



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Smooth Prickly Pear

Opuntia phaeacantha var. *laevis*

DESCRIPTION: This beautiful (*nearly* unarmed) prickly pear a variety of our local sprawling prickly pear. It is not nearly as common in horticulture, though. It is native to pine-juniper woodlands of northern Arizona, as well as oak-woodlands from central Arizona, south into Mexico. It grows at a moderate rate, loosely mounding to 3' or so. Flowers are bright yellow and appear in April or May. Native bees pollinate the blooms, and the juicy fruit and young pads can be fed to desert tortoise.

RECOMMENDED USE: Use Smooth Prickly Pear as an accent, rock garden, or in an enhanced desert landscape.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: It is hardy to 0°F.



Sun tolerance: It gets its best growth when grown in full sun to light shade.



Watering and feeding: Water once every week or two the first growing season (spring-early fall). Once established it can get by on rainfall. Fertilizing is not necessary unless kept in a pot.



Soil requirements: It does best in well-drained soil, but can grow on most soil types.



Pruning: To limit size, knock off new pads as they emerge in the spring.