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Peasant lore

- **The reasons why people grow trees**

One of the outcomes of ranking methods is that they produce a fascinating variety of reasons why people prefer one tree or crop to another.

Two examples from Kenya:

- Tall isolated trees are often justifiably avoided because they stand the risk of being struck by lightning. But one tall local Kenyan tree (species unfortunately unidentified) standing beside a house was claimed to be a lightning repellent.
- One woman questioned about the tall Eucalyptus beside her house said she liked it because it told everyone where her house was.

- **Have you heard the story about the:**

Antique dealer who heard about a peasant up country who possessed a saucer decorated with an Imperial Crown.

The antique dealer travelled by plane and jeep and finally for several miles on foot until he came to the village of the peasant. The villagers directed him to the peasant's hut where he was made welcome. His eyes immediately lit on a sleek black cat lapping up milk from a saucer. As the cat licked the last drops of milk the antique dealer could see the Imperial Crown marked upon the saucer and knew it to be very valuable.

He sat talking to the peasant and after a while remarked upon what a fine cat the peasant

owned. They chatted further and then the dealer said he thought the cat was so fine that he would like to purchase it. The peasant demurred at first but after several minutes of haggling agreed to sell the cat. The dealer was delighted but concealed his pleasure and as he was about to depart said casually:

'I shall need something to give the cat its milk, so if you don't mind I'll take that old saucer as well.'

'You can have the cat' replied the peasant, 'but not the saucer. We need the saucer to sell cats'.