

Willow

(*Salix spp.* — includes Weeping Willow, Golden Willow, Globe Willow, Niobe Willow, and native riparian willows)

Willows grow rapidly and prefer **moist soils**, making them common along waterways and irrigated landscapes in Colorado. They are beautiful but prone to **borers, cankers, aphids, scale, leaf spots**, and **structural breakage**, especially in windy or dry sites.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

Icons: Spring | Summer | Fall | Winter

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Willow leaf beetle	Insect	Spring–Summer	
Aphids	Insect	Spring–Fall	
Scale insects	Insect	Spring crawlers; visible year-round	
Borers (poplar/willow borers)	Insect/borer	Summer	

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Cytospora canker / other cankers	Fungus	Spring–Fall	  
Rust & leaf spot diseases	Fungus	Spring–Summer	 
Environmental stress (drought/wind breakage)	Abiotic	Summer–Fall	 

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Willow Leaf Beetle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skeletonized leaves • Defoliation in patches • Small black/green beetles and larvae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often cosmetic • Hose-rinse foliage • In severe cases, pro-applied insecticide
Aphids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky honeydew • Sooty mold • Leaf curling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water spray to remove aphids • Natural predators (lady beetles) • Systemic insecticides for major infestations
Scale Insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard bumps or cottony masses on twigs • Yellowing leaves • Dieback in severe cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat crawler stage in late spring • Horticultural oil late winter • Prune badly infested branches
Borers (Willow/Poplar Borers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oval or round exit holes • Frass at trunk or branch unions • Dieback from branch tips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce stress—borers attack weakened trees • Deep watering, mulch • Professional preventive sprays in active years

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Common Symptoms</u>	<u>Treatment & Management</u>
Cytospora & Other Cankers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken, cracked, or discolored bark • Oozing sap • Branch dieback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prune infected limbs back to collar • Sanitize tools • Improve vigor—no chemical cure
Rust & Leaf Spot Diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orange, brown, or black leaf spots • Premature leaf drop • Worse in wet, humid seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rake & remove leaves • Improve airflow • Fungicide rarely required
Environmental Stress (Drought/Wind Breakage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf scorch • Cracked or broken limbs • Sparse canopy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep water every 1–2 weeks in summer • Proper structural pruning • Avoid planting in dry, windy exposed sites

When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (action recommended)

- Large branches cracking or breaking (willows have brittle wood)
- Significant borer activity (multiple exit holes, dieback)
- Expanding cankers on trunk or major limbs
- Heavy scale with sticky honeydew and sooty mold
- Repeated defoliation causing thinning canopy
- Severe scorch during heat waves despite watering

These situations call for **professional evaluation**, especially due to willows' fast growth and weak wood structure.

● Mostly Cosmetic (monitor only)

- Light leaf beetle feeding

- Mild aphid activity early in season
- Small leaf spots or rust patches
- Occasional tip dieback
- Early fall color during drought

These typically resolve with **watering, pruning, and seasonal weather changes**.