

# The **Empty Pot**

A Folktale from China

Retold by Andrea Seargent





For months, Cheng tries to make his seed grow. He waters it. He gives it plant food. He even talks to the seed. Nothing works!

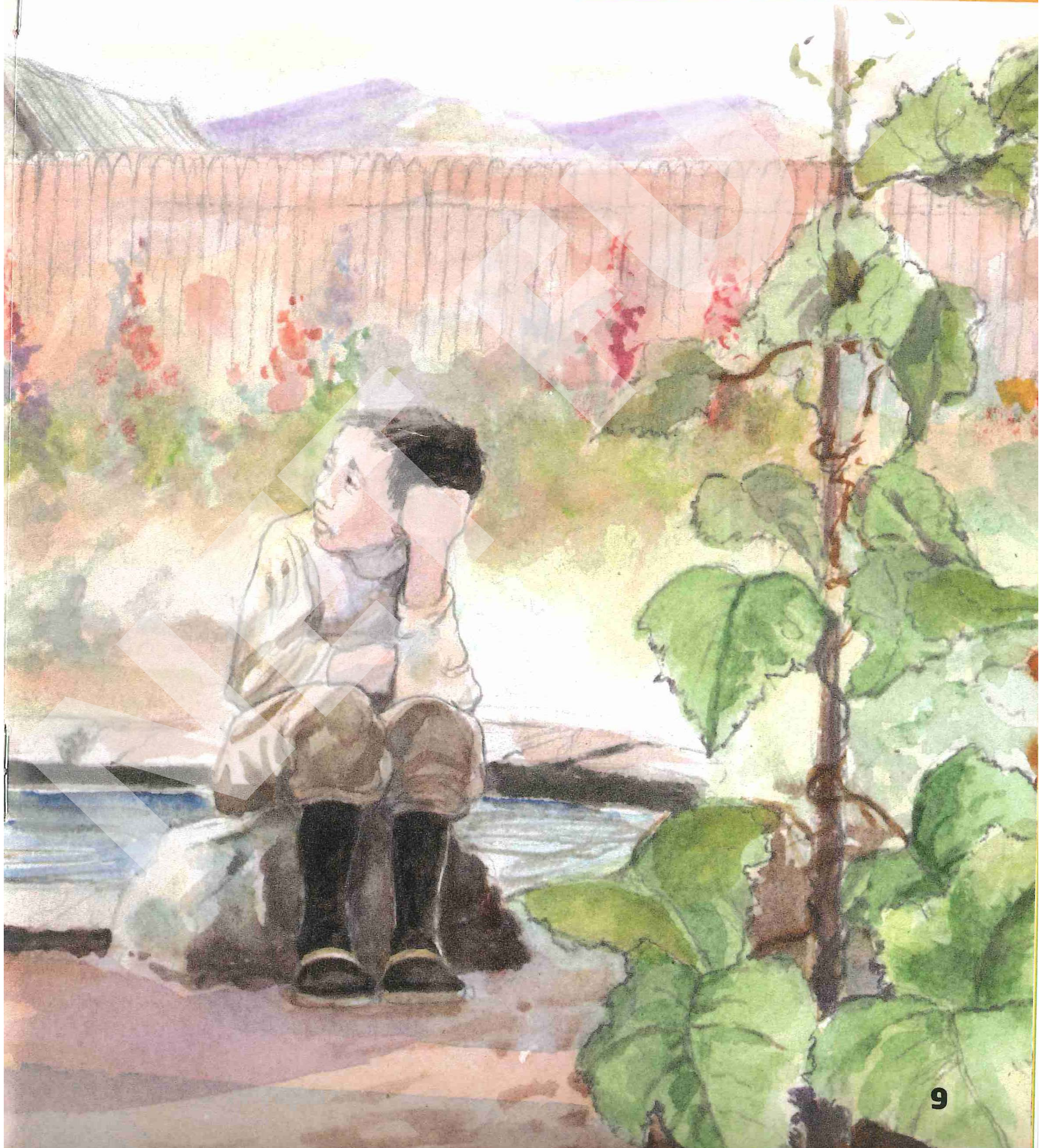
"Now I have to return to the palace," says Cheng. "But I only have an empty pot!"





"You worked very hard," says Cheng's mother. "That is the important thing. Take your empty pot to the emperor. Tell him you tried very hard."

