

Yews

(*Taxus spp.* — *Japanese Yew, English Yew, Hybrid Yews*)

Yews are durable, shade-tolerant evergreens widely used in Colorado landscapes. They are generally tough but can suffer from **winter burn**, **root issues**, **needle blight**, and occasional insect pests. Yews are **highly sensitive to overwatering and poor drainage**, which is the #1 cause of decline in Colorado soils.



Seasonal Pest & Disease Calendar

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

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Winter burn / desiccation	Environmental	Winter–Early Spring	❄️ 🌸
Black Vine Weevil	Insect	Summer feeding	☀️

<u>Problem</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Active Season</u>	<u>Icons</u>
Scale insects	Insect	Spring–Summer	🌸 🌻
Spider mites	Mites	Summer–Fall	🌻 🍂
Phytophthora root rot	Fungus (soilborne)	Year-round in wet soils	🌸 🌻 🍂 ❄️
Botryosphaeria / other stem cankers	Fungus	Summer–Fall	🌻 🍂

Pest & Disease Guide (Homeowner-Friendly)

1. Winter Burn / Desiccation (MOST COMMON IN COLORADO)



Symptoms:

- Needles turn orange, bronze, or brown
- Outer foliage scorches while inner stays green
- Most common on **south or west exposures**

Treatment:

- Winter watering every **4–6 weeks** when dry
 - Mulch 2–3" around root zone
 - Avoid late-fall fertilizer pushes
 - Prune lightly in spring to remove dead tips
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2. Black Vine Weevil



Symptoms:

- Notched leaf edges (“half-moon” bites) from adults
- Larvae feed on roots, causing thinning or dieback
- Shrub looks weak despite watering

Treatment:

- Apply beneficial nematodes to soil (late summer)
 - Systemic insecticides for adults (spring–summer)
 - Remove mulch piled against stems
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3. Scale Insects



Symptoms:

- Small bumps on stems or needles
- Sticky honeydew or sooty mold sometimes present
- Thinning or stunted growth

Treatment:

- Horticultural oil (spring)
- Systemic insecticides (summer)
- Light pruning of infested twigs

4. Spider Mites



Symptoms:

- Yellowing, stippled needles
- Fine webbing
- Most common in hot, dry summers

Treatment:

- Rinse foliage with water
 - Miticides if severe
 - Keep soil evenly moist (not soggy!)
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5. Phytophthora Root Rot (VERY COMMON CAUSE OF DECLINE)

Symptoms:

- Sudden or progressive dieback
- Wilting despite watering
- Brown, mushy roots
- Often due to **overwatering or clay soils**

Treatment:

- Improve drainage immediately
 - Reduce watering frequency
 - Remove mulch against trunk
 - Fungicides are usually ineffective once rot is advanced
 - Replace with more water-tolerant species if site is chronically wet
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6. Stem Cankers (Botryosphaeria & Others)

Symptoms:

- Random branch dieback
- Sunken, cracked, or blackened stems
- Often follows drought or winter injury

Treatment:

- Prune 6–8" into healthy wood
 - Sanitize tools
 - Improve watering consistency
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When to Worry vs. When It's Cosmetic

● When to Worry (Action Needed)

- Rapid browning or dieback on entire branches
- Needles turning bronze after winter with no green underneath
- Plants wilting despite water (possible root rot)
- Sticky residue indicating scale infestation
- Notching on leaves + thinning (weevil activity)

● Mostly Cosmetic (Monitor Only)

- Light bronzing on exposed sides (recoverable)
- Minor notches on leaves without thinning
- Occasional mite stippling
- Slight tip dieback easily pruned in spring