

Plum (Ornamental & Fruiting)

(*Prunus spp.*)

Plum trees—both fruiting and flowering types—are widely planted in Colorado for their **spring blossoms, purple foliage (ornamental types), and sweet fruit**. However, plums are **high-maintenance** in this region and susceptible to **borers, cankers, leaf spot, aphids, scale, tent caterpillars, and environmental stress**.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons: Spring | Summer | Fall | Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Cytospora / bacterial canker (major issue)	Fungus/Bacteria	Spring–Fall	
Borers (peach tree borer, shot-hole borer, flatheaded)	Insect/borer	Summer	
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	 
Leaf spot / shot hole disease (Coryneum blight)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Brown rot (fruiting plums)	Fungus	Summer–Fall	 
Tent caterpillars	Insect	Spring–Early Summer	 
Environmental stress (heat/drought/alkaline soil)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Cytospora / Bacterial Canker (Very Common & Serious)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber gum oozing Sunken bark lesions Branch dieback Bloom loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prune infected limbs in late winter only Sanitize tools Improve vigor—no chemical cure Avoid pruning during bloom or wet weather
Borers (Peach Tree Borer, Flatheaded Borer, Shot-hole Borer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sawdust-like frass at trunk Gummosis (sap blobs) Exit holes Limb dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent trunk injury Deep watering in drought Professional preventive trunk sprays in summer Remove severely infested trees

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Leaf curling • Fruit deformities on edible plums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage • Encourage lady beetles • Apply systemic treatment if severe
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard bumps on twigs • Honeydew & black sooty mold • Thinning canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dormant oil in late winter • Treat crawler stage in late spring • Prune heavily infested twigs
Leaf Spot / Shot Hole (<i>Coryneum</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small brown lesions • Spots dry and fall out → “shot hole” leaves • Early defoliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove infected leaves • Avoid overhead irrigation • Preventive fungicide during bud break in severe years
Brown Rot (Common in Fruiting Plums)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit rot • Tan mold spores • Blossom blight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove mummified fruit • Thin fruit for airflow • Preventive fungicide for heavy fruiting years
Tent Caterpillars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silk nests • Chewed foliage • Defoliation in patches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove nests early • Treat professionally if widespread
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Early yellowing • Sparse canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 2–3 weeks • Mulch 2–4" deep • Avoid planting in high-heat or compacted soil sites

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

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

- Amber sap dripping from multiple wounds (possible canker)
- Gummy frass and holes at base or limbs (**borers**)
- Large portions of canopy defoliating by mid-summer
- Fruit rot spreading quickly (poor airflow or wet conditions)
- Multiple dead branches each year
- Progressive decline in alkaline or compacted soil

Plum trees in Colorado often struggle without **consistent irrigation and careful pruning**.

Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light shot hole spotting
- Minor aphid honeydew or small colonies
- Occasional mildew in late summer
- A few tent caterpillar nests removed early
- Early fall color during drought

These usually resolve with **proper watering, cleanup, and airflow improvements**.