

*Opuntia stricta*   

**System:** Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Magnoliopsida	Caryophyllales	Cactacea

**Common name** nopal estricto (Spanish), common prickly pear (English), erect prickly pear (English), Araluen pear (English), common pest pear (English), gayndah pear (English), spiny pest pear (English), sour prickly pear (English), suurturksvy (English), pest pear of Australia (English), Australian pest pear (English), chumbera (Spanish), Feigenkaktus (German)

**Synonym** *Cactus strictus* , Haw.  
*Opuntia airampo* , Phil.  
*Opuntia bartramii* , Raf.  
*Opuntia anahuacensis* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia atrocopensis* , Small  
*Opuntia dillenii* , (KerGawl.) Haw.  
*Opuntia gomei* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia gilvoalba* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia cyanella* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia bentonii* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia humilis* , (Haw.) Haw.  
*Opuntia inermis* , (DC.) DC.  
*Opuntia keyensis* , Britton ex Small  
*Opuntia laxiflora* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia longiclada* , Griffiths  
*Opuntia magnifica* , Small  
*Opuntia maritima* , Raf.  
*Opuntia nitens* , Small  
*Opuntia parva* , A.Berger  
*Opuntia spinalba* , Raf.  
*Opuntia stricta* ,(Haw.) Haw.var. *dillenii* (KerGawl.) L.D.Benson  
*Opuntia tenuiflora* , Small  
*Opuntia zebrina* , Small  
*Opuntia horrida* , Salm-Dyck ex DC.  
*Opuntia tunoides* , Gibbes  
*Opuntia macrarthra* , Gibbes  
*Cactus opuntia* ,L.var. *inermis*DC.

**Similar species** *Opuntia ficus-indica*

**Summary** *Opuntia stricta* is a cactus that can grow up to 2 metres in height and originates in central America. This spiny shrub favours habitats such as rocky slopes, river banks and urban areas. *Opuntia stricta* was considered to be Australia's worst ever weed. *Opuntia stricta* is also invasive in South Africa, where biological options are currently being explored to control the problem.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)



## Species Description

Spreading to an erect shrub to 2 metres. Basal stem-segments sometimes thickened, trunk-forming; upper segments elliptic to obovate, 10-35cm long, 7-20cm wide, glabrous, dull green to grey-green. Leaves conical, 4.5-6mm long. Spines up to 11 per areole, 1-6cm long, yellow to brown; glochids yellow. Flowers 5-6.5cm diam.; petaloid lobes spreading, yellow. Fruit obovoid with depressed apex, 4-6cm long, 2.5-4cm diam., purple. Seeds 4-5mm long, pale brown." (George, 1984, In PIER, 2003)

## Uses

Cultivated for Medicinal/culinary uses in some areas

## Reproduction

Seed. The segments will take root from the "eyes" if left in contact with the ground, and because they are so succulent, they remain capable of rooting for several months after being detached from the parent plant. They can be moved in floods leading to infestations along river banks.

## Pathway

This plant came to Australia on the first fleet, making it the oldest weed. Early settlers in Australia planted *O. stricta* for ornamental purposes and as hedges to keep cattle under control before barbed wire became affordable. (Australian Plants online, 1999)

## Principal source:

**Compiler:** IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)

**Review:** Under revision

**Publication date:** 2010-06-12

## ALIEN RANGE

[3] AUSTRALIA  
[1] ETHIOPIA  
[1] PORTUGAL  
[1] SOMALIA  
[1] SPAIN  
[1] YEMEN

[1] ERITREA  
[1] NEW CALEDONIA  
[1] SOLOMON ISLANDS  
[4] SOUTH AFRICA  
[1] SWAZILAND

**Red List assessed species 1: EX = 1;**

[Psephotus pulcherrimus](#) EX

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

24 references found for *Opuntia stricta*

### Management information

AME, 2004 Agence Méditerranéenne de l'Environnement. Plantes Envahissantes de la Région Méditerranéenne. *Opuntia* spp. [Australian Plants online, 1999. Weeds - The Silent Invaders. Australian Plants online - December 1999.](#)

**Summary:** An article on different weeds in Australia and a little caption on each one. This article was presented to the Society for Growing Australian Plants Queensland Region Conference, Townsville, 28 June-5 July, 1998.

Available from: <http://farrer.riv.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/APOL16/dec99-2.html> [Accessed 16 July 2003].

[Eurobodalla Shire Council \(ESC\), undated. Opuntia spp.](#)

**Summary:** Some information on the Common prickly pear in Australia. Available from: <http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Sheets/shrubs/S%20Prickly%20pear.htm> [Accessed 15 July 2003]

[European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization \(EPPO\), 2005. Reporting Service 2005, No. 9.](#)

**Summary:** The [EPPO Reporting Service](#) is a monthly information report on events of phytosanitary concern. It focuses on new geographical records, new host plants, new pests (including invasive alien plants), pests to be added to the EPPO Alert List, detection and identification methods etc. The EPPO Reporting Service is published in English and French.

Available from: <http://archives.eppo.org/EPPORreporting/2005/Rse-0509.pdf> [Accessed 28 November 2005]

Hoffmann, J.H., Moran, V.C. & Zeller, D.A. 1998. Evaluation of *Cactoblastis cactorum* (Lepidoptera: Phycitidae) as a biological control agent of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in the Kruger National Park, South Africa. *Biological Control*. 12: 20-24.

**Summary:** Publication on the Biological control of *O. stricta* in South Africa.

Hoffmann, J.H., Moran, V.C. & Zeller, D.A. 1998. Long-term population studies and the development of an integrated management programme for control of *Opuntia stricta* in Kruger National Park, South Africa. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 35: 156-160.

