

Colorado Blue Spruce

(Picea pungens)

Evergreen conifer with stiff, blue-gray needles. Prefers full sun. Commonly stressed in Colorado’s dry, urban environments, which increases vulnerability to pests and diseases.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Spruce spider mite	Insect/mite	Spring & Fall	🌸 🍂
Spruce aphid	Insect	Late Winter–Spring	❄️ 🌸
Ips bark beetle	Insect/borer	Late Spring–Summer	🌸 ☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
<b>Rhizosphaera / Stigmina needle cast</b>	Fungus	Spring infection, symptoms mid-late summer	 
<b>Cytospora canker</b>	Fungus	Year-round (visible mostly in Summer–Fall)	 

## Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment &amp; Management</u>
<b>Spruce spider mite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inner needles look dull, stippled, then bronze</li> <li>• Fine webbing</li> <li>• Premature needle drop</li> <li>• <i>Paper Test</i>: tap a branch over white paper—moving dots = mites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm with tap test</li> <li>• Professional miticide sprays (spring/fall)</li> <li>• Deep, infrequent watering; avoid chronic drought stress</li> </ul>
<b>Spruce aphid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticky needles (honeydew)</li> <li>• Sooty mold</li> <li>• Localized thinning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systemic insecticides (professional or homeowner depending on product)</li> <li>• Support natural predators</li> <li>• Avoid heavy nitrogen fertilizers</li> </ul>
<b>Ips bark beetle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden browning of entire sections</li> <li>• Fine boring dust around bark cracks</li> <li>• Small, round exit holes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventive trunk sprays (licensed applicators only)</li> <li>• Remove severely infested trees</li> <li>• Keep tree watered and unstressed—drought is the #1 risk factor</li> </ul>
<b>Rhizosphaera &amp; Stigmina needle cast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower branches thin first</li> <li>• Needles turn purple-brown</li> <li>• Black fruiting dots seen on needles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fungicide sprays in spring (pros only)</li> <li>• Increase airflow: prune interior, avoid overcrowding</li> <li>• Reduce overhead irrigation</li> </ul>

## Problem

## Common Symptoms

## Treatment & Management

### **Cytospora canker**

- White resin patches on limbs
- Branches die from the tip inward
- Often starts on lower limbs

- Remove infected lower branches if practical
- Remove infected limbs back to the branch collar
- Sanitize pruning tools
- Improve vigor—watering, mulch, avoiding injury (no chemical cure)

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## **When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic**

### **When to Worry (action recommended)**

- Large sections of the tree suddenly brown out
- Resin (“pitch”) oozing from many branches
- The top of the tree begins dying back
- Bark dust or small round exit holes appear (possible beetles)

### **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Only older, inner needles shed (normal needle drop)
- A few lower branches thin while overall canopy stays full
- Minor sooty mold or light aphid activity with no dieback