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Greenpeace Russia Asks Moscow to Leave Autumn Leaves Untouched

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Greenpeace Russia said in a blog post last year that the excessive clearing of leaves could cause trees to die within 10 to 15 years.

Greenpeace Russia has asked Muscovites not to get too enthusiastic about sweeping up fallen leaves, and to instead focus on preserving the capital's trees.

“We ask that these rules be taken into account: Sweep up leaves on roads and artificial lawns, leave them in parks and public gardens,” Alexei Yaroshenko, head of the forestry program at Greenpeace Russia, was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency on Monday.

Those in favor of sweeping up the leaves say that if left on roads and paths, they become slippery when wet, and also damage lawns if left uncleared for long periods of time.

“I fear they'll clear [leaves] both where it's needed and where it's not,” said Yaroshenko.

The Greenpeace activist said leaves helped to improve the quality of the soil and protect trees' roots from frost by acting as a “blanket” when temperatures drop.

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Last week the Activny Grazhdanin online platform, designed by City Hall to get feedback from residents on various issues, launched a survey asking Muscovites to state their preference for the clearing of leaves outside their own apartment block. If 70 out of at least 100 residents of the same apartment block vote against the clearing of leaves, an exception will be made for those areas, City Hall promised.

Voting closes on Oct. 31, the website said.

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