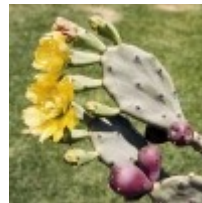
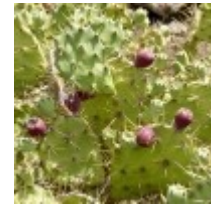


Pest Pear of Australia (Prickly Pear)

Opuntia stricta



Alternative common names:

Common prickly pear, coastal prickly pear, common pest pear, erect prickly pear, pest prickly pear, sour prickly pear, southern spineless cactus.

Where does this species come from?

Caribbean region.

How does it spread?

This plant reproduces by seed and vegetative reproduction via its fleshy cladodes, which become dislodged from the plant and produce roots. Cladodes are spread by attaching to animals, footwear and vehicles. They may also be dispersed by flood water and in dumped garden waste. The fruit is eaten by various animals (birds and rodents) and the seeds then spread in their droppings.

Why is it a problem?

Pest Pear of Australia is a very serious problem in arid lands.

It is an irritant due to its spines and glochids (barbed hairs or bristles). People have abandoned homes/villages as a result of this weed. It prevents access, displaces indigenous species and causes injuries to people and wild animals.



Interesting fact:

The plant was originally brought here by the British with the aim of farming cochineal. They used the red in the cochineal bug as dye for their red uniforms.



Did U Know?



Starbucks is coming under fire from vegans for using ground-up bugs to colour its Frappuccinos, but the use of cochineal insects is actually common in the food industry.

Control of Pest Pear of Australia:

There are various methods that have been used very successfully.

Bio control, such as cochineal bug, is used on dense infestations.

Younger plants are dug up and thrown in the road to be destroyed by motor vehicles.

Individual big plants are injected with a herbicide.

