

\*(iii) The struggle of the tree for survival.

**Ans.** 'Goats ate the leaves, the grass cutter scythe Split it apart and a monsoon blight Shrivelled the slender stem.'

The plant was almost destroyed on several occasions. Man and animal went about regardless of the tree. (Even though no one noticed the little plant, it struggled but survived because it was resilient.)

(4) State whether the statement is True/False. If the statement is false, correct it by finding evidence from the extract to support your answer.

The cherry tree did not take long to grow.

**Ans. False.**

Opening line - 'Eight years have passed Since I placed my cherry seed.'

The line tells us that the seed took almost a decade to grow into a tree.

## A2. Interpretation/Understanding of Poetic Devices :

\*(1) State the reasons/consequences/effects of :

The life of the cherry tree was threatened.

*(Interpretation)*

**Ans.** The poet forgot about the seed he had put in the ground. No one cared about or looked after it/ watered it. The cattle ate the fresh leaves of the little plant. The grass cutter did not notice it, and mangled it when cutting the grass. The sapling though in danger, struggled for life and survived with the help of the life-giving sunlight and rains.

\*(2) A small thought, put into action, led to great achievement. Pick out the lines from the beginning of the poem and explain their significance. *(Interpretation)*

**Ans.** Opening lines...

Since I placed my cherry seed in the grass,  
"Must have a tree of my own," I said...

The desire to have his own tree prompted the poet to plant a cherry seed and water it, though later he forgot all about it.

That seed sprouted, struggled and grew, thrived and blossomed till it was six feet tall. It blossomed and yielded fruit too.

(3) Find examples of the following from the extract. *(Poetic Devices)*

(a) Alliteration :

Alliteration is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

**Ans.** '....the grass cutter scythe

Split it apart'

'Shrivelled the slender stem...'

(Repetition of 's' sound).

(b) Antithesis :

Antithesis literally means "opposite." It is a device in which two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect.

**Ans.** 'It was very small, five months child

Lost in the tall grass.....'

(Two opposite ideas small and tall are put together for effect.)

(c) Personification :

Personification is a figure of speech where human qualities are given to non-human objects.

**Ans.** '....very small, five months child,'

'.....upward thrust

Its arms .....

(Here, the plant sapling is represented as a human child holding its arms up to be lifted.)

- (4) How does the poet use imagery in "upward thrust It's arms...?"?

(Poetic Devices)

### Imagery

Imagery is descriptive language for the reader to better imagine the work of the poet. Imagery draws on the five senses [namely taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound] and also adds symbolism to the work.

**Ans.** The lines "upwards .... arms" brings to mind a child holding up its arms to be carried by someone the child loves and who loves him. The plant seems to be the child who wants to be loved.

### A3. Appreciation / Personal Response :

Why do you think the cherry seed was forgotten? (Personal Response)

**Ans.** When the poet placed the seed on the ground, eight years earlier, he may have been a young boy. He might have not realized that plants/seeds need nurturing.

### A4. Poetic Creativity :

Write a few lines about your favourite seasonal fruit.

**Ans.** Apples, Oranges, Sitaphal or Chikoo. Mango is my favourite, what about you?

Write a poem of your own of four lines on a plant.

**Ans.** I planted a tiny seed  
Near some grass, or weed?  
When I remembered it once more  
What a surprise it had in store!

### Q. 2 Read the extract and do the activities that follow it :

#### Extract 2 (Textbook page 67)

I could only wait, as one  
Who watched, wandering, while Time and the rain  
Made a miracle from green growing pain.....  
I went away next year - Spent a season in  
Kashmir -  
Came back thinner, rather poor,  
But richer by a cherry tree at my door.

Six feet high my own dark cherry,  
And I could scarcely believe it - a berry.  
Ripened and jeweled in the sun,  
Hung from a branch - just one!  
And next year there were blossoms small  
Pink, fragile, quick to fall  
At the merest breath, the sleepiest breeze.....

**Glossary :** blossoms – flowers that bloom on trees. watched, wandering – noted the growth of the plant between his travels and return home. scarcely – hardly. merest – slightest. sleepiest breeze – the gentlest puff of wind.

### A1. Factual Understanding :

- \*(1) Choose the correct options from the brackets :

The blossoms are fragile. (True/False)

**Ans.** True

- \*(2) State whether the statement is True or False. If the statement is false, correct it, by finding evidence from the extract to support your answer :

The poet was ecstatic at the sight of the cherry tree. – True

- \*(3) Find the lines from the extract that are the proofs of colour imagery.

**Ans** 'Made a miracle from green growing pain....' this shows the wonder of growing greenery. 'Ripened and jeweled in the sun...' The poet speaks of the single cherry he saw and compares it to a 'jewel'. A cherry is red, and the fruit reminded him of a ruby. He even felt richer because of the cherry tree though money-wise he was poor.

