

PLANT HEALTH CARE REPORT



Juniper

Junipers (*Juniperus* spp.) are among the hardiest and most versatile landscape plants. This genus is represented by more than fifty species and hundreds of cultivated varieties. Depending on variety, junipers can be used for screens, hedges, windbreaks, formal plantings, foundations, and ground covers.

Juniper foliage can be green, gray, blue, or yellow and have a variety of textures. Growth forms vary from prostrate to upright. The fruit is a small, blue berry which can be showy in winter and provide an important food source for wildlife.



Upright
Juniperus
chinensis



Shrub
juniper
with gold
foliage (in
foreground)

Junipers are well adapted to dry sites and full sun. In heavy shade plants tend to become leggy and prone to diseases and mites. Principal diseases of juniper are twig blights caused by the fungi *Kabatina* and *Phomopsis*. These diseases are most prevalent in shaded locations and where sprinkler irrigation is used. On wet, poorly drained soils *Phytophthora* root rot can cause decline and death of plants. Where juniper is planted near crabapple, hawthorn, or certain related species, orange galls are often produced on branches. These showy galls are caused by a rust disease but cause minor damage to the plant.

Spider mites remove cell contents with sucking mouthparts and can severely injure juniper foliage. Management of this pest requires careful monitoring due to the unpredictable nature of spider mite

outbreaks. Scale insects infest twigs and branches, weakening the host. In the Southeast, bagworms cause defoliation.

In ground cover plantings, voles often feed on bark tissue during winter that results in girdling and death of stems. While juniper is not a favored host for deer, damage does occur when animal populations are high and alternative food sources are limited.

Monitoring and Treatment Considerations for Juniper

Early to mid-winter

Inspect plants for deer browse and rodent damage. Apply repellent treatment as needed and install barriers near base to deter rodent-feeding as needed.

Late winter

Apply dormant treatment to suppress mites and scale. Expose and inspect root collar for problems. Add mulch as necessary. Remove dead, dying, diseased, and broken branches. Reduce or remove branches to manage size and shape. Sample soil for nutrient and pH levels. If decline is evident, submit root samples for Phytophthora root rot testing.

Early spring

Apply first fungicide treatment to prevent Phomopsis twig blight on susceptible varieties. If soil is poorly drained, apply treatment for Phytophthora root rot. Monitor for spider mites; treat as needed. Remove any barriers that were installed around lower stem to deter rodents.

Mid-spring

Apply second fungicide treatment to prevent Phomopsis twig blight on susceptible varieties. Monitor for spider mites and bagworm; treat as needed. Fertilize, adjust pH, and amend soil according to soil analysis.

Late spring

Apply third fungicide treatment to suppress Phomopsis twig blight on susceptible varieties. Monitor for spider mites, scale crawlers, and bagworm; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize water stress and prevent root disease.

Summer

Apply additional fungicide treatments on plantings if Kabatina tip blight is diagnosed as infection timing is late summer/fall. Monitor for spider mites, scale crawlers, and bagworm; treat as needed. Monitor irrigation and soil moisture to minimize water stress and prevent root disease.

Fall

Apply additional fungicide treatments on plantings if Kabatina tip blight is diagnosed as infection timing is late summer/early fall. Inspect plants for deer browse; apply repellent treatment as needed. Remove mulch from stem to reduce risk of disease and rodent injury. Fertilize, adjust pH, and amend soil according to soil analysis.
