

tree is oxygen. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that it is this that will determine the fate of mankind.

Judge for yourselves. Scientists state that sixty per cent of the oxygen in the atmosphere comes from trees, with the remaining forty per cent derived from the world's oceans. Moreover, these two sources are far from being equal in value. Forest oxygen differs from the oceanic kind in that it is ionized, is therefore better assimilated by the organism, with less of it needed for breathing. Trees release into the air bactericide-fungicide-protozoacides (BFP) - substances that kill or suppress pathogenic microbes. It is the BFPs that are protecting our lungs against fungal diseases. They are natural antibiotics.

Question. How much forest is required to provide each individual with life-giving oxygen?

A. In order to breathe, a person needs 400 kilogrammes of oxygen per year. Until recently, 0.3 hectares of forest were enough to supply this. However, in consequence of the sharp increase in the gas content of the atmosphere there has been a tenfold decrease in the amount of oxygen produced by a tree. Further calculations are simple: in our country, the area of forest existing for each inhabitant is three hectares on the average, which is barely sufficient.

In many other countries the situation is worse still. There is no longer enough forest, even for breathing! And by the end of the century each of us will have to settle for a small grove of trees measuring no more than 0.6 hectares. It is easy to see that for this reason alone, civilisation is on