

Mugo Pine

(Pinus mugo — includes dwarf, compact, and shrub-form cultivars)

Mugo Pine is a **hardy, compact conifer** commonly used in Colorado landscapes. It tolerates **cold, wind, and poor soils**, but can be affected by several pests and diseases including **pine needle scale**, **sawfly**, **needle cast**, **tip blight**, and **spider mites**.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

Problem	Type	Active Season	Icons
Pine needle scale	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	🌸❄️
Pine sawfly	Insect/defoliator	Spring	🌸
Spider mites (especially spruce spider mite)	Mite	Spring & Fall	🌸🍂
Dothistroma / Lophodermium needle cast	Fungus	Spring infection; symptoms Summer–Fall	🌸☀️🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Diplodia tip blight (less common on mugo)	Fungus	Spring	
Pine wilt (rare but fatal)	Nematode	Summer	
Environmental stress (heat/drought)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Pine Needle Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White, oyster-shell-shaped scales on needles • Thinning foliage • Poor color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat crawler stage in late spring (most effective) • Horticultural oil applications • Avoid stressing the plant
Pine Sawfly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needles chewed down to stubs • Larvae feed in groups • Rapid thinning of outer needles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-pick larvae if small population • Hose-spray branches • Pro treatment in severe cases
Spider Mites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dull green or bronzed needles • Fine webbing • Paper test shows moving mites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage often • Encourage humidity • Miticide treatments in spring/fall (pros)
Needle Cast (Dothistroma / Lophodermium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yellow to brown bands on needles • Premature needle drop • Interior branch thinning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune for airflow • Remove fallen needles • Preventive fungicide in spring (pros)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Diplodia Tip Blight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browning tips on new candles • Resin droplets • Dieback at branch tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune out infected shoots • Sanitize tools • Fungicide may help in high-pressure years
Pine Wilt (Rare but Serious)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden browning • Resin stops flowing • Rapid death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove tree promptly • Prevent spread via beetle vectors
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needle scorch • Overall thinning • Stunted growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 3–4 weeks in drought • Maintain 2–3" mulch • Avoid excessive heat and reflective surfaces

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Heavy needle scale covering branches
- Rapid defoliation from sawfly larvae
- Brown/black needle banding with major needle drop
- Sudden complete browning (possible pine wilt—rare but fatal)
- Severe mite infestations leaving needles bronzed
- Progressive dieback over multiple seasons

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

● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light scale on limited needles
- Minor needle cast during wet springs
- Occasional mite spotting in fall or spring
- Slight scorch on exposed southwest-facing sides
- Slow growth on dwarf varieties (normal)

Mugo Pine is generally **reliable and low maintenance**, especially with proper watering and monitoring.