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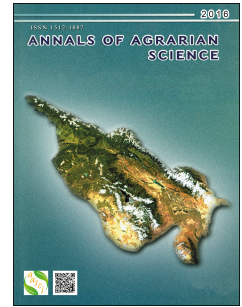
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Urban forests and green spaces of Tbilisi and ecological problems of the city

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ABSTRACT

The increase in urbanization is the most dramatic factor in today's world and it did not pass round Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, too. Since the sixties of the 20th century the population of the city nearly doubled and today is about 1.3-1.4 million. Many problems that may not have been so evident in the past, became obvious and dramatic today. These problems concern urban forests and green spaces of the city because they shrank considerably and as the result, deteriorated ecological situation. Today, their role in improvement of city climate is little. In the Soviet period the main polluters of the air considered factories and plants, but today, after breaking of the Soviet Union and closing or destruction of all factories and plants, the increasing number of light vehicles, especially outdated once, manufactured before 1999(67%) are the main source of pollution(80%). The article highlights the historical development of Tbilisi urban forests and green spaces and outlines some challenges and prospects of ecological condition of the city.

Keywords: Urban forests, Green space, Pollution, Contaminants, Vehicle

Introduction

According to many scientists' definition urban forests are the forests and forest-like vegetation in and peripheral urban environment that appear in different compositions. They can be isolated trees in the streets and squares. They can be found in lanes, parks and gardens, in arboretums and of course in forest stands. All these trees, bushes and other vegetation form a kind of plant network-the urban forest. Therefore urban forest is the sum of total green tissue [1-3].

Urban forestry has been recognized as a discipline within forestry profession since the early 1970s. From that moment on much attention has been paid to this field of forestry, especially in the USA, Canada and European countries. Today this list is enlarged by developing countries. [4-5].

In the early and middle ages people, especially the nobility, used forests for hunting and in times of wars the forests served as a kind of economic reserve and hiding place. From the late middle ages the attitude towards forests changed. It was especially noted with early urbanization period. The industrial revolution brought with it the deterioration of the healthy living environment in the cities. More urban green spaces were needed.

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