

Boxelder

(*Acer negundo* — also called *Ash-leaf Maple*)

Boxelder is a fast-growing, drought-tolerant maple often considered “weedy,” but it remains common across Colorado. It is prone to **breakage**, **borers**, **boxelder bugs**, **leaf spots**, and **environmental stress** in urban soils. Despite this, it can survive harsh conditions where many other species fail.



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Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons: 🌸 Spring | ☀️ Summer | 🍂 Fall | ❄️ Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Boxelder bugs	Insect	Late Summer–Fall (peak)	☀️ 🍂
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	🌸 ☀️ 🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	 
Flatheaded & roundheaded borers	Insect/borer	Summer	
Leaf spot / anthracnose	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Verticillium wilt	Fungus	Spring–Fall	  
Environmental stress (drought, soil compaction)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Boxelder Bugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swarms of black/red insects on house or trunk in fall • Minor leaf feeding • Nuisance but harmless to tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seal home gaps • Power wash bugs off siding • Insecticides rarely necessary for tree health
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Leaf curling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage • Encourage lady beetles • Systemic treatments for large outbreaks

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Scale Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard bumps or cottony masses on twigs • Yellowing leaves • Branch dieback if heavy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat crawler stage in late spring • Apply horticultural oil late winter • Prune infested twigs
Flatheaded & Roundheaded Borers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D-shaped or round exit holes • Boring dust • Dieback of branches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce stress—borers target weak trees • Deep water during drought • Professional preventive sprays if needed
Leaf Spot / Anthracnose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown or black spots • Irregular leaf margins • Early leaf drop in wet years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake and remove leaves • Improve airflow • Fungicide rarely needed
Verticillium Wilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden wilting on one side • Brown streaks in sapwood • Progressive branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cure—manage stress • Prune affected limbs • Mulch & deep watering help prolong life
Environmental Stress / Decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scorch on leaf edges • Sparse canopy • Frequent limb breakage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 2–3 weeks in summer • Avoid soil compaction • Structural pruning recommended

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Sudden wilting on one side (possible **Verticillium wilt**)
- Borer exit holes or significant branch dieback
- Large-scale scale infestation with sooty mold
- Repeated heavy limb drop (structural hazard)
- Canopy thinning year over year

These should be evaluated by a **professional arborist**.

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Boxelder bugs congregating in fall
- Light aphid honeydew
- Minor leaf spotting
- Occasional scorch during heat waves
- Early leaf drop from drought

These issues often resolve with **better watering and minor cleanup**.