

Cherry (Ornamental & Fruiting)

(Prunus spp.)






Cherry trees—both flowering and fruiting—provide **spring blooms**, **attractive bark**, and in some cases **edible fruit**. In Colorado they are vulnerable to **borers**, **leaf spot**, **powdery mildew**, **aphids**, **canker diseases**, and **environmental stress**. Cherries prefer **well-drained soil** and struggle in compacted, alkaline, or chronically wet sites.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

Problem	Type	Active Season	Icons
Cytospora canker / bacterial canker	Fungus/Bacteria	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂
Borers (shot-hole, peach tree, flatheaded)	Insect/borer	Summer	☀️
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂
Cherry leaf spot	Fungus	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Shot hole (Coryneum blight)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Powdery mildew	Fungus	Summer–Fall	 
Tent caterpillars	Insect	Spring–Early Summer	 
Environmental scorch / drought stress	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Cytospora / Bacterial Canker (Major Issue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amber sap oozing • Sunken bark lesions • Branch dieback starting at tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune infected limbs in late winter • Sanitize tools between cuts • Improve vigor—no chemical cure • Avoid pruning during bloom or wet conditions
Borers (Shot-hole, Flatheaded, Peach Tree Borer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sawdust-like frass • Oozing gum (“gummosis”) • Exit holes • Limb dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid stress—borers target weakened trees • Deep watering & mulch (not touching trunk) • Professional trunk sprays in summer if needed

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Curled leaves • Ant activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose off foliage • Support lady beetles • Systemic options for severe infestations
Cherry Leaf Spot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purple/brown leaf spots • Early leaf drop mid-summer • Thinning canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake fallen leaves • Improve airflow • Preventive fungicide if repeatedly severe
Shot Hole Disease (Coryneum Blight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small circular leaf spots that fall out → “shot holes” • Gum oozing on twigs • Early leaf drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove infected leaves • Avoid overhead irrigation • Fungicide during bud break for severe cases
Powdery Mildew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White powder on leaves • Distorted new growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase airflow • Avoid excessive shade • Fungicide if recurring
Tent Caterpillars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webbed nests in branches • Chewed leaves • Defoliation patches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove nests early • Pro treatment for heavy infestations
Environmental Stress (Heat/Drought)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Yellowing • Sparse canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep watering every 2–3 weeks in summer • Mulch 2–4" deep • Plant in protected sites away from reflected heat

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

 **When to Worry (action recommended)**

- Cankers with amber sap and spreading dieback
- Borer exit holes + thinning foliage
- Large portions of the canopy defoliating from leaf spot
- Repeated severe mildew or shot hole disease
- Whole branches wilting suddenly (possible canker infection)
- Fruit trees failing to leaf out evenly after a spring freeze

Cherries are **prone to dieback** in Colorado when exposed to drought, alkaline soil, or trunk injury.

Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light shot hole spotting
- Minor aphid honeydew without dieback
- Occasional mildew in late summer
- Small tent caterpillar nests (removed early)
- Early fall color during drought

These issues typically improve with proper watering and basic sanitation.