

Crabapple

(Malus spp. — includes flowering, ornamental, and fruiting crabapples)










Crabapples are some of the **most reliable flowering trees in Colorado**, offering showy spring blossoms and colorful fruit. Their biggest challenges are **apple scab**, **fire blight**, **rust**, **mildew**, **aphids**, and **borers**. Choosing resistant cultivars is key to long-term success.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

Problem	Type	Active Season	Icons
Apple scab (major issue)	Fungus	Spring infection; symptoms Spring–Summer	🌸☀️
Fire blight	Bacteria	Spring bloom–early summer	🌸☀️
Cedar–apple rust & other rusts	Fungus	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Powdery mildew	Fungus	Summer–Fall	 
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	  
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	 
Borers	Insect/borer	Summer	
Fruiting & leaf drop (normal)	Seasonal	Fall	

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Apple Scab (Very Common)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olive-green to black leaf spots • Leaves yellow and drop by midsummer • Deformed fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant resistant varieties (best long-term solution) • Rake fallen leaves • Preventive fungicide sprays during leaf-out (pros)
Fire Blight (Serious Bacterial Disease)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackened “shepherd’s crook” twigs • Oozing cankers • Blossom blight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune 8–12" below affected wood • Sanitize tools • Professional antibiotic sprays only during bloom

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Cedar–Apple Rust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow/orange leaf spots • Gelatinous orange galls on junipers (alternate host) • Premature leaf drop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove fallen leaves • Avoid planting near junipers if possible • Fungicides may help during high-pressure years
Powdery Mildew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White powder on leaves • Distorted new growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve airflow • Avoid overhead watering • Fungicide if repeated/severe
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Curled leaves • Ant activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage • Encourage lady beetles • Systemic treatments if severe
Scale Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard or cottony bumps on twigs • Leaf yellowing • Honeydew & sooty mold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat crawler stage in late spring • Apply dormant oil in late winter • Prune heavily infested twigs
Borers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit holes • Sawdust-like frass • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep tree healthy—borers attack stressed trees • Mulch & deep water • Preventive pro sprays in active years

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Blackened twigs or oozing cankers (fire blight)
- Repeated severe apple scab causing early defoliation
- Rust spots covering large portions of canopy

- Borer exit holes with branch dieback
- Progressive thinning year over year
- Heavy scale with sticky honeydew and sooty mold

These may require **professional diagnosis and treatment**.

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Mild scab spotting with normal leaf retention
- Light mildew in late summer
- Minor aphid or scale activity
- Occasional early leaf drop
- Fruit litter (normal seasonal behavior)

These typically improve with **resistant varieties, watering, and basic maintenance**.