

Title: FLORAL EMBLEM		Number: 0003
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Prepared by: FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT		

STATEMENT

THE PLAINS PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS (OPUNTIA POLYACATHA HAW) SHALL BE THE OFFICIAL FLOWER OF THE CITY OF MEDICINE HAT.

PURPOSE

To authorize an official floral emblem for the City of Medicine Hat.

PLAINS PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS

Cactaceae - Opuntia polyacantha Haw. Belonging to a group of the cactus family that sometimes reaches gigantic size in other parts of the world, the Alberta species of the Plains Prickly Pear Cactus is a comparatively small plant. Its prostrate gray-green stems grow in irregular mound-like clumps, and are made up of several segments. These are flattened and covered with clusters of five to nine hard, sharp, reddish brown spines 1/2" to 2" in length.

The almost leafless perennial plants produce a yellow to almost pinkish flower in bloom through most of June and July. The flower is usually two to three inches across.

The plant produces a fleshy berry that is relished by antelope and sheep.

The Plains Prickly Pear Cactus thrives in light soils on dry prairie hillsides and slopes, as well as overgrazed range lands.