

Onishchenko Calls for Cutting Down Poplar Trees

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A little girl staring at the poppy fluff that has descended upon the city. **Vladimir Filonov**

Correction appended.

Chief Sanitary Inspector Gennady Onishchenko has proposed replacing Moscow's poplar trees with different types of trees due to the cotton-like fluff produced by poplar, which causes problems for those who suffer from asthma and allergies during the summer.

Onishchenko, who said the poplar trees' fluff was "irritating" to allergic people, has called for the renewal of a program to cut down poppy trees in the city.

But Onishchenko said further studies would be required to find proper trees to replace the poplars.

"Not every kind of tree could survive in the modern city," Onishchenko said, Interfax reported Monday.

According to Anton Kulbachevsky, a city official in charge of environmental management and protection, there are around 100,000 poppy trees in the capital. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said in 2011 that his government would cut down all poplar trees.

Poplar trees first started to appear in large numbers during the rule of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, who favored the tree for its rapid growth.

The tradition was followed by other Soviet leaders.

The title of a popular Soviet-era film — "Three Poplars at Plyuschikha Street" — paid homage to the poplar tree, as did a brand for strategic missiles called Topol (poplar, in Russian).

Correction:

Poppy trees are referred to twice in this article. Poplar trees is the correct term.

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