PLANT FACT SHEET

Opuntia basilaris Engelm. & Bigelow

GENUS *Opuntia* **FAMILY** Cactaceae

COMMON NAMES Beavertail prickly pear

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Stems, Flowers, Fruit, bud

The unripe fruit are boiled or baked.
The ripe fruit are eaten raw or dried and made into syrup and jam.
Young pads are sliced and used in stews and other dishes.
Flowers and flower buds are cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A bush cactus. It grows about 1 m high. The joints are almost oval. They are bluish-green or pale red-green. They are 10-20 cm long. They have a velvety appearance. The spine spots are brownish. The have barbed bristles and one short spine. It flowers in the daytime. The flowers are reddish-purple. They are 6-8 cm long.

HABITAT

A subtropical plant. It needs a bright sunny position. It grows in dry conditions between 150-2,200 m above sea level. It needs a temperature above 7°C. It grows in alkaline soil. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

NOTES

There are about 250 Opuntia species. It is used in medicine.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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