

Pittocaulon praecox

Cineraria praecox Cav.

Pittocaulon praecox is the type species for the genus *Pittocaulon* and family Asteraceae. This species also has the widest range of the genus.[3]

It is a deciduous shrub or small tree up to 4 meters high. Its succulent, erect, light gray stems fork like a candelabrum. The glabrous leaves, cordate at the base, are grouped at the upper end of the branches, with petioles up to 17.5 cm long. The entire margins have 5 to 8 acuminate lobes. The inflorescences are grouped into five or six ligule that simulate yellow petals. The fruit is less than 1 cm long and is a dry cylindrical or clavate achene with a pappus of white bristles.

It is a plant native to the semi-arid and temperate zones of central and southern Mexico. Its short roots allow it to grow on thin and uneven soils. In particular, it has found a niche thriving on deposits of extrusive igneous material, such as the Nealtican malpaís and the Pedregal de San Ángel (Coyoacán, Mexico City). The proliferation of *Pittocaulon praecox* in the Pedregal de San Ángel has been such that its xerophytic ecosystem It is usually classified as “matorral de palo loco”.

An infusion made from the leaves is a traditional remedy against rheumatism, wounds and dermatitis.

Media related to *Pittocaulon praecox* at Wikimedia Commons

