



Photos from: <https://www.agaveville.org/viewtopic.php?t=5617>

**Scientific Name:** *Fouquieria purpusii*

**Common Name:** caudex ocotillo

**Botanical Family:** Fouquieriaceae

**Botanical Characteristics:**

This beautiful succulent can grow to 23 feet tall and has a fat, 24 inch diameter caudiciform trunk base. This tree-like woody plant has bright green leaves that are slender and spiral up the branch. The leaves are light to bright green, thin and oblong. In spring, it forms frilled out clusters of cone-shaped pale yellow to white flowers. The flowers have long anthers that protrude from the flower (1, 7).

Compound: Fou pur

Geographic Origin: Central Mexico

Ecozone Origin: Nearctic

Biome Origin:

**Natural History:**

This plant originates in Mexico. While it is endemic to the Tehuacan Valley, Mexico (1), It has been distributed to Apache junction, Phoenix, Chandler, AZ; Bostonia, Casa De Oro-mount Helix, CA. Townshend Stith Brandege was the first to describe this species in 1909 in central and southern Mexico. This plant was once thought to be extinct and was on the endangered list (1 ,2). Currently it is still rare in cultivation and in its natural habitat. This species is one of eleven in the Genus Fouquieria. The name Fouquieria comes from P.E. Fouquier, who was a Parisian medical professor (6). The specific epithet is named for C. A. Purpus, who was a plant collector, active in Central America (6).

**Cultivation Notes:**

When growing the ocotillo planting by seed has the best results. Instead of transplanting, the plant can established a strong root system which gives a better survival rate. These plants will grow fast with proper care. The plant needs watering to establish a root system. Once the plant has matured it can go on a natural cycle of the monsoon rains. This plant prefers full sunlight and is excellent for hummingbirds (3). If potted it will needs excellent draining to prevent root rot (4).

**Ethnobotany:**

The ocotillo is valued by the Native American tribes. The best time to extract this plant is right after it rains. The plant will be plump and lush. Ocotillo is prized for its bark, it is used in the treatment of pelvic diseases and to improve systemic circulation (5).

**Height:** 11 - 15 feet

**Width:** 11 - 15 feet

**Growth Rate:** Fast Growing

**Grow Season:** Fall

**Flower Season:** Spring

**Color:** White

**Function:** Accent

**Spread:** Non-spreading

**Allergen:** Non-allergenic

**Invasive:** Benign

**Toxicity:** Benign

**Hardy:** Hardy

**Water Use:** Low water Use

**Resources:**

1. University of British Columbia Botanic Garden  
<https://forums.botanicgarden.ubc.ca/threads/fouquieria-purpusii.66087/> Retrieved Jan. 19, 2019.
2. Dave's Garden davesgarden.com. Retrieved Jan. 19, 2019.
3. Plants for the Southwest plantsforthesouthwest.com. Retrieved Jan. 21, 2019.
4. National Gardening Association garden.org. Retrieved Jan. 21, 2019.

5. Natural Well Being [naturalwellbeing.com](http://naturalwellbeing.com). Retrieved Jan. 21, 2019.
6. Bihrmann's Caudiciforms <https://bihrmann.com/caudiciforms/subs/fou-pur-sub.asp>  
Retrieved June 12, 2024.