

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	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

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

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

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.

 **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.**