

White Poplar

(*Populus alba* — includes cultivars like 'Bolleana')

White Poplar is a **fast-growing, highly suckering**, drought-tolerant tree known for its **white-backed leaves** and upright form in some cultivars. In Colorado, it is prone to **borers, cankers, leaf spot, rust, aphids**, and **extreme suckering**, which often makes it **unsuitable for most residential landscapes**. It is considered a **high-maintenance and short-lived** species here.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons:  Spring |  Summer |  Fall |  Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Borers (poplar borer, flatheaded borer)	Insect/borer	Summer	
Cytospora canker / bacterial canker	Fungus/Bacteria	Spring–Fall	  
Marssonina leaf spot / leaf blight	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Rust (Poplar rust)	Fungus	Summer–Fall	 
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	  
Leaf miners	Insect	Spring–Summer	 
Suckering (root sprouts)	Physiological	Spring–Fall	  
Environmental scorch / drought stress	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Borers (Major Issue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round or oval exit holes • Sawdust-like frass • Branch dieback • Weak, brittle wood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep tree watered & unstressed (critical) • Avoid trunk wounds • Professional preventive trunk sprays in summer • Remove severely infested trees
Cytospora / Bacterial Canker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken bark patches • Amber resin oozing • Branch dieback • Often follows drought or freeze injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune infected limbs in late winter • Sanitize tools • Improve vigor—no chemical cure

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Leaf Spot (Marssonina Leaf Blight)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown/black leaf spots • Premature leaf drop • Sparse canopy in midsummer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake/remove leaves • Improve airflow • Fungicides only in severe, repeated outbreaks
Rust (Poplar Rust)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange/yellow pustules on leaf undersides • Leaf yellowing and drop • Common in humid periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake leaves • Increase airflow • Usually cosmetic
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Leaf curling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hose-rinse foliage • Encourage lady beetles • Systemic treatment if severe
Leaf Miners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tunnels inside leaves • Brown “trails” visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly cosmetic • Remove affected leaves • Rarely needs treatment
Suckering (Significant Issue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Root suckers appearing many feet from tree • Spreading colony of stems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mow/remove sprouts regularly • Barrier systems rarely help • Only permanent solution: tree removal & root decay over time
Environmental Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Early yellowing • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 2–3 weeks • Mulch to conserve soil moisture • Avoid hot, exposed sites

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Large borer exit holes + branch dieback

- Multiple expanding cankers on trunk or limbs
- Severe leaf drop by midsummer
- Increasing deadwood in upper canopy
- Rapid decline during hot, dry seasons
- Aggressive suckering spreading into landscapes or lawns

White Poplar is considered **invasive in many regions** and often declines young in Colorado landscapes.

Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light rust or leaf spotting
- Minor aphid honeydew
- Small amounts of leaf miner tunneling
- Occasional early fall color during drought
- Some natural shedding of older inner leaves

These issues typically resolve with **watering and routine cleanup**.