

# It's a crime to sell or swap prickly pear cacti in NSW



## What's the problem?

Prickly pear cacti have sharp spines or barbs that:

- injure people, pets, working dogs and livestock
- injure, cause infections in and kill native animals
- blind animals
- prevent farm animals from grazing
- restrict animals access to shade and water.

## What can you do to help?

To help stop the spread of prickly pear cacti:

- don't buy, sell, swap or give away prickly pear cacti
- don't buy, sell, swap or giveaway cacti if you don't know for sure they are not prickly pears
- let us know if you see any prickly pear cacti being traded
- never dump unwanted plants, ask your local council weeds officer how to dispose of them.

Seen them for sale?  
Call us:

NSW Biosecurity Helpline:  
**1800 680 244**  
[weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:weeds@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

Protect people,  
pets and parks.

# It's a crime to sell or swap prickly pear cacti.

Prickly pears are fleshy-stemmed cacti that belong to the *Austrocylindropuntia*, *Cylindropuntia* and *Opuntia* groups of plants. There are over 27 different species in Australia. The prickly pears below are the most common ones that are illegally traded.



**Blind cactus (*Opuntia rufida*)**  
Oval/round pads to 15 cm long and 12 cm wide. Clustered red-brown barbed bristles. Flowers yellow to red. Fruit red-purple.



**Bunny ears (*Opuntia microdasys*)**  
Oval/round pads in pairs up to 15 cm long and 12 cm wide. Clustered yellow or white barbed bristles. Flowers yellow. Fruit red-purple.



**Monstrosa form of bunny ears (*Opuntia microdasys f. montrose*)**  
Also called crazy bunny ears. Pads are fused together and curved rather than flat.



**Chicken dance cactus (*Opuntia schickendantzii*)** Dull-green pads to 35 cm long and 5 cm wide, like flattened tubes. Spines up to 1 cm long. Yellow to orange-yellow flowers. Green fruit.



**Drooping/smooth tree pear (*Opuntia monacantha*)** Thin, shiny, drooping pear-shaped pads to 50 cm long and 18 cm wide. Spines in groups of 1-3. Yellow flowers. Red fruit.



***Opuntia monacantha f. monstrosa variegata*** These are distorted forms of drooping/smooth tree pear with white, cream, yellow, light green and pink discolourations.



**Aaron's beard cactus (*Opuntia leucotricha*)** Oval/round pads to 30 cm long and 20 cm wide. Clusters of white spines up to 4 cm long. Yellow flowers and fruit.



**Common pear (*Opuntia stricta*)** Oval pads to 35 cm long and 20 cm wide. Spineless or with groups of 1-2 spines, 2-4 cm long.



**Eve's needle cactus (*Austrocylindropuntia subulata*)** Shiny green cylindrical pads up to 50 cm long and 5 cm wide. Fleshy leaves to 12 cm long. Clusters of 1-4 spines up to 7 cm long. Pink flowers. Green fruit.

Penalties of up to **\$220,000** apply.  
**Don't risk it.**



For more information visit NSW WeedWise:  
[weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au](https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au)