

# Ocotillo

Melhog

Ocotillo

*Fouquieria splendens*

## Type and Size

Accent Plant to 20' tall x 15' wide

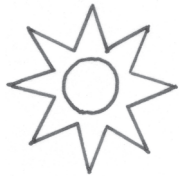
## Water Needs

Low



## Sunlight Needs

Full Sun



## Flower Color

Orange-Red

## Flower Season

March, April,  
May

## Pollinators

Hummingbirds, Carpenter Bees

## Range

Southwest U.S. and Mexico

## Natural Habitat and Special Adaptations

- \* Commonly found on dry, rocky slopes, flats, and edges of washes in intermediate to low desert regions and grasslands.
- \* Spiny branches deter animals from eating them.
- \* Conserves moisture within the plant by dropping leaves when soil becomes dry.

## Ecological Interactions

- \* Excellent source of nectar for hummingbirds in the spring.
- \* Canes serve as a perch for birds, including doves, hummingbirds, and cactus wrens.
- \* Large, black carpenter bees feed on nectar and pollinate flowers.

## Human and Landscape Uses

- \* Often used as an accent plant in courtyards, entry planters, and in plantings with other desert species.
- \* Canes, held together with wire, are sometimes used as a ramada covering, or planted in a line to make a "living fence".
- \* Seri makes tea from flowers for treating muscle soreness.

## Seasonal Changes

- \* Ocotillo is leafless and dormant during winter. From spring through fall, leaves occur only when there is enough moisture. A plant may undergo several cycles of sprouting leaves after a rain fall, then losing them after the soil dries out.
- \* Autumn in the desert usually comes in September when the ocotillo leaves turn yellow.

## Temperature Extremes

- \* Tolerates desert summer heat extremes.
- \* May suffer frost damage at 10°F (-12°C) or below.

## Soil Needs

- \* Grows best in sandy or rocky, well-drained soil.
- \* Natural populations are thickest on limestone outcroppings.

## Special Care

- \* Ocotillos grow very slowly when young, requiring 10 to 15 years to develop a 5 foot plant from seed. Almost all ocotillos sold for landscape use are collected from the wild (with permits).
- \* Transplanted ocotillos only have about a 50% chance of survival.
- \* When first planted, spray water on the canes one to several times per week, and water the roots once every 2 - 3 weeks.