PLANT FACT SHEET

Opuntia polyacantha Haw.

GENUS *Opuntia* **FAMILY** Cactaceae

COMMON NAMES Red-spined prickly pear

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Stem

The stem segments have the spines burnt off in a hot flame and are then cooked and the inner section eaten.
The dried pulp of the fruits is used to thicken soups and stews.
The fruit are dried and stored for winter use.
The fruit are eaten raw.

DESCRIPTION

A cactus. It forms mats, It grows 30 cm high and spreads 1.2 m wide. The stem segments are rounded but flat. They are 10 cm long. They have clusters of 5-10 blue-green spines. These are 5 cm long. The flowers are yellow to yellow-green. The fruit are dry and rather spiny and 25 mm long.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows in dry, open prairie and sand hills. It suits hardiness zones 3-10.

PRODUCTION

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is slow growing.

NOTES

There are about 250 Opuntia species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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WHITING,

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/a1c5d560-ecea-4cde-a862-bd40bd7d4d06