So Cheng takes his pot to the palace.

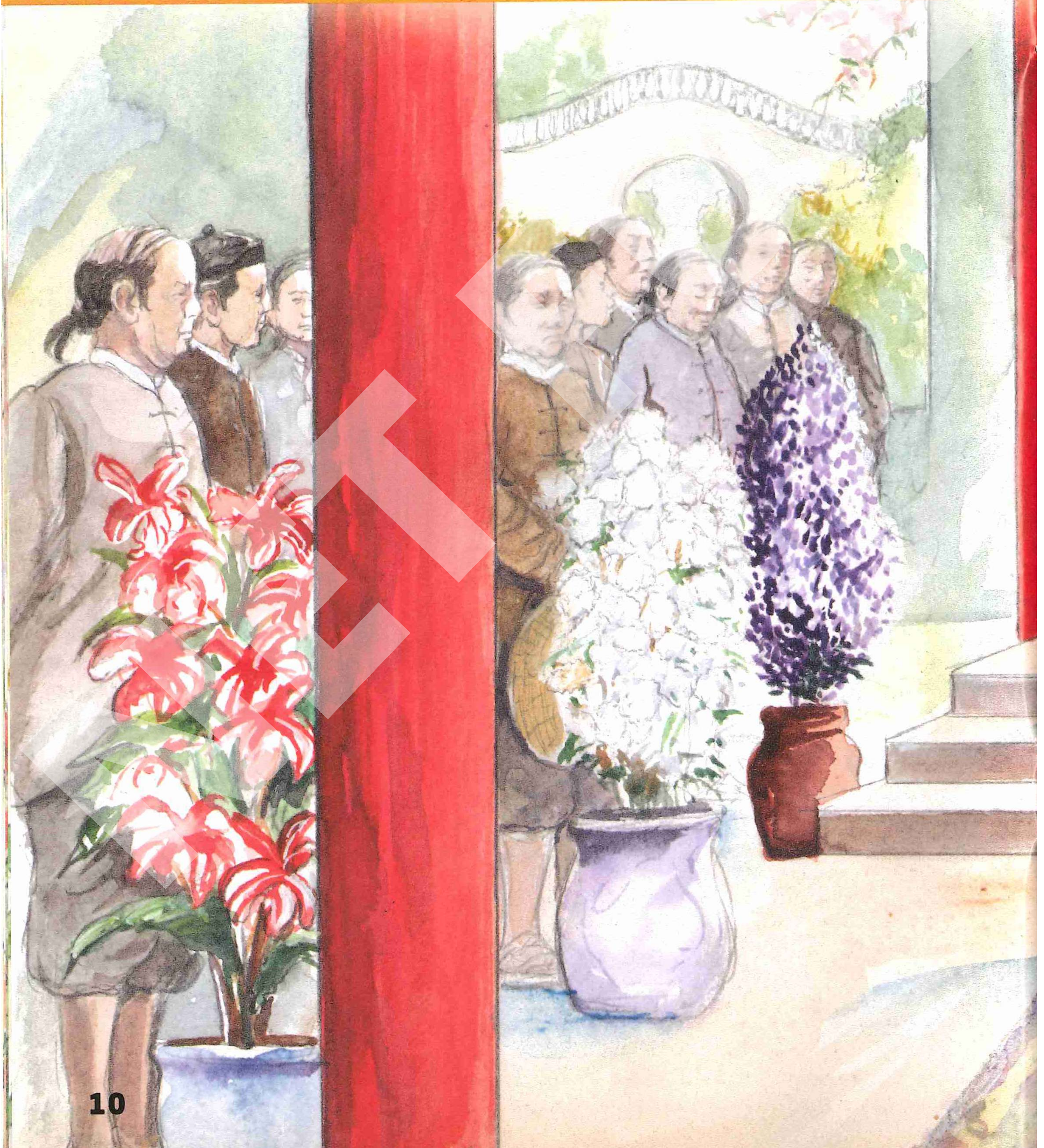




At the palace, all the gardeners have beautiful plants.

"Where is your plant?" the emperor asks Cheng.

"I worked very hard. I planted it in good soil. I watered it every day," says Cheng. "But it didn't grow. I only have an empty pot for you."





