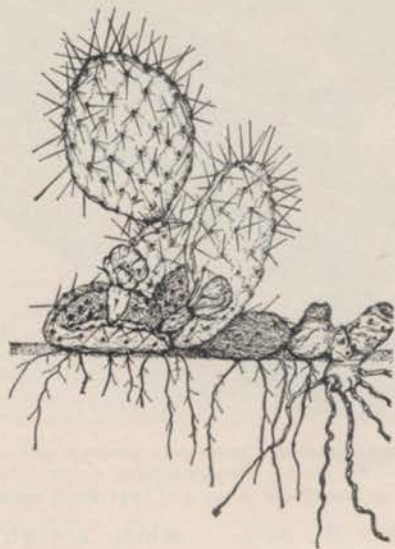


PRICKLY PEAR

(*Opuntia* spp.)



Prickly pear is a cactus found on dry, sandy soils, but not restricted to arid regions. The cactus is a perennial and reproduces by seeds and by rooting stems (pads). Its growth characteristics are prostrate or semiprostrate. It sometimes ascends up to 3 feet. Prickly pear may be confused with other cactus species. Species of this plant may be found in Massachusetts, New York, west to British Columbia, and south to California, Texas, and Florida.

Stems of *Opuntia* cactus are flattened and fleshy; they may be described as padlike. There are no true leaves of cactus, but leaves are represented as sharp yellow spines, 1 inch long.

Flowers are bright yellow with long succulent petals. Some species have red centers. After pollination and maturation, the fruit is formed; this is a pear-shaped, fleshy protuberance on the spiny stem. Inside are many hard seeds.

This pest is troublesome on many overgrazed pastures and ranges. In extreme infestations, prickly pear may be plowed under and the area reseeded to grasses after one or more years of intertilled crops where the climate and soil are adapted to this practice.

Prickly pear cactus is resistant to sprays of 2,4-D. Sprays of 2,4,5-T in diesel oil will kill it on an individual-plant-treatment basis. Recent work indicates 2 to 4 lbs. per acre of silvex spray on prickly pear that had been run over by land roller gave good control.

Heavy infestations of this cactus in Australia in the 1930's were brought under control biologically, predominantly by importation of an Argentinian cactus moth, *Cactoblastis cactorum*. There are many other predators of cactus but their own predators in turn prevent them from being very effective.

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Brush Control at TVA

(from page 18)

trast, careless and indiscriminate use of the same chemicals can result not only in unsatisfactory control but also in actual damage to desirable crops.

We believe that users of herbicides have a definite responsibility to the general public to exercise extreme discretion when using these chemicals, especially along rights-of-way conspicuously exposed to public view. This is particularly true in those areas where garden clubs, civic organizations, or government agencies have made special efforts to improve the landscape.

Use of discretion in applying these chemicals should result in public acceptance and reduced pressure for restrictive legislation. When inquiries are received concerning chemicals being used and reasons for using them, we should always discuss them thoroughly with the public or the person making the inquiry. We should explain our chemical program and economics involved in this type of maintenance.

Summary

Value of chemical brush control on rights-of-way has been definitely proved during the past few years. There are several effective methods that have been in use for herbicide application. These methods all have their merits and should be given consideration in planning an effective and economical chemical brush control program.

Today we know that chemical brush control is not a "one-shot cure-all" for the majority of our rights-of-way. Chemical brush control may be accomplished by several methods, from the ground as well as from the air, depending upon the specific problem. After the specific brush control problem has been determined, a successful right-of-way maintenance program at a reasonable cost will depend upon selecting the proper chemicals and equipment and making certain that the crews are thoroughly trained and adequately supervised in their proper use.