'Pink, fragile, quick to fall....'

The colour pink brings to mind something dainty, flimsy or delicate. The poet is able to make the reader imagine small, pretty and delicate flowers in the colour pink.

### A2. Interpretation / Understanding of poetic Devices :

- \*(1) Complete the following : (*Interpretation*)  
(The answers are given directly and underlined.)

**Ans.** The poet felt richer because though he may have had little money when he came back, the cherry tree growing near his home, gave him joy and a sense of achievement. When he remembered it had overcome adversities, struggled and now cheerfully was even giving fruit, he was happier.

- \***(2)** State the reasons/consequences/effects of the following : (*Interpretation*)  
The cherry tree blossomed.

**Ans.** The cherry tree had grown and reached a stage when it bore flowers. This showed it was a healthy fully grown cherry tree.

**(3) Poetic Devices :**

**Figure of Speech – Climax**

The figure of speech called **climax** is used here, as the words are arranged in increasing order of importance.

'Pink, fragile quick to fall.'

- The poet wants to emphasize how delicate the flowers are.
- The colour 'pink' is light – conveying a feeling about the blooms being dainty.
- The next word is 'fragile', actually describing the flower itself as delicate, weak or flimsy.
- 'Quick to fall' speaks of how easily it can break off the branch.

So the impression of frailness is built up from first description to the last.

\*Find out examples of the following from the extract. (*Poetic Devices*)

**(a) Alliteration :**

**Ans.** ....only wait, as wone  
Who watched, w(Repetition of 'w' sound)

**(b) Antithesis :**

**Ans.** ....rather poor,  
But richer by .....  
(Two opposite ideas poor and rich are put together here.)

**A3. Appreciation / Personal Response :**  
\*(1) Find out some expressions from the extract that bring out the elements of beauty of Nature. (*Appreciation*)

**Ans.** Three new shoots, ripened and jeweled in the sun, blossoms small pink, fragile, sleeping breeze, blue sky, finches flew and flitted dappled green, bees in ecstasy, singing crickets.

The use of such phrases conveys the various aspects of Nature's beauty through sight – colour, movement of birds & insects and sounds in nature.

- (2) The poet first forgot about the seed. Later he writes "I could only wait, as one who watched, ...." What feeling does this line convey? (*Personal Response*)

**Ans.** The author, many years back had planted the seed and forgotten it. Now that he knew his seed was a plant, he felt impatient for it to grow. The line "I could .... who watched conveys that he has to wait and give the plant time to grow and cannot hurry up the progress of nature.

**A4. Poetic Creativity :**

Write two lines on a fruit, you were served

**Ans.** For it was many years later

I had a dozen gooseberries on a platter.

**Q. Read the extract and do the activities that follow it :**

**Extract 3 (Textbook page 67)**

I lay on the grass, at ease,  
Looking up through leaves at the blue  
Blind sky, at the finches as they flew  
And flitted through the dappled green.  
While bees in an ecstasy drank  
Of nectar from each bloom and the sun sank  
Swiftly, and the stars turned in the sky,  
And moon-moths and singing crickets and I  
Yes, I! — praised Night and Stars and tree :  
That small, the cherry, grown by me.

**Glossary :** **dappled** – having dark or light patches.  
**ecstasy** – feeling of great happiness. **nectar** – sweet liquid produced by flowers. **finches** – small (song) birds that eat seeds. **flitted** – flew lightly and fast.

## A1. Factual Understanding :

### \*(1) Complete the following :

(The answers are given directly and underlined.)

The beneficiaries of the cherry tree are birds – finches, insects such as bees, crickets, moths, and probably humans too.

### \*(2) Find the proofs of colour imagery from the extract.

**Ans.** ‘Looking up through leaves at the blue Blind sky..’

The poet describes the **blue** sky, visible through the leaves above him.

‘..they flew

And flitted through the **dappled green**.’

The poet is watching the birds darting and flying between the leaves of varied green.

### (3) State whether the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements by finding evidence from the extract to support your answer.

(1) Birds and insects were benefitted from the tree.

**Ans.**

True

(2) The poem has an underlying message about the importance of trees.

True

(3) The poet repents planting the cherry tree.

**Ans.**  
False

In the end of the poem the poet expresses his praise for the cherry tree. He is very happy and does not repent planting the seed.

## A2. Interpretation / Understanding of Poetic Devices :

### \*(1) A small thought, put into action, led to a great achievement. Pick out the lines from the end of the poem and explain its significance. (Interpretation)

**Ans.** In the end the poet says,

Yes I, – praised Night and Stars and tree:

*That small, the cherry, grown by me.*

He is thrilled to see his casual action of putting a seed to the ground, actually resulting in a tree bearing beautiful blossoms and yielding fruits.

