Mexican Tree Ocotillo

Fouquieria macdougalii

Height: 15 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Candlewood Tree, Ocotillo Macho, Torote Verde



Mexican Tree Ocotillo
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Description:

This large, succulent features long, upright spiny branches from a short thick trunk; small green leaves line the branches, and are drought-deciduous; bright red tubular flower clusters appear primarily in spring, but will occur all year



Mexican Tree Ocotillo flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Mexican Tree Ocotillo features airy clusters of red tubular flowers at the ends of the branches from mid to late spring. It has dark green deciduous foliage which emerges light green in spring. The glossy oval leaves do not develop any appreciable fall color. It produces brown capsules from late summer to mid fall. The peeling brown bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Mexican Tree Ocotillo is an open multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting hummingbirds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Spiny

Mexican Tree Ocotillo is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting



Mexican Tree Ocotillo stems
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Mexican Tree Ocotillo will grow to be about 15 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 30 years.

This shrub does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America..

Mexican Tree Ocotillo makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.