"Then you win the contest!" says the emperor.  
"The seeds I gave everyone were dead. The seeds can not grow. All the other gardeners tried to trick me. Only you are good and honest. So you will be the next emperor!"



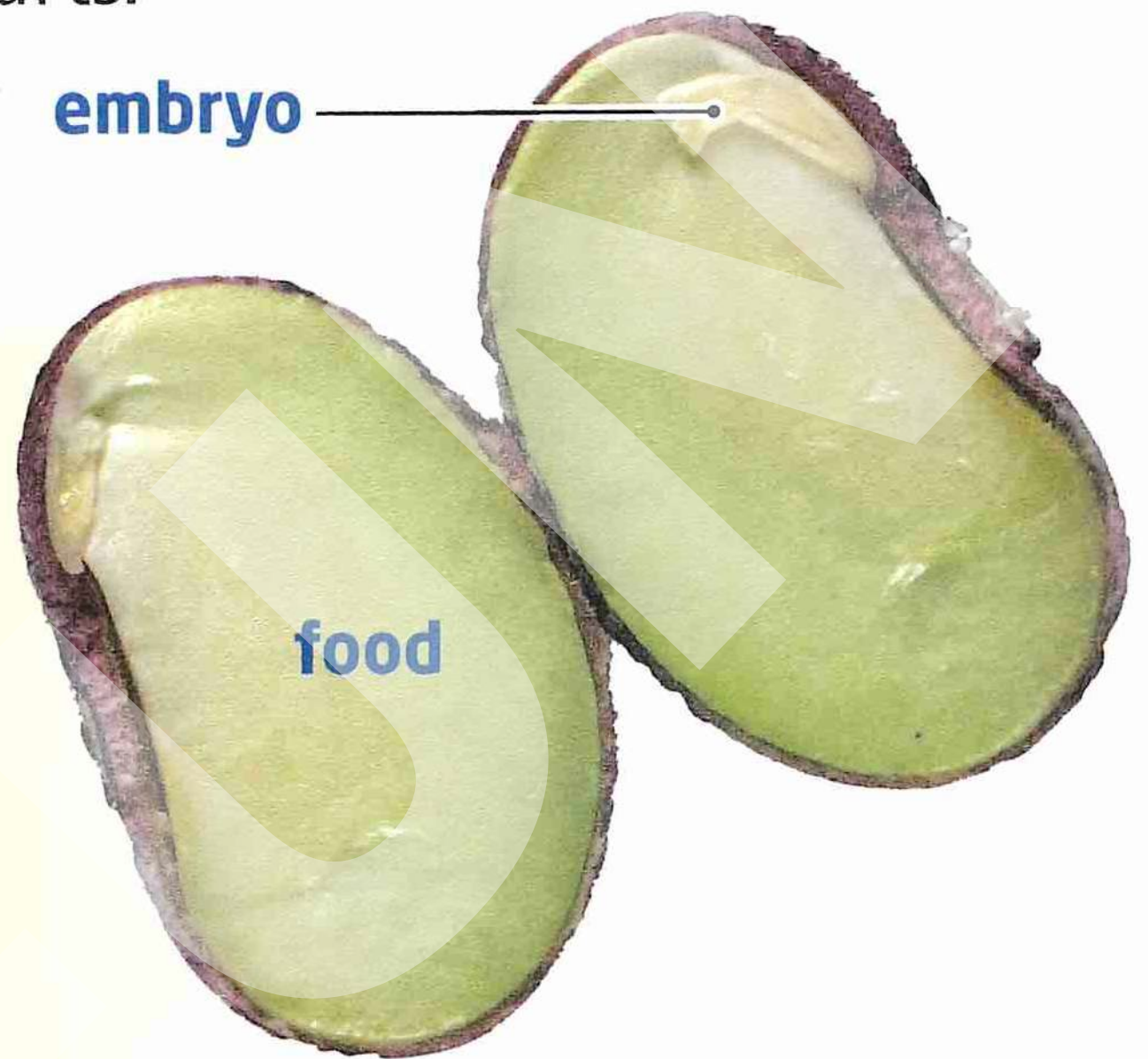


# Facts About Plants

Most plants and trees come from seeds. Seeds and plants have different parts.

