PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Opuntia streptacantha* Lemaire

**GENUS** *Opuntia* **FAMILY** Cactaceae

**COMMON NAMES** White-spined Prickly Pear, Cardona-pear

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Fruit, stem

The ripe fruit are eaten raw and used in the preparation of sweetmeats.
They are also used to make a sweet alcoholic drink. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The pulp of the fruit is boiled down to make thick brown cakes.
Whole fruit are strung on strings to dry and they become coated with a sweet sticky juice.
The pads are eaten after the spines are removed. The are sliced or diced and used as a vegetable.

## DESCRIPTION

A cactus. It is shrubby or treelike and branches above the ground. It grows to 2-4 m tall. The main stem is 80 cm tall and 30-40 cm wide. The pads are spiny and round. They can be 30 cm across. There are 4-7 spines. The flowers occur in groups of 4-8 on the edges of the cladodes. The flowers are yellow or orange. They are 6-7 cm long. The fruit are round and yellow to red. The fruit is barrel shaped and 3.5-4 cm long and 2.5-3 cm wide. They are edible.

## HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. It can grow in arid places.

## NOTES

There are about 250 Opuntia species.
It has hyperglycemic action.

## PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

## REFERENCES


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**ONLINE FACT SHEET** https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/1b000bbd-47f8-484a-ab9c-15625a061ac4