

Mezcales



Mexico is privileged from the point of view of the diversity of **maguery** (also known as Agave) present in the country. Mexico is the center of origin and of natural diversity of these plants. Furthermore, this genus of the Agavaceae family, rich in potential applications, fell into the hands of the people who gave rise to the main agricultural center of the Americas, resulting in its explosive diversification and selection under human management (Gentry, 1982). It is this diversity, first generated by natural selection, and for some 10,000 years by human selection, which is currently enjoyed by the people of this country and world wide.

The resources which this group of plants has provided for us covers the full range of our needs; from the most

basic food and shelter, to spiritual and recreational. The ancient Mexicans expressed in their huehuetlatolli ("the ancient word", a set of oral texts with which they taught their children and youth), the importance of the agave in their lives (Leon-Portilla, 1991):

"Take care of the things of the earth. Do something, chop the wood, work the land, plant nopal, plant maguery. You will have something to eat, to drink, to wear. With that you will stand, be true, with that you will walk. With that they will speak of you, praise you, with that you will be known".