

Seen this plant? Wheel cactus

Opuntia robusta



How does this weed affect us?

An invasive spiny cactus. The spines can:

- Injure people, livestock, working dogs and pets.
- Injure and sometimes kill wildlife that get trapped in the spines.
- Devalue wool, hides and can become a source of worker injury while shearing.
- Degrades natural environments by out-competing native plants - also harbors pests like foxes and rabbits.
- Dense thickets restrict animal movement and use of available forage and water sources.
- Devalues recreational areas by restricting human movement.
- Produces viable seed that is spread by birds that consume fruit.
- Also capable of vegetative spread as plant parts are moved in soil or by vectors.

Seen it? Call us:

**Cootamundra-Gundagai
Biosecurity Officer:**

1300 459 689

**NSW DPI Biosecurity
Helpline:**

1800 680 244

Help protect our land, plants and wildlife.

For control and biosecurity information visit NSW WeedWise:

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/WheelCactus>



Where are you likely to find it?

Wheel cactus grows in a wide range of climates. It mostly grows in arid, semi-arid warm temperate and subtropical climates but it can tolerate cooler temperate areas. It is very drought tolerant. Plants can survive extremely high temperatures up to 50 °C and low temperatures down to -7°C. It tolerates a wide variety of soil types and grows very well in shallow granite soils. In NSW, most infestations are in the Western Region. Plants have also been found in the Northern Tablelands, Riverina and in the South-East.

What does it look like?

Succulent shrub usually 1–2 m tall. Sometimes it is treelike with a distinct trunk and up to 4 m tall. Cacti pads have bumps on the surface called areoles. Spines, bristles, leaves, flowers, fruit, roots and new shoots all grow out of the areoles. Stems/cladodes are blue-green, circular and flat. Spines up to 5cm long presented all over the cladodes. Flowers are held at the top of the cladodes and are predominantly yellow. The resulting fruit are pink-purple with an oval shape – the flesh is dark red. The shallow fibrous root system is shallow and spreads over considerable distance from the plant.



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General Biosecurity Duty

All pest plants are regulated with a general biosecurity duty to prevent, eliminate or minimise any biosecurity risk they may pose. Any person who deals with any plant, who knows (or ought to know) of any biosecurity risk, has a duty to ensure the risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Prohibition on certain dealings

Must not be imported into the state, sold, bartered, exchanged or offered for sale.



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