

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

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

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**.