

# Plastic Bag Tree

*Plastic Bag Tree* was written by the poet and author Michael Rosen. He wrote this poem when he was on a train on an autumn day. When he looked out of the train's window, he noticed that the trees had plastic bags caught in their branches, which covered them instead of leaves.

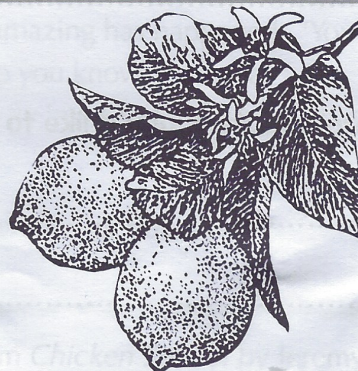
## Plastic Bag Tree

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|---|--|
| <p>The bags are ripe<br/>On the Plastic Bag Tree,<br/>Bags as far<br/>As the eye can see.</p> <p>5 Apples and pears, peaches and plums;<br/>The fruit is ripe, it's fantastic.<br/>Lemon and lime, bunches of grapes;<br/>And old bags, made of plastic.</p> <p>10 Shake the branches<br/>Gather the crop,<br/>It's time to take them<br/>Down to the shop.</p> <p>Fresh plastic bags<br/>On sale today.</p> <p>15 There's a choice of colour:<br/>Black or grey!</p> | <p>20 Apples and pears, peaches and plums;<br/>The fruit is ripe, it's fantastic.<br/>Lemon and lime, bunches of grapes;<br/>And old bags, made of plastic.</p> <p>There's plenty on the shelf.<br/>No need to panic.<br/>And next year's bags<br/>Might be organic*.</p> <p>25 The bags are ripe<br/>On the Plastic Bag Tree<br/>Bags as far<br/>As the eye can see.<br/>Bags as far<br/>As the eye can see.</p> <p>30 As the eye can see.<br/>Bags of bags<br/>As I can see.</p> |
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Michael Rosen

### Glossary

organic — when plants are grown without the use of chemicals





1 Which two words rhyme in the first verse?

1 mark

2 Do you think there are a lot of bags on the Plastic Bag Tree? How can you tell?

2 marks

3 Why does the narrator "Shake the branches" (line 9) of the Plastic Bag Tree?

1 mark

4 Write down the two adjectives used to describe the plastic bags on lines 1 and 13. Why do you think the author might have chosen these words?

2 marks

5 What does the word "panic" (line 22) mean? Check your answer in a dictionary.

1 mark

6 What do you notice about the different ways the word "bags" is used in line 31?

1 mark

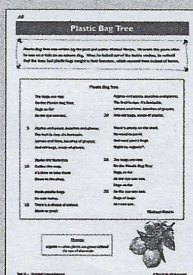
7 What do you think Michael Rosen is trying to tell us about plastic bags? Explain your answer.

2 marks

Total  
out of 10



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## Question Book:

Year 3, pages 20-21

## Author / Source:

Michael Rosen

## Genre:

Poetry

## Cross-curricular links:

- Art (illustration)
- Science (decomposition)
- PSHE (caring for the environment)

## Introduction

Michael Rosen is an English writer and poet. Pupils may already have read some of his most famous works, including *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Rosen was Children's Laureate between 2007 and 2009, and focused on making poetry more accessible in schools. He writes mainly for children, and his fiction and poetry are well known for their humour and fun use of language. *Plastic Bag Tree* is a light-hearted poem with a serious message about the environment.

## Answers

1. tree and see
2. E.g. Yes, because the poet says there are "bags as far as the eye can see".
3. E.g. To make the plastic bags fall off the tree.
4. ripe and fresh e.g. To make the plastic bags sound like fruit.
5. E.g. fret; be alarmed
6. E.g. It's used once to mean 'a lot of' and once to mean the noun 'bags'.
7. E.g. I think Michael Rosen is saying that littering is bad and it is a big problem because there are "bags as far as the eye can see". He pretends the bags are like fruit, but it makes the reader realise that it's not natural that plastic bags are found on trees.

## Extra Activities

- Discuss the form of the poem with the class. Ask pupils to look for patterns, e.g. the lengths of the stanzas and words that rhyme. As a class, decide whether you think the poem is regular or irregular.
- Explain to the class what imagery is. Get pupils to identify imagery used in the poem and ask them why they think Michael Rosen chose to write about plastic bags growing on trees. Does it seem like a natural or unnatural idea? Do pupils think that it would look nice? Ask pupils to look at their answers to question 7 in the Question Book. How does the imagery in the poem help to reinforce its message?
- Get pupils to use details from the poem to create an illustration for it.
- Ask pupils to design a poster encouraging people not to litter. They should concentrate on using layout, language and pictures to make the poster as persuasive as they can.
- Introduce pupils to the terms biodegradable and non-biodegradable. Discuss with the class why it's important to reuse or recycle non-biodegradable waste. Give the class a list of objects and ask them to decide whether each one is biodegradable or non-biodegradable, e.g. banana skins and plastic bottles.
- Explain that the government has brought in a plastic bag charge to try to reduce the number of plastic bags that are thrown away each year. Split the class into pairs. One pupil in each pair should argue in favour of the charge and the other should argue against it.