

Kentucky Coffeetree

(*Gymnocladus dioica* — includes cultivars like ‘Espresso,’ ‘Prairie Titan,’ and seedless forms)



Kentucky Coffeetree is one of the **toughest and most adaptable** shade trees for Colorado. It thrives in poor soils, heat, drought, and urban conditions. It has **very few major pests or diseases**, making it an excellent low-maintenance choice. Minor issues may include **leaf spot**, **canker**, **borers** (rare), and **environmental stress** during establishment.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Leaf spot (fungal)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️
Cankers (various fungi)	Fungus	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂
Borers (rare)	Insect/borer	Summer	☀️
Aphids (minor)	Insect	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Environmental stress (new plantings, drought)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Leaf Spot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small brown or black spots • Minor early leaf drop in wet years • Typically cosmetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake leaves in fall • Improve airflow • Fungicide rarely needed
Cankers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken bark patches • Dieback on twigs or branches • Cracking bark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune affected limbs back to collar • Sanitize tools • Improve vigor — no chemical cure
Borers (Uncommon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit holes • Sawdust-like frass • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain tree vigor — borers target stressed trees • Deep watering in drought • Preventive sprays only if borer activity confirmed nearby
Aphids (Typically Mild)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew on leaves • Light sooty mold • Usually limited impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage • Encourage predators • Rarely needs treatment
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Early yellowing or early fall color • Slow growth in first 2–3 years after planting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 2–3 weeks in summer • Add 2–4" mulch ring • Avoid overwatering—tree prefers drier soils

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Major branch dieback from canker infections
- Multiple borer exit holes with canopy thinning
- Severe scorch combined with poor watering or compacted soil
- Repeated early leaf drop year after year
- Decline within first 3 years after planting (establishment stress)

These issues may require **professional evaluation**, though Coffeetree problems are usually manageable.

● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Occasional leaf spotting
- Light aphid activity
- Mild scorch during extreme heat
- Sparse foliage early in season (tree leafs out late naturally!)
- Seed pod litter on female trees (unless using seedless varieties)

Kentucky Coffeetree is one of the **lowest-maintenance shade trees** for Colorado and is very tolerant once established.