

Russian Scientists to Clone 'Survivor' Tree

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VOLGOGRAD — Scientists in southern Russia are working to clone a 100-year-old poplar tree that survived the Battle of Stalingrad, a spokesperson for the local environmental authority said.

The poplar was damaged by bullets and shrapnel during the World War II, when Volgograd — then known as Stalingrad — was the scene of a 200-day battle between Soviet and invading Nazi forces.

Against all odds, however, the tree survived and has been protected by the local authorities since 1993.

Scientists now fear that the tree may not survive much longer, as poplar trees on average live for about 80 years.

"In order to preserve the idea of continuity between generations, we have decided to use this tree's genetic material to reproduce it," the spokesperson said.

The scientists have taken 10 samples from the tree and expect to plant its first saplings in downtown Volgograd next year.

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