

**Missouri Assessment Program
Spring 2006**

Communication Arts

Released Items

Grade 4

Directions

This article is about an event that happened long ago. Read the article. Then answer Numbers 1 through 6.

The Dream That Grows

by Melanie Crabtree

Eliza Scidmore stood near the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., and watched as two women planted two trees in carefully prepared soil. One of the women was Helen Herron Taft, wife of President William Howard Taft. The other woman was Mrs. Chinda, wife of the Japanese Ambassador to the United States.

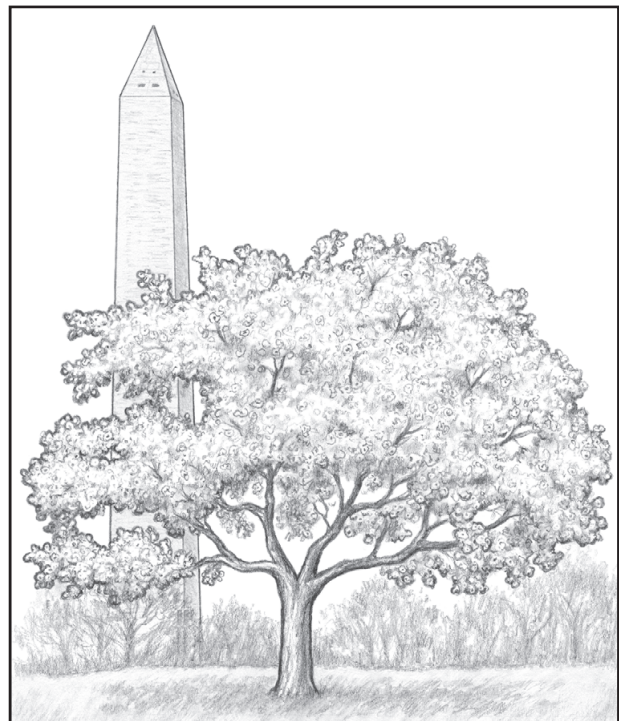
Ambassador = a person who represents his or her government in another country

These were not ordinary women, and the trees they planted were not ordinary trees. To Eliza Scidmore, the trees were two of the most beautiful trees in the world. She had waited for many years to see this day come. Her heart was full of joy.

Mrs. Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore was a travel writer and photographer who lived in Washington, D.C. On a visit to Japan in 1885, she saw in a park some blooming “sakura” (the Japanese name for cherry trees). The image of those beautiful pink and white blossoms stayed in her mind after she returned to the United States. She wanted to plant some of the fruitless cherry trees in Washington, D.C., so that Americans could enjoy the cherry blossoms too.

At first, no one would listen to her plan. Some people laughed at the idea of planting cherry trees that never produced cherries but only produced flowers that just lasted for a few days each year. It seemed no one would help. However, Mrs. Scidmore did not give up on her dream so easily.

Mrs. Scidmore began to raise money with the goal of buying 100 trees each year. In ten years, 1,000 blooming sakura would put on quite a show, she thought.



Eliza Scidmore's hopes soared when William Howard Taft was elected President of the United States in 1908. Mrs. Scidmore knew that Mrs. Taft had been to Japan and loved cherry trees as well. She wrote a letter to the White House asking for First Lady Helen Taft's help.

Within a few days, the First Lady wrote a letter back to Mrs. Scidmore. Mrs. Taft thanked Eliza Scidmore for her suggestion. Mrs. Taft had talked to some Japanese people who were in Washington, D.C., about the idea. A Japanese official and a well-known Japanese chemist, Dr. Takamine, said they would get some fruitless sakura from Japan. Mrs. Taft told Eliza Scidmore the trees were coming.

In 1910, two thousand trees were sent as gifts from the city of Tokyo, Japan. Mrs. Scidmore thought her dream was coming true. Sadly, the trees had to be destroyed. They had become diseased and full of insects. But the people of Tokyo did not give up easily, either. Dr. Takamine had helped pay for the first batch of trees. He now helped pay for a second batch as well. In 1912, three thousand more specially selected trees arrived. They were inspected and found to be healthy.

batch = a group
or bunch

On March 27, 1912, the first two trees were planted. Eliza Scidmore was there, watching her dream take root in the ground.

Even though cherry trees are only expected to live for fifty years, these first two trees are still alive. Each spring they bloom along with thousands of other cherry trees, just as Mrs. Scidmore hoped they would.

Many people come from all over the world to see the pink and white cherry blossoms of Washington, D.C. They remind people of the friendship between the United States and Japan.



Go On ►

1 What is the purpose of the article “The Dream That Grows”?

- to encourage people to plant special Japanese cherry trees
- to compare Japanese and American ideas about cherry trees
- to explain how the Japanese cherry trees came to Washington, D.C.
- to describe how beautiful the flowering cherry trees are in Washington, D.C.

2 Which of these is an opinion about the cherry trees described in the article “The Dream That Grows”?

- They have pink and white blossoms.
- They are the most beautiful trees in the world.
- People from all over the world come to see them.
- Thousands of them have been planted in Washington, D.C.

3 The article says that the cherry trees Eliza Scidmore and Mrs. Taft planted are “**not ordinary trees.**” What are two ways the trees are special? Use one detail from the article for each way the trees are special.

1. _____
2. _____

4 Read this sentence from the article.

“Eliza Scidmore was there, watching her dream take root in the ground.”

What does “**watching her dream take root in the ground**” mean? Explain your answer, using information from the article.

5 Complete the chart to show some problems Eliza Scidmore and Mrs. Taft had in getting the cherry trees. How were the problems solved? Use information from the article.

Problems in Getting the Cherry Trees

Problem	Solution
1. _____ _____	1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____	2. _____ _____

Go On ►

6 Imagine a friend will visit Washington, D.C., in the springtime. Write a letter to your friend telling how the cherry trees got there and why he or she should go see them. Use information from the article in your letter.

Be sure your letter has all the parts of a letter, tells all about the cherry trees, and makes sense to your friend.

