PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Opuntia megacantha* Salm-Dyck.

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

**COMMON NAMES** Mispel, Mission prickly-pear

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Fruit, Stems

The fruit are eaten raw or made into preserved products. The dried fruit are made into large, thick cakes. A paste or jelly is made from the boiled juice.
The juice is also boiled and fermented.
The tender young joints are used as a vegetable.

## DESCRIPTION

A cactus. It is shrubby or tree like. It grows 4-5 m tall. It can have a trunk. The stem segments are large and oval. They are 40-60 cm long. There are 1-5 spines 2-3 cm long. The flowers are yellow or orange and 8 cm long. The fruit are 7-8 cm long.

## HABITAT

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

## NOTES

There are about 250 Opuntia species.

## REFERENCES


Anderson, E.F., 2001, The Cactus Family, Timber Press. p 507

Benitez, G., et al, 2023, Wild Edible Plants of Andalusia: Traditional Uses and Potential of Eating Wild in a Highly Diverse Region. Plants 2023, 12, 1218 p 16

Britton, N. L. & Rose, J. N., 1919, The Cactaceae. Descriptions and Illustrations of Plants of the Cactus Family. Volume 1 Carnegie Institution of Washington. p 261

Cruz, I. M., et al, 2015, Edible fruits and seeds in the State of Mexico. Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Agricolas. Vol. 6. Num. 2 pp 331-346

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 65

Food Composition Tables for use in East Asia FAO http://www.fao.org/infoods/directory No. 985

Gallegos-Vazquez, C., et al, 2012, Morphological diversity of xoconostles (Opuntia spp.) or acidic cactus pears: A Mexican contribution to functional foods. Fruits, Vol. 67, p. 109-220

Grivetti, L. E., 1980, Agricultural development: present and potential role of edible wild plants. Part 2: Sub-Saharan Africa, Report to the Department of State Agency for International Development. p 75

Hermandez Bermejo, J.E., and Leon, J. (Eds.), 1994, Neglected Crops. 1492 from a different perspective. FAO Plant Production and Protection Series No 26. FAO, Rome. p15

Hort. dyck. 363. 1834

Jardin, C., 1970, List of Foods Used In Africa, FAO Nutrition Information Document Series No 2.p 151

Lopez-Palacios, C., et al, 2016, Rheological Flow Behavior of Structural Polysaccharides from Edible Tender Cladodes of Wild, Semidomesticated and Cultivated 'Nopal' (Opuntia) of Mexican Highlands. Plant Foods for Human Nutrition. Vol. 71, Issue 4, pp 388-395

Martin, F. W., et al, 1987, Perennial Edible Fruits of the Tropics. USDA Handbook 642 p 88

Nabhan, G. P., et al, 2022, Reviving the Arid American Diet in the Face of Climate Change: Assessing its Composition, Links to the Mesomerican Diet and Potential to Advance Indigenous Health and Diabetes Prevention. International Journal of Water Resources and Arid Environments 11(2): 81-112

Ruiters-Welcome, A. K., 2019, Food plants of southern Africa. Ph.D. thesis. Univ. of Johannesburg p 41

Saunders, C.F., 1948, Edible and Useful Wild Plants. Dover. New York. p 108

Segura, S. et al, 2018, The edible fruit species in Mexico. Genet Resour Crop Evol (2018) 65:1767–1793

USDA, ARS, National Genetic Resources Program. Germplasm Resources Information Network - (GRIN). [Online Database] National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville, Maryland. Available: www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/econ.pl (10 April 2000)

Welcome, A. K. & Van Wyk, B.-E., 2019, An inventory and analysis of the food plants of southern Africa. South African Journal of Botany 122 (2019) 136–179

**PROVIDED BY** **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

**LICENCE** CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

**ONLINE FACT SHEET** https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/98d22519-b296-48b0-80cc-ed2b9056ace2