

## Invasive cacti

## a prickly problem

Invasive cacti are a serious threat to biodiversity and agricultural systems within Australian rangeland regions. The key features listed may assist you to identify these prickly invaders.

# Austrocylindropuntia & Cylindropuntia

## Austrocylindropuntia cylindrica



Erect, branching shrub
0.3-1.5m tall. Often forms
patches several metres wide.

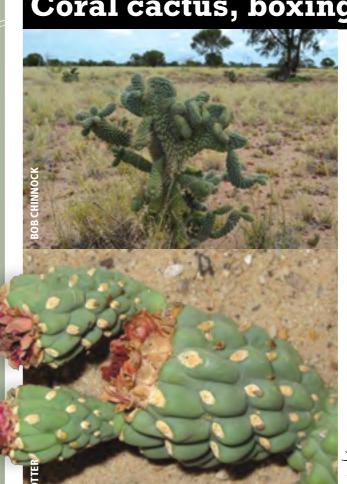
- Dark bluish-green, shiny.
  Rounded, 15-50cm long,
  3-4cm diameter. Deciduous leaves to 1cm long.
- Red, cup shaped.
- Egg to urn shaped, to 4.5cm long. Deep green-yellow green. (Can produce chains).
- 2-6 spines, approx 1cm long. (Lack papery sheath).

## Austrocylindropuntia subulata



- Branching shrub to 3m tall. Forms patches to 8m wide. Leaves can persist.
- Mid green. Slender, to 50cm long, 4-5cm diameter. Leaves to 12cm long.
- Pink.
- Oblong, egg or club shaped to 10cm long. Green. (Can produce chains).
- 1-4 spines, up to 7cm long. (Lack papery sheath).

#### Cylindropuntia fulgida var. mamillata Coral cactus, boxing glove cactus



Erect shrub up to 0.4-0.8m tall. Deciduous leaves. Rarely flowers/fruits.

- Green-grey green.
  Often distorted, with a corrugated (tuberculate) surface, 10-22cm long, 2-4.5cm diameter. Often numerous, easily detached small segments.
- Deep red.
- Inverse cone or oval shaped. Grey-green. Forms long chains. Usually sterile.
- 4-15 spines, 7-20cm long (often shorter). Cream to brown (colour variable). (White to tan sheath).

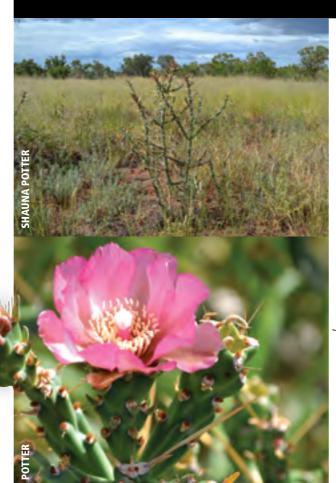
### Cylindropuntia imbricata Devil's rope/rope pear



Branched shrub or small tree 1-3m tall. Often with short trunks. Deciduous leaves.

- Dull grey-green. 15-40cm long, 3.5-5cm diameter. Large, widely spaced tubercles give a woven, rope like appearance.
- Dark pink, magenta.
- Flashy, egg shaped, to 4cm long. Greenishyellow when ripe. (Can form chains).
- 2-12 spines, 0.8-3cm long. Trunks often covered in spines. Off white-cream. (Off white-cream sheath attached).

## Cylindropuntia kleiniae



- Straggly shrub to 0.5-2.5m tall. Large plants form trunk. Deciduous leaves.
- Light grey-green. 6-26cm long, 0.6-1.2cm diameter.
- Pink-red.
- Egg or cylinder shaped. Ripens to orange.
- 1-4 spines, 2-4.5cm long. White to brown. (Tan sheath firmly attached).

## Cylindropuntia leptocaulis



Spreading shrub 0.4-1.8m tall.

Deciduous leaves.

- Green-grey green. Very slender, 2-8cm long, 0.3-0.5cm diameter.
- Pale to greenish yellow.
- Fleshy, egg shaped.
  Yellow to red when ripe.
  Spineless. Often sterile.
- 0-4 spines, 0.5-1.5cm long. Cream to pale yellow.

#### Cylindropuntia prolifera Jumping cholla



- Low shrub 0.4-1m tall. Deciduous leaves.
- Greenish grey. 4-15cm long, 4-5cm diameter. Easily detached. Prominent tubercles.
- Rose to magenta.
- Top shaped, 2-5cm long. Green. Can form chains. Usually sterile.
- 7-11 spines, 1-2cm long.
  Light to dark brown,
  interlacing. (White to tan
  sheath firmly attached).

## Cylindropuntia spinosior



Erect shrub to 1m tall. Often forming patches several metres wide. Similar to *C. prolifera*, but different spine and fruit colour. Deciduous leaves.

- Mid grey-green. 10-24cm long, 1.5-3cm diameter. Firmly attached. Prominent tubercles.
- Rose-purple.
- Fleshy, cylindrical, to 4cm long. Yellow, sometimes green.
- 6-24 spines, 0.8-1.5cm long, interlacing. White to grey. (White sheath firmly attached).

#### Cylindropuntia rosea (White-spined) Hudson pear



Low, spreading shrub, 0.5-1m tall. Up to 3m wide. Old plants can develop trunks, but not commonly seen. Deciduous leaves.

- Grey-pale green. 4.5-26cm long, 1.5-3.5cm diameter.
  Easily detached. Prominent tubercles.
- 🔗 Pink-red.
- Oblong to egg shaped, to 3cm long. Green-yellow green. Sterile hybrid.
- 7-14 spines, 1-4cm long.
  White to light brown.
  (White sheath loosely attached).

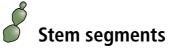
## Cylindropuntia tunicata (Brown-spined) Hudson pear



Low, densely branched shrub 0.3 to 0.6m tall. Deciduous leaves.

- Pale grey-green. 10-20cm long, 1.5-3cm diameter. Easily detached. Prominent tubercles.
- Yellowish-brown.
- Club to top shaped.
  Greenish-yellowish to red.
  Spineless. Usually sterile.
- 4-7 spines, 3-7cm long.
  Red-brown to pale brown.
  (Brownish sheath loosely attached).

#### Key to symbols



Flowers

Fruits
Spines

#### Glossary

**Areole** – small pits or depressions on the surface of segments.

**Tubercle** – a small raised area or nodule on a plant surface.

**Glochids** – small, detachable barbed bristles.

Stem segment – distinct, individual part of the stem. Can be cylindrical (e.g. in

Austrocylindropuntia & Cylindropuntia), or flattened (e.g. in Opuntia, commonly referred to as pads).

**Sheath** – papery outer covering of the spine. Only present in *Cylindropuntia* species.

This poster is based on a previous version by the South Australian Opuntia Taskforce.





