

SEPTEMBER

ECO-BLITZ CHALLENGE

ENGELMANN PRICKLY PEAR

PHOTO CREDIT: NIKKI BUNNELL, INTERPRETIVE RANGER



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QUESTIONS

[maricopacountyparks
@maricