

# Asst Optunia Cacti



Prickly Pear is in the cacti family and contains over 100 species that are native to North and South America. They are erect or spreading cacti, ranging from small low-growing shrubs to tree-like specimens reaching 16 feet or more in height. Some are grown as houseplants. They

have flat paddle-shaped stem segments called cladodes that grow one on top of the other. They all have spines in the areoles but some have additional large spines.

## *Optunia sp.*

- **Use:** A cute and charming cactus that looks a little different than the stereotypical thorn-covered ball or spire we often see, Bunny Ears Cactus grows with round, flat pads. New pads form from the top of an old pad, and when it branches, it can look like a pair of rounded ears. It's also very easy to care for; all Bunny Ears Cactus needs to thrive is a little bit of water and a lot of bright light. Not for consumption.
- **Exposure/Soil:** It grows best indoors with lots and lots of light. It should thrive within 1 to 3 feet of a large, unobstructed south- or west-facing window or the equivalent from plant lights. It likes average household temperatures and tolerates low humidity levels. It thrives both with natural sunlight inside, plant lights, or a combination of both. This plant can go several weeks without water. Only water it when the soil dries out completely and be careful not to over-water. In winter only needs water 1 time a month.
- **Growth:** Slow growing, but can get 2 feet tall and wide as it matures
- **Hardiness:** Zone 7-10, Perennial or likely colder
- **Foliage:** Evergreen; white markings on its leaf surfaces and the thin pointed leaves. Aloe aristata has no papery bracts along the peduncle, a characteristic it does not share with other dwarf aloes.
- **Flower:** Give it plenty of light and it will reward you with abundant growth and little yellow, pink, or orange flowers depending on the species. The fruits are generally fleshy, orange, and spiny but sometimes dry.