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Russia's Leningrad Region Sends 500K Pine Seedlings to Occupied Donetsk

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Occupied Mariupol. **Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

Northern Russia's Leningrad region has sent half a million pine seedlings to the occupied Ukrainian region of Donetsk, Russian authorities announced Tuesday.

The so-called "green humanitarian aid" is just the latest in a series of seedling shipments from the Leningrad region to occupied Donetsk, with authorities having already sent around 100,000 pine and spruce seedlings earlier this year amid efforts to restore natural habitats destroyed by the invasion of Ukraine.

"I promised that the supply of seedlings would be a regular occurrence," Leningrad region Governor Alexander Drozdenko was quoted as saying in an official statement.

"In Mariupol, there is already the 'Leningrad Quarter' [of trees], and over time, there will be the 'Leningrad Forest' in Donbas," the governor added.

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Mariupol is part of eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, which President Vladimir Putin annexed along with three other partially occupied regions of Ukraine — Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson — in September 2022.

The seaside city, which had a pre-war population of 400,000, was mostly destroyed during a brutal Russian siege last year, shortly after which it was completely captured by Moscow's forces.

In October, Russia pledged to deliver some 150 waste disposal trucks and more than 11,000 containers for waste collection to the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions by the end of 2023 in a bid to prevent a "garbage collapse" in the occupied territories.

Authorities in regions across Russia have sought to play a role in the reconstruction of Mariupol, with both St. Petersburg and the Chechen capital of Grozny establishing sister-city relations with the devastated port city since its capture.

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