

Why Observe?

We observe to gather data, to engage with people, and to learn about the world around us. The ocotillo is typically a Sonoran Desert species. Here at Joshua Tree National Park we find them in the transition zone between the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, or what is commonly referred to as the Colorado Desert. Through observing this species we can learn how climate change is affecting ocotillo in the transition zone. The data collected will inform on health, sustainability, and shifts in the various phenophases of the Ocotillo. The Ocotillo is an important part of the ecosystem, it provides food and shelter to the local and migrating fauna.

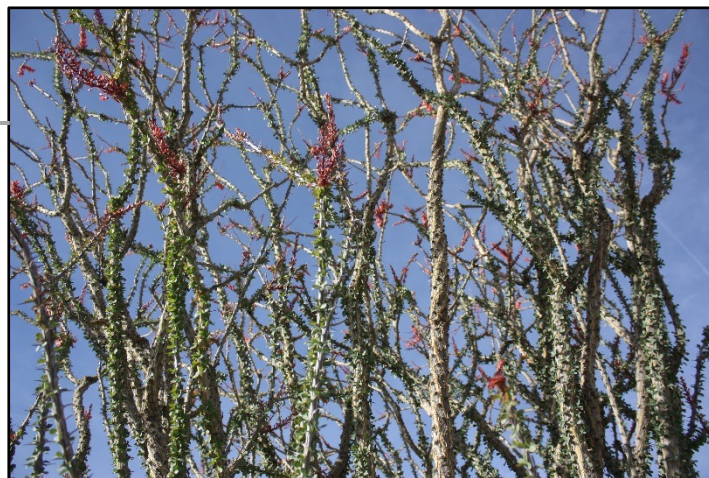
Tips for Identification

Ocotillo have multiple stems. The stems are thorny, typically green to tan in color and can vary in sizes and width. The flowers are red to orange and grow at the end of the stems.

Be aware there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a "?" for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.



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Young leaves

One or more young, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "young" and "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the leaf stalk (petiole) or stem, but before the leaf has reached full size or turned the darker green color or tougher texture of mature leaves on the plant. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.



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Leaves

One or more live, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the leaf stalk (petiole) or stem. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.

Colored leaves

One or more leaves show some of their typical late-season color, or yellow or brown due to drought or other stresses. Do not include small spots of color due to minor leaf damage, or dieback on branches that have broken. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.



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Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



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Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Fouquieria splendens*, the fruit is a capsule that changes from green or reddish-green to tan or light brown and splits open to expose the seeds. Do not include empty capsules that have already dropped all of their seeds.



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Image Needed

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Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Fouquieria splendens*, a fruit is considered ripe when it has turned tan or light-brown and has split open to expose seeds. Do not include empty capsules that have already dropped all of their seeds.

Phenophases not pictured: Falling leaves, Recent fruit or seed drop