

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
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)

Problem

Common Symptoms

Treatment & Management

Diplodia Tip Blight

- Browning tips on new candles
- Resin droplets
- Dieback at branch tips

- Prune out infected shoots
- Sanitize tools
- Fungicide may help in high-pressure years

Pine Wilt (Rare but Serious)

- Sudden browning
- Resin stops flowing
- Rapid death

- Remove tree promptly
- Prevent spread via beetle vectors

Environmental Stress

- Needle scorch
- Overall thinning
- Stunted growth

- 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.