

## Japanese Tree Lilac

(*Syringa reticulata* — includes 'Ivory Silk,' 'Snowdance,' and other cultivars)

Japanese Tree Lilac is a **hardy, small ornamental tree** popular in Colorado for its **creamy white early-summer flowers, pleasant fragrance, and excellent cold tolerance**. It is generally low-maintenance but can experience **scale, borers, leaf spot, blight, and environmental stress** in compacted or overly dry sites.



### Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons:  Spring |  Summer |  Fall |  Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	 
Lilac borer / clearwing borers	Insect/borer	Late Spring–Summer	 
Leaf spot (fungal)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Bacterial blight (cool, wet springs)	Bacteria	Spring	
Powdery mildew	Fungus	Summer–Fall	 

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	  
Environmental stress (drought, heat)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

## Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment &amp; Management</u>
Scale Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard bumps or cottony masses on twigs</li> <li>Yellowing leaves</li> <li>Honeydew &amp; sooty mold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat crawler stage in late spring</li> <li>Apply dormant oil in late winter</li> <li>Prune out heavily infested twigs</li> </ul>
Lilac Borer (Clearwing Borer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sawdust-like frass at trunk base</li> <li>Oozing sap</li> <li>Exit holes</li> <li>Branch dieback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid trunk injury and drought stress</li> <li>Deep watering &amp; mulch</li> <li>Professional preventive sprays during adult flight</li> </ul>
Leaf Spot (Fungal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brown or black leaf blotches</li> <li>Early leaf drop in wet years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rake/remove fallen leaves</li> <li>Improve airflow (selective pruning)</li> <li>Fungicides rarely needed</li> </ul>
Bacterial Blight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blackened young shoots</li> <li>Brown water-soaked leaf spots</li> <li>Occurs mainly in cool, wet springs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prune affected shoots 8–12" below symptoms</li> <li>Sanitize tools</li> <li>Avoid overhead irrigation</li> </ul>
Powdery Mildew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White powder on leaves</li> <li>Less common than in shrub lilacs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve airflow</li> <li>Avoid excess shade</li> <li>Fungicides only if severe</li> </ul>

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Common Symptoms</b>	<b>Treatment &amp; Management</b>
<b>Aphids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticky honeydew</li> <li>• Sooty mold</li> <li>• Distorted new leaves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hose-rinse foliage</li> <li>• Lady beetles help naturally</li> <li>• Systemic treatment if infestation is heavy</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Stress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaf scorch</li> <li>• Sparse canopy</li> <li>• Reduced flowering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep water every 2-3 weeks</li> <li>• Mulch 2-4" around base</li> <li>• Avoid compacted soils and high-reflective heat sites</li> </ul>

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

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

- Borer activity (frass, oozing sap, exit holes)
- Progressive dieback from trunk or major limbs
- Severe scale with sticky honeydew and black sooty mold
- Repeated early leaf drop caused by leaf spot or blight
- Dramatic reduction in flowering year after year
- Deep cracks or cankers forming at the trunk

These conditions require **professional evaluation**, especially for borer management.

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#### ● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light powdery mildew
- Minor leaf spotting

- Occasional aphids with light honeydew
- Small amounts of scale on isolated twigs
- Slight scorch in mid-summer heat
- Early fall color during drought years

Japanese Tree Lilac is **one of the most trouble-free ornamental trees** when given good watering and soil conditions.