

Moths May Have Been Smuggled to Sochi to Destroy Environment, Minister Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Moths that have ravaged Sochi's trees may have been smuggled into the city prior to the Olympics last year in an intentional ploy to wreak havoc on the environment, Russia's Natural Resources and Environment Minister was quoted as saying Wednesday.

The bugs pose a threat to box trees, an endangered tree native to the area with a lifespan of up to 600 years.

"The pests appeared from imported planting materials while we were making the area more verdant ahead of the Olympics. We don't rule out the possibility that it was a deliberate act," Natural Resources and Environment Minister Sergei Donskoi said in comments carried by RIA Novosti on Wednesday.

He did not elaborate on who the culprit might have been.

A method for exterminating the troublesome moths has not yet been developed, the ministry's press office said. Complicating matters, box trees are most populous in the Sochi National Park and Caucasus State Biosphere Reserve — where the use of pesticides is prohibited.

Donskoi has instructed the relevant ministry committee to look into making amendments to current legislation allowing for the use of pesticides to protect the habitat, RIA Novosti reported.

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