



# ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

## PLANT CARE INFORMATION

### Ocotillo or Coachwhip

*Fouquieria splendens*

**DESCRIPTION:** Thorns and the desert habitat it lives in brings to mind a cactus to many people, but ocotillos are not even closely related to cacti. This is the best known species in a small family of plants that include several tree ocotillos and the odd looking boojum. A spray of wand-like branches grows up to 20' tall, but usually less. The width can be 6' or more. Stems are leafless in dry times, and crowded with leaves in the wetter times when temperatures are warmer. This cycle can happen several times during a year. Individual cut stems, if planted, may eventually grow into new plants. Orange-red flowers, 1 inch long, occur in clusters covering the ends of the stems in April and May. Ocotillo is native from southwestern California to Western Texas, and south into the Baja peninsula, and on the mainland into Coahuila and Zacatecas Mexico.

**RECOMMENDED USE:** Makes a striking accent or specimen for its form. Also a must for enhanced desert landscapes or xeriscapes.

#### CULTURE:



**Hardiness:** Down to 0°F.



**Sun tolerance:** Full sun.



**Watering and feeding:** Spray canes daily and give a good watering weekly for first few weeks after planting. Little or no water needed once fully established.



**Soil requirements:** Most soils will do; even caliche



**Pruning:** Not necessary or recommended. Choose planting site with the ultimate width of the ocotillo in mind to prevent the need for disfiguring pruning.