

Botanical Name: *Opuntia ficus-indica*

Common Name: Indian Fig



Family: Cactaceae

Native Distribution: Believed to be pre-Columbian hybrid cultivar from Central Mexico now growing wild in dry, rocky slopes and flats as well as forests and mountain foothills

Plant Size: 3-20' tall, 10' wide shrub or tree with well developed trunk

Flowers: Yellow to red cup-shaped flowers along the perimeter of the pads in late spring, followed by large, edible, usually spineless, yellow, orange, or reddish purple fruits

Foliage: Flattened, bright green pads growing to almost 2' across with spines and glochids mostly absent

Site Preferences: Full sun

Landscape Uses: In Greater Phoenix, use along walls or buildings as a backdrop, standing alone as a specimen in large courtyards, as a fence or barrier, or as a food source for wildlife.

Other Stuff:

- Hardy to 15°F.
- Nearly spineless compared to other forms.
- Just needs natural rainfall or supplemental water, if needed, in times of drought (pads shrivel).
- Grown for their pads (nopales) and fruit which are used in cooking.
- Easy to grow, fast grower.
- Can be easily pruned by pulling pads off.
- Will develop a woody stump over time.
- Have escaped cultivation and now can be found growing wild.
- Easily attacked by the cactus beetle, and can be infested by cochineal insects that can eventually kill or damage the stems.
- Has various medicinal uses including use as a hangover cure.