

Russian Olive

(*Elaeagnus angustifolia* — includes wild-type and ornamental selections)

Russian Olive is a **drought-tolerant, silver-leaved tree** historically planted throughout Colorado but now considered **invasive and no longer recommended** in most areas. While hardy, it is susceptible to **scale, borers, Verticillium wilt, leaf spot**, and frequent **environmental stress**. Its aggressive suckering and bird-spread seeds allow it to escape into riparian areas.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	🌸❄️
Borers (flatheaded, roundheaded)	Insect/borer	Summer	☀️
Verticillium wilt	Fungus	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Leaf spot (fungal)	Fungus	Spring–Summer	🌸☀️
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂
Suckering / invasiveness	Biological	Spring–Fall	🌸☀️🍂
Drought/heat scorch	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	☀️🍂

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment &amp; Management</u>
Scale Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard bumps on twigs</li> <li>• Honeydew &amp; sooty mold</li> <li>• Thinning foliage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat crawler stage in late spring</li> <li>• Dormant oil in late winter</li> <li>• Prune infested twigs</li> </ul>
Borers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round or oval exit holes</li> <li>• Sawdust-like frass</li> <li>• Branch dieback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain vigor with periodic watering</li> <li>• Avoid trunk wounds</li> <li>• Professional preventive sprays in active years</li> </ul>
Verticillium Wilt (Serious)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-sided wilting</li> <li>• Yellowing or browning leaves</li> <li>• Branch dieback</li> <li>• Dark streaks in sapwood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No cure—improve soil health &amp; watering</li> <li>• Prune out deadwood</li> <li>• Remove tree if decline becomes severe</li> </ul>

<b><u>Problem</u></b>	<b><u>Common Symptoms</u></b>	<b><u>Treatment &amp; Management</u></b>
<b>Leaf Spot (Fungal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown or black leaf spots</li> <li>• Premature leaf drop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove fallen leaves</li> <li>• Improve airflow</li> <li>• Usually cosmetic</li> </ul>
<b>Aphids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sticky honeydew</li> <li>• Sooty mold</li> <li>• Curled leaves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hose-rinse foliage</li> <li>• Encourage natural predators</li> <li>• Systemic insecticide if severe</li> </ul>
<b>Suckering / Invasive Spread</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dense root sprouts around tree</li> <li>• Rapid colonization of nearby land</li> <li>• Hard to control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mow/remove sprouts frequently</li> <li>• Cut-stump herbicide treatment if removal desired</li> <li>• Avoid planting—species is invasive</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Stress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaf scorch</li> <li>• Sparse canopy</li> <li>• Brittle branches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water deeply during extended drought</li> <li>• Mulch lightly to conserve moisture</li> <li>• Avoid planting near sidewalks/driveways (surface rooting)</li> </ul>

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

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

- Extensive dieback from Verticillium wilt
- Large borer holes with branch failure
- Heavy scale covering twigs & causing thinning
- Aggressive suckering invading lawn or neighboring property
- Rapid decline during drought periods
- Tree growing near waterways (risk of spreading invasively)

Russian Olive is **no longer recommended** and is restricted or banned in many Colorado counties.

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● **Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)**

- Light leaf spotting
- Minor aphid activity
- Occasional scorch in extreme heat
- Dry-season silvering of leaves (normal)

Russian Olive is naturally resilient, but **its invasiveness outweighs its landscape value.**