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.
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.

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

This Phenophase Photo Guide has been vetted by the USA-NPN NCO. It is appropriate for use as a supplement to the Nature's Notebook phenophase definition sheet for this species.