

Muscovites Wonder Where Winter Has Gone as Temperatures Hit 133-Year High

By [Reuters](#)

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Residents of Moscow are wondering where winter has gone as the highest December temperatures for 133 years deprive the Russian capital of its customary covering of snow.

"This is not our winter," said pensioner Ludmila Biryukova. "It came from somewhere else."

At a time when snow often blankets the streets and icicles hang from buildings, the temperature in Moscow is expected to reach 6 degrees Celsius overnight on Wednesday, according to Elena Vosolyuk of the FOBOS weather center.

The last time Moscow was warmer than 5.3 degrees Celsius on Dec. 18 was in 1886, she said. The usual air temperature for Dec. 18 is minus 6.2 degrees Celsius, according to Russia's Hydrometeorological Research Center.

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The unseasonable warmth has been brought by an atmospheric front from the Atlantic Ocean, and rain, not snow, is forecast for the New Year holiday, Russia's main festive celebration.

And it's not just people who have been surprised. At Moscow State University's Apothecary Garden, snowdrops and rhododendron are among flowers that have mistaken the soft soil for the early onset of spring.

"The plants were deceived by this (warm weather) and decided it is spring already, so they are in bloom," said head gardener Anton Dubenyuk, warning that could mean less color later.

"These flowers will certainly not survive when the cold comes. So there will be no spring blossom," he said.

Biryukova, who was walking in the Apothecary Garden, said: "I was born here and have lived here my whole life."

"We are used to real winters."

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