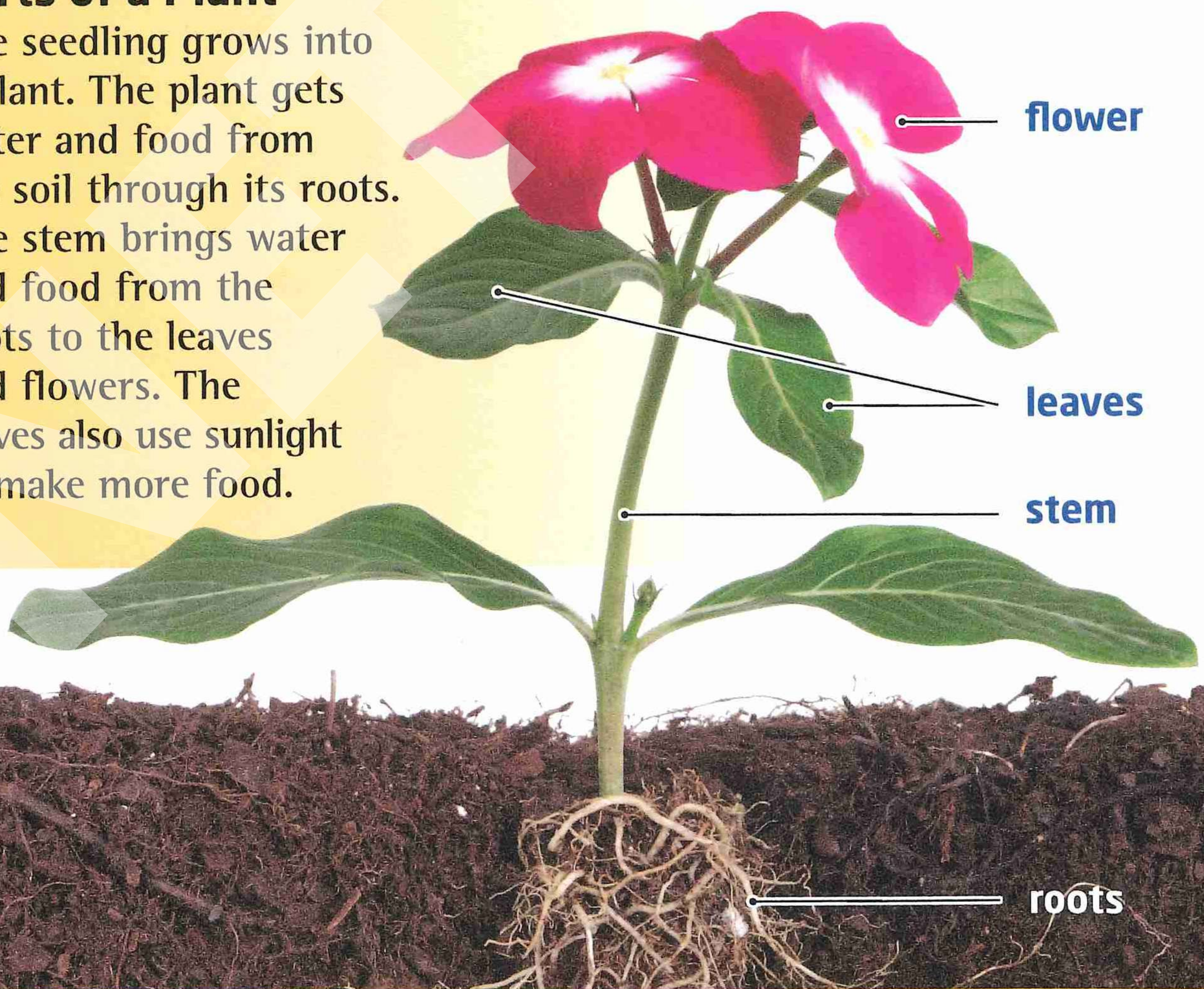
## Parts of a Seed

A seed has a baby plant inside it. This is called an embryo. The embryo has food around it that helps it grow. When it is in soil, the seed needs water and sunlight to grow. It starts as a tiny plant, called a seedling.