### \*(2) Find examples from the poem of the following. (Poetic Devices)

#### (1) Alliteration :

**Ans.** ‘...at the blue Blind sky’

(Repetition of ‘b’ sound)

‘the finches as they flew  
And flitted..’

(Repetition of ‘f’ sound)

‘...the sun sank

Swiftly, and the stars...’

(Repetition of ‘s’ sound)

#### (2) Personification :

**Ans.** ‘....blue Blind sky.’

‘...bees in an ecstasy drank....’

‘...singing crickets..’

(Here non-living things and insects are given human qualities of blindness, ecstasy and singing.)

## A3. Appreciation / Personal Response :

How does the poet convey that a happy feeling in his mind is matched by beauty around him outside? (Appreciation)

**Ans.** The poet conveys a sense of peace and quiet joy – “at ease looking up ...” The poet mentions the leaves of the cherry tree through which he watches the sky, the birds, insects and flowers. In the quiet peace, stars appear. Also the sounds of the night insects and bees humming are soothing, showing him enjoying the peace outside and joy within.

## A4. Poetic Creativity :

The beginning of some lines are given. Complete them in your own way. (You may use poetic devices if you want.)

Flashes of .....

of tiny waves .....

And back, .....

But to bring .....

Ans.

Flashes of silver sparkled on the tips  
Of tiny waves, as they walked lazily to the shore  
And back, This water is not for boats or ships,  
But to bring peace, calm and joy to a heart that is sore.

### BRAINSTORMING

(Based on whole poem)

'Cherry Tree' is a narrative poem. The features that make it a narrative poem are given. Justify them with examples :

- (1) The poem has a beginning, middle and an end.

Ans. The poem begins with the poet recalling how he planted the seed and forgot about it. He then narrates how the plant struggled through the perils and survived. He watched it grow from a little sapling to a six feet tree bearing beautiful blossoms and even a jewel-like fruit. He returns to the present day when he is relaxing under the branches of the full grown tree, admiring the creatures living on and off his cherry tree.

- (2) Different places are mentioned.

Ans. The poet speaks of going away from that place to Kashmir and returning. At the end of the poem the poet describes his surroundings while he lies under the cherry tree.

- (3) Characters are referred to.

Ans. There is reference to a grass-cutter. Several creatures – goat, birds and insects are mentioned.

- (4) Incidents are arranged in sequence.

Ans. In the first stanza it is mentioned that the little green cherry plant was small – a five months child, and later it has three shoots growing upward. Finally it is a full grown tree with blossoms and fruit.

- (5) There is dialogue between the poet and reader or characters in the poem.
- Ans. The poet is telling the reader incident – about planting a seed, subsequent development and miraculous survival, and lastly, the way it succeeded in becoming the tree of his dreams.

- (6) It is a time-bound poem.

Ans. The poem begins with a recollection of how it was a seed, proceeds with its struggle to survive, its growth, and the final sense of pride the poet feels when he lies under his own tree admiring it as part of beautiful Nature around him.

### POETIC CREATIVITY

Compose 8-10 lines. Narrate any incident of your life without using any rhyming pattern.

Ans.

As I walked down the school-lane, I remembered the coin

My grandfather gave me to buy a toffee or a top from

My favourite corner shop. The pocket of my shorts was torn and I

Sadly found out only after losing my treasure. But another day my Friend, who had won my Cat's eye, lost it back to me! I was thrilled

To be the master of marble-games again He begged me

For the Cat's eye and offered a coin in exchange. I didn't know

If I wanted the Cat's eye or a top more!

### APPRECIATION OF POEM

Write an appreciation of the poem using the following points :

- (1) About the poem, poet and title.

Ans. The title Cherry Tree indicates to the reader that the poem has something to do with nature. The poet, Ruskin Bond is a

nature lover. His life in the beautiful hills of Mussourie has provided the setting for many books of stories and poems. The poem follows the relationship of the narrator and the tree over several years.

**(2) Theme/summary/gist of the poem.**

**Ans.** The poem is one that makes the reader feel as if the poet is describing how a child was growing up over the years. He observes the tree growth and (in the end) feels content to admire it in his garden.

**(3) Poetic style/language, poetic devices used in the poem.**

**Ans.** The poem is interesting as the story flows. It has rhyme scheme aa, bb, cc.... There are many run-on lines, where the end of the line does not end the sentence, but the sentence continues onto the next line. There is sensory imagery of sight and sound. The choice of simple words makes the language easy to comprehend and enjoy. Alliteration in several lines makes the poem enjoyable to read aloud/listen to. Personification makes the cherry tree dear even to the reader.