**Summary:** Long-term population studies and the development of an integrated management programme for control of *Opuntia stricta* in Kruger National Park, South Africa.

[IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group \(ISSG\), 2010. A Compilation of Information Sources for Conservation Managers.](#)

**Summary:** This compilation of information sources can be sorted on keywords for example: Baits & Lures, Non Target Species, Eradication, Monitoring, Risk Assessment, Weeds, Herbicides etc. This compilation is at present in Excel format, this will be web-enabled as a searchable database shortly. This version of the database has been developed by the IUCN SSC ISSG as part of an Overseas Territories Environmental Programme funded project XOT603 in partnership with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment. The compilation is a work under progress, the ISSG will manage, maintain and enhance the database with current and newly published information, reports, journal articles etc.

Land Protection, 2003. PP29, Prickly pear identification and their control. NRM facts, Pest Series. The State of Queensland (Department of Natural Resources and Mines).

Lotter, W.D. & Hoffman J.H. 1998. An integrated management plan for the control of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in the Kruger National Park, South Africa. *Koedoe*, 41: 63-68.

**Summary:** An integrated management plan for the control of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in the Kruger National Park, South Africa.

Monteiro A, Cheia V. M, Vasconcelos T & Moreira I., 2005. Management of the invasive species *Opuntia stricta* in a Botanical Reserve in Portugal. *Weed Research* 45, 193-201.

[PIER \(Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk\), 2003. Opuntia stricta](#)

**Summary:** Ecology, synonyms, common names, distributions (Pacific as well as global), management and impact information.

Available from: [http://www.hear.org/pier/species/opuntia\\_stricta.htm](http://www.hear.org/pier/species/opuntia_stricta.htm)[Accessed 15 July 2003]

South African National Parks. Kruger National Park: Scientific Services. Biological Control Of *Opuntia stricta* In The Kruger National Park.

Swaziland s Alien Plants Database., Undated. *Opuntia stricta*

**Summary:** A database of Swaziland s alien plant species.

Volchnasky, C.R., Hoffmann, J.H. AND Zimmermann, H.G. 1999. Host-plant affinities of two biotypes of *Dactylopius opuntiae* (Homoptera: Dactylopiidae): enhanced prospects for biological control of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in South Africa. *Journal of Applied Ecology*. In Press.

**Summary:** Host-plant affinities of two biotypes of *Dactylopius opuntiae* (Homoptera: Dactylopiidae): enhanced prospects for biological control of *Opuntia stricta* (Cactaceae) in South Africa.

Wilson, Colin, Wildlife Management Officer, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, Parks & Wildlife Service, Northern Territory, Australia.

**Summary:** Compiler of original GISD profile of *Chromoleana odorata*.

## General information

[Fuentes, A. R., undated. Lista de los cactus nativos y naturalizados de Cuba](#)

**Summary:** Available from: <http://www.uh.cu/centros/jbn/descargas/cactus/3.pdf> [Accessed January 11 2012]

Gimeno, I. and Vila, M. 2002. Recruitment of two *Opuntia* species invading abandoned olive groves. *Acat Oecologia* 23: 239-246

**Summary:** Notes on Invasions.

Henderson, Lesley. 1995. *Plant Invaders of Southern Africa*. Plant Protection Research Institute Handbook No 5. Agricultural Research Council.

**Summary:** A pocket field guide to the identification of 161 of the most important and potentially important alien species in South Africa.

[ITIS \(Integrated Taxonomic Information System\), 2005. Online Database Opuntia stricta](#)

**Summary:** An online database that provides taxonomic information, common names, synonyms and geographical jurisdiction of a species. In addition links are provided to retrieve biological records and collection information from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) Data Portal and bioscience articles from BioOne journals.

Available from:

[http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxastep?king=every&p\\_action=containing&taxa=Opuntia+stricta&p\\_format=&p\\_ifx=pligt&p\\_lang=](http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/itisca/taxastep?king=every&p_action=containing&taxa=Opuntia+stricta&p_format=&p_ifx=pligt&p_lang=) [Accessed March 2005]

MacKee, H.S. 1994. *Catalogue des plantes introduites et cultivées en Nouvelle-Calédonie*, 2nd edn. MNHN, Paris.

**Summary:** Cet ouvrage liste 1412 taxons (espèces, sous espèces et variétés) introduits en Nouvelle-Calédonie. L'auteur précise dans la majorité des cas si l'espèce est cultivée ou naturalisée.

Meyer, J.-Y., Loope, L., Sheppard, A., Munzinger, J., Jaffre, T. 2006. Les plantes envahissantes et potentiellement envahissantes dans l'archipel néo-calédonien : première évaluation et recommandations de gestion. in M.-L. Beauvais et al. (2006) : Les espèces envahissantes dans l'archipel néo-calédonien, Paris, IRD éditions, 260 p.+ cdrom.

Vila, M And Gimeno, I. 2003. Seed predation of two alien *Opuntia* species invading Mediterranean communities. *Plant Ecology* 167: 1-8

**Summary:** Notes on Invasions.

Vila, M., Burriel, J.A, Pinoj, Chamizo J, Llach E, Porterias, M. And Vives M. 2003. Association between *Opuntia* species invasion and changes in land-cover in the Mediterranean region. *Global Change Biology* 9: 1234-1239

**Summary:** Notes on spread.



# GLOBAL INVASIVE SPECIES DATABASE

FULL ACCOUNT FOR: *Opuntia stricta*

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Wunderlin & Hansen, 2003. Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants. Institute for Systematic Botany.

**Summary:** Synonyms.