



MOJAVE DESERT NATIVE PLANTS

BEAVERTAIL CACTUS

Opuntia basilaris

Lack of obvious spines is peculiar to this species, but one must be careful of the glochids found at the areoles (brownish dots). These are tiny and hair-like and can be painful and difficult to remove from skin and clothing. Pads, about 4 to 6 inches (10-15 cm) long and bluish/gray in color, grow close to the ground, rarely more than two pads high.

Tiny leaves do appear on this cactus and can be found around newly formed pads for about a month. This cactus can be found in sandy, gravelly, and rocky slopes to 6000 feet (1800 m). Flowers, pollinated by native bees, are rose to magenta in color. Beavertail is usually the first cactus to bloom, flowering as early as February and through May.

