

Horse Chestnut

(*Aesculus hippocastanum* — includes hybrid forms and ornamental selections)

Horse Chestnut is known for its **large palmate leaves**, **showy white flower candles**, and **distinctive conkers**. In Colorado, it is **highly prone to leaf blotch, leaf scorch, mildew, aphids, borers**, and **heat stress**. It performs best in **cooler, irrigated sites** and struggles in **hot, dry, or compacted soils**.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

Problem	Type	Active Season	Icons
Leaf blotch (Guignardia)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️
Leaf scorch (abiotic)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	☀️🍂
Powdery mildew	Fungus	Summer–Fall	☀️🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	🌸🌻🍂
Japanese beetles (Front Range)	Insect	Summer	🌻
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	🌸❄️
Borers	Insect/borer	Summer	🌻
Canker diseases	Fungus	Spring–Fall	🌸🌻🍂
Environmental heat/drought stress	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	🌻🍂

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Leaf Blotch (Extremely Common)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular brown patches • Yellow halos • Early leaf drop (often mid-summer) • Lower canopy thins first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake/remove leaves (reduces spores) • Increase airflow • Fungicides rarely used for ornamental trees
Leaf Scorch (Major Colorado Issue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown leaf edges/tips • Crispy leaves • Premature fall color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep watering every 2–3 weeks • Maintain mulch (2–3") • Avoid hot, west-facing exposures

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Powdery Mildew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White powdery coating • Distorted leaves • Slowed growth in shade or crowding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve airflow • Water only at soil level • Fungicide if severe
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 • Systemics for heavy activity
Japanese Beetles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skeletonized leaves • Clusters of feeding beetles • Damage peaks midsummer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-pick early morning • Professional control if widespread • Avoid planting heavy JB-attracting species nearby
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard bumps on twigs • Honeydew & mold • Reduced vigor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dormant oil in late winter • Treat crawler stage in late spring
Borers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit holes • Sawdust-like frass • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid trunk injury • Deep watering • Pro preventive sprays in high-risk years
Canker Diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken bark patches • Dead limbs • Often follows drought or freeze injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune in late winter • Sanitize tools • Improve overall vigor

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Leaf blotch so severe the tree defoliates by June/July every year

- Persistent leaf scorch despite proper watering
- Extensive Japanese beetle feeding causing canopy thinning
- Multiple large cankers or progressive branch dieback
- Scale covering stems with honeydew and black mold
- Borers present with declining canopy

Horse Chestnut is **sensitive in Colorado**, especially in hot, dry, high-reflective landscapes.

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Mild blotch or mildew
- Light honeydew from aphids
- Early fall color during drought
- Minor tip burn in midsummer
- Occasional JB feeding with little canopy loss

These are common seasonal issues and not typically harmful long-term.