

Piñon Pine

(Pinus edulis — Colorado Piñon; includes singleleaf pinyon P. monophylla in some regions)









Piñon Pine is a **native, drought-tolerant evergreen** that thrives in dry, rocky soils of Colorado’s foothills and plains. Its biggest threats include **piñon ips beetle, scale, needle cast, bark diseases,** and **environmental stress**—especially prolonged drought. Ips beetle is the **most serious concern**.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Piñon ips beetle (major issue)	Insect/borer	Spring–Fall (multiple flights)	🌸☀️🍂
Piñon needle scale	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	🌸❄️
Spider mites	Mite	Spring & Fall	🌸🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Needle cast (fungal)	Fungus	Spring infection; symptoms Summer–Fall	  
Cytospora & other cankers	Fungus	Spring–Fall	  
Drought/heat stress	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

---

### Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment &amp; Management</u>
<b>Piñon Ips Beetle (Most Serious Threat)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sections of tree turn reddish-brown</li> <li>• Boring dust (“sawdust”) in bark crevices</li> <li>• Pitch tubes may be small or absent</li> <li>• Rapid decline during drought</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preventive trunk sprays</b> (pros only) during beetle flight</li> <li>• <b>Deep watering</b> every 3–4 weeks in summer</li> <li>• Remove severely infested trees quickly</li> <li>• Avoid pruning in warm months (attracts beetles)</li> </ul>
<b>Piñon Needle Scale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White, cottony spots on needles</li> <li>• Thinning foliage</li> <li>• Gray, dull needle color</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat crawler stage in late spring</li> <li>• Horticultural oil applications</li> <li>• Improve tree vigor—scale thrives on stressed trees</li> </ul>
<b>Spider Mites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speckled, dusty-looking needles</li> <li>• Fine webbing</li> <li>• Needles bronzing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rinse foliage periodically</li> <li>• Encourage natural predators</li> <li>• Pro miticide treatment if severe</li> </ul>

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment &amp; Management</u>
<b>Needle Cast (Fungal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow-brown bands on needles</li> <li>• Interior needle drop</li> <li>• Thinning lower canopy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase airflow (prune if needed)</li> <li>• Remove fallen needles</li> <li>• Preventive fungicide in spring (pros)</li> </ul>
<b>Cytospora &amp; Other Cankers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunken bark lesions</li> <li>• Amber pitch flow</li> <li>• Branch dieback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prune affected limbs to branch collar</li> <li>• Sanitize tools</li> <li>• Improve watering—no chemical cure</li> </ul>
<b>Drought / Heat Stress (Very Common)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needle tip scorch</li> <li>• Early needle drop</li> <li>• Reduced cone production</li> <li>• Increased beetle susceptibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep but infrequent watering</li> <li>• Mulch lightly (not against trunk)</li> <li>• Avoid soil compaction and overwatering</li> </ul>

---

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

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

- Rapid browning of entire branches or tree sections
- Boring dust or small round exit holes (possible **ips beetle**)
- Widespread scale covering needles and twigs
- Progressive thinning over several seasons
- Large patches of dieback or expanding cankers
- Extreme drought years (high beetle activity)

Ips beetle is the **#1 cause of Piñon Pine mortality** in Colorado.

---

#### ● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light scale on older needles
- Minor mite activity in spring or fall
- Occasional needle cast with small spots
- Natural shedding of older inner needles
- Modest scorch after very hot, dry weeks

Piñon Pine is naturally tolerant of harsh conditions—most issues improve with **proper watering and reduced stress**.