

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>
Rhizosphaera / Stigmina needle cast	Fungus	Spring infection, symptoms mid-late summer	 
Cytospora canker	Fungus	Year-round (visible mostly in Summer-Fall)	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

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

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)

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