

Pin Oak

(Quercus palustris)

Pin Oak is a stately, fast-growing oak with a strong central leader and distinctive drooping lower branches. Though beautiful, it often **struggles in Colorado** due to alkaline soils, leading to **severe iron chlorosis**, decline, and increased vulnerability to pests and diseases. Pin Oak performs best in **deep, acidic, well-drained soils**—conditions rarely found along the Front Range.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Severe iron chlorosis (very common)	Abiotic	Spring–Summer	🌸 ☀️
Galls (gall wasps)	Insect	Spring–Summer	🌸 ☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Kermes scale	Insect/scale	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	 
Two-lined chestnut borer	Insect/borer	Summer	
Anthracnose / leaf spot	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Oak wilt (rare in CO but serious)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Environmental scorch / drought stress	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Severe Iron Chlorosis (Most Common Issue in CO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves turn yellow with green veins • Stunted growth • Branch dieback • Can kill tree over several seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron trunk injections (pros) • Soil acidification treatments (often temporary) • Avoid overwatering; improve soil aeration • Long-term solution often requires replacing tree with a more tolerant species

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Gall Wasps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round, spiky, or irregular galls on leaves or stems • Distorted leaves • Usually cosmetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment typically needed • Rake & dispose of infested leaves • Maintain tree vigor to reduce impact
Kermes Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honeydew & sooty mold • Brown, round scale bumps on twigs • Yellowing leaves • Tip dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat crawlers in late spring (pros) • Horticultural oil late winter • Prune heavily infested twigs
Two-Lined Chestnut Borer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinning canopy starting from upper crown • D-shaped exit holes • Progressive dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep watering during drought • Reduce stress—borers attack weakened trees • Preventive trunk sprays during outbreak years
Anthracnose / Leaf Spot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown blotches, especially along veins • Early leaf drop during wet years • Curling or distorted leaves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually cosmetic • Remove infected leaves • Improve airflow; avoid overhead watering
Oak Wilt (Rare but Important)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden leaf wilt & bronzing • Top-down decline • Rapid progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate professional evaluation • Preventive fungicide injections if nearby cases exist • Avoid pruning April–July
Environmental Scorch / Drought Decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf edges turn brown • Early fall color • Twig dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep watering every 2–3 weeks • Maintain mulch ring • Avoid compacting soil over roots

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

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

- **Severe chlorosis** across the entire canopy (yellow leaves with green veins)
- D-shaped exit holes or top-down dieback (borers)
- Heavy scale infestation with black sooty mold
- Whole-branch wilting in midsummer (possible oak wilt)
- Continuous decline over several seasons

Pin Oak decline in Colorado is **very common** due to soil chemistry; many trees ultimately require removal and replacement with more alkaline-tolerant species (Swamp White Oak, Bur Oak, Shumard Oak, or hybrids).

● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Light gall formation on leaves
- Minor leaf spots in wet springs
- Slight scorch along leaf edges
- Early fall color in hot/dry years
- Small amounts of tip dieback

These issues typically resolve with **better watering and routine care**.