**(4) Special features/novelties/focusing elements.**

**Ans.** The poem seems to make the reader aware that a small effort, if nurtured carefully, without giving up, can bring rich rewards. It is a happy poem that kindles hope.

**(5) Message/values/morals in the poem.**

**Ans.** The poem has more than one message. It has the message to persist in the struggle to achieve a goal.

There is a message of hope when one can only despair.

There is a message to love trees, and plant and grow greenery wherever we can. It will inspire children to sow seeds and look after the plants for the several years that they take to grow. Then later they can enjoy the fruits.

**(6) Your opinion about the poem.**

**Ans.** I enjoyed the poem. It was interesting to read the sapling growing into a tree as the boy grew into a responsible young man.

**SUMMARY WRITING**

Write a summary of the poem using the following points :

**(1) Title :**

**Ans.** 'Cherry Tree' makes the reader wonder why a tree is important enough for a poet to write about it.

**(2) Introductory paragraph (about the poem, type, Nature, tone) :**

**Ans.** The poem is a narrative one. It describes how the tree came into existence, with just a careless burying of a seed.

**(3) Main body (central idea, gist of the poem) :**

**Ans.** The poet, at the outset, recalls that eight years earlier he placed a seed in his garden, but he forgot about it. But that little seed took root and sprouted. It was nearly killed but survived.

The sun and rain helped it to flourish. The poet had to go away and on his return he was overjoyed to find a full grown cherry tree. In the closing lines he is admiring his handiwork, as he relaxes under its branches, watching the creatures enjoying the tree.

**(4) Conclusion (opinion, views, appeal) :**

**Ans.** It is a fine example of a poem that tells a simple story in easy verse.

**WRITING SKILLS**

**(1) Write the poem 'Cherry Tree' in the form of a story.**

**Ans. Cherry Tree**

Eight years ago I put a cherry seed among some grass in the garden and watered it. I wanted a cherry tree of my own! But then I forgot all about it. Yet the seed had taken root and I noticed at the end of May that summer that there was actually a cherry plant growing.

It grew among the tall grass and so was unnoticed. The goats ate up its leaves while grazing there. The grass cutter too did not take care when trimming the grass and the stem of the cherry sapling was damaged. In the rains the poor plant was infected with a fungus. Yet, in the following spring, there were three new shoots making their way upward toward the warm sun and the rain.

Now that I knew that the plant was growing, I was impatient. But I had to wait. I also had to travel away from home. I went to Kashmir for a season and when I came back I was thrilled to see not a plant but a cherry tree in the garden! It was six feet tall, and, amazingly, had a single, ruby-red cherry hanging from a branch! The next year there were beautiful cherry-blossoms. They were a delicate pale pink. They were so frail that if I went too close, my breath, or even a gentle puff of breeze would blow them off the tree!

Later, lying under the tree on the grass, I watched the finches darting among the leaves of the cherry tree. The sun was quickly setting and the sky was darkening, stars appearing as bees hovered over the flowers for the nectar. Crickets chirped and the night-moths appeared as I admired the beautiful night and stars and my very own cherry tree.

(2) **Write in 100 words what the cherry tree in the poem symbolizes.**

**Ans.** The cherry tree could be a symbol of a hesitant/slow tentative beginning of a dream or ambition. It is begun with hope, perhaps forgotten afterwards. The dreamer may despair and even give it up. But a little effort, some nurturing and determination will make the idea slowly take shape. Confidence returns and hope revives. Some

more care, sustained effort and time will see the dream become real and finally one finds hope again. The person will use up all the resources and toil till the small idea is successful and gives results. Thus one can (metaphorically) taste the sweet fruits after a long time and hard work.

- (3) You have studied the lesson 'The Call of the Soil' from prose 1.3. Compare 'Cherry Tree' with 'The Call of the Soil' and find out the element of joy of nurturing for the author and the poet.

**Ans.** The author's feelings which he describes in 'The Call of the Soil' are very similar to the feelings of the poet of 'Cherry Tree'. Venkat Iyer recalls his thrill when looking around his fields of moong, yet to ripen. He describes his quest to break free of growing modern, hybrid and chemical-dependant, water-intense variety of short-term rice. He later succeeded in finding a traditional variety of rice seeds to grow a sturdy, long-term crop. The locals had given up this rice for short term hybrid varieties. He was happy about his life-change from techie to farmer.

Ruskin Bond recalls how he, probably as a boy, wanted his own cherry tree and planted a seed. In spite of neglect the little seed sprouted, put forth shoots and leaves. The sapling struggled through the grazing cattle and careless grass-cutter, to flourish with the help of Nature. The poet when older was overjoyed to see a full grown tree by his door, with fragrant blooms, and actually bearing fruit.

Both find joy in having created something living. They watch the growing life anxiously and are content and find happiness to grow the crop/tree.