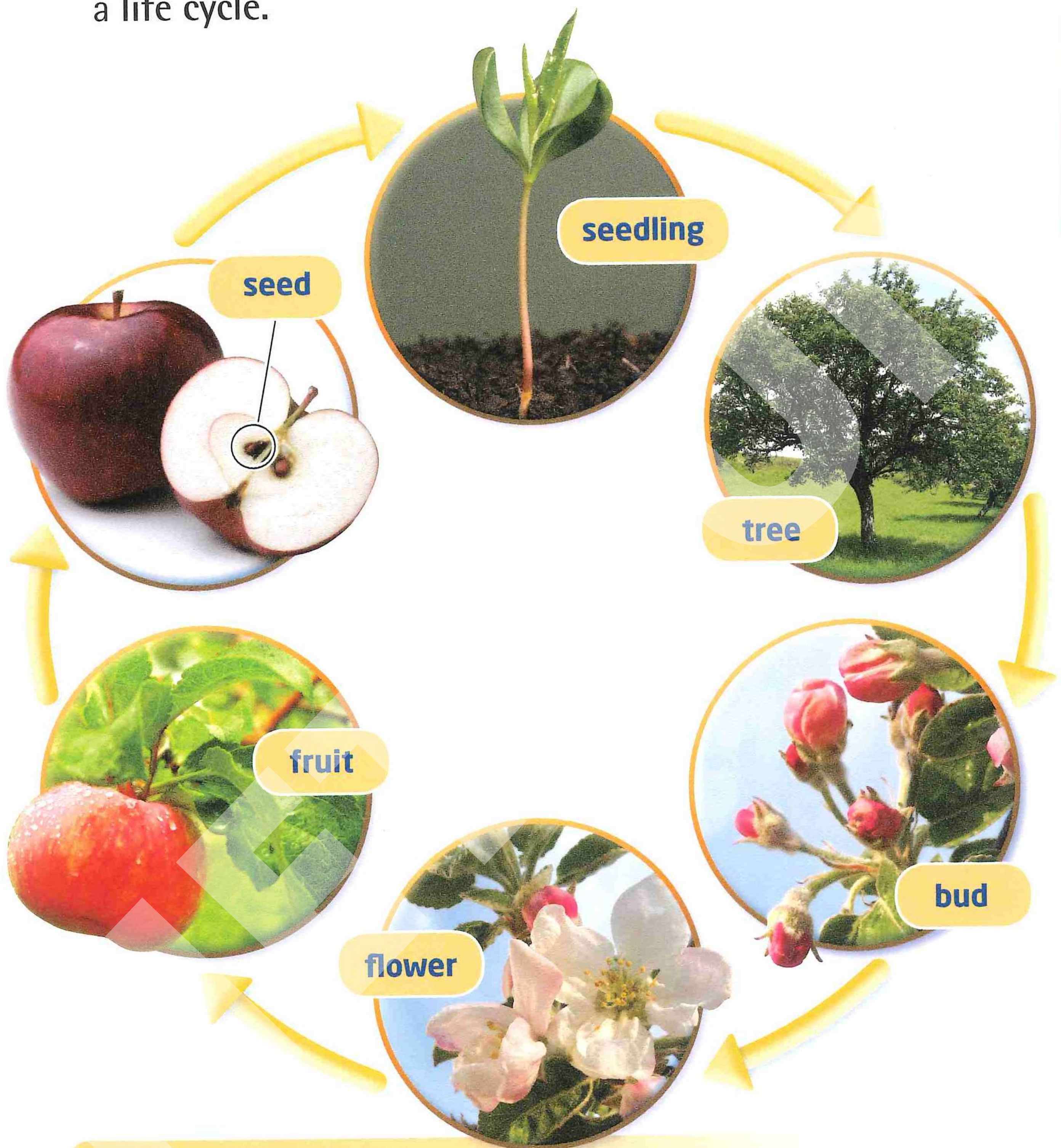
## Parts of a Plant

The seedling grows into a plant. The plant gets water and food from the soil through its roots. The stem brings water and food from the roots to the leaves and flowers. The leaves also use sunlight to make more food.





Plants start as seeds. Then those seeds grow into plants, and those plants make more seeds. This process is called a life cycle.



### **Life Cycle of an Apple**

Apples have seeds in them. A tiny seedling grows from the seed. In a few years, the seedling becomes a tree. The tree grows buds. Flowers grow from the buds. Then apples grow where the flowers were.



## THE EMPTY POT

The Emperor gives a seed to each gardener in the village, telling the gardeners that the person who grows the most beautiful plant will become the next Emperor. Young Cheng cares for his seed, but no plant grows. How can Cheng win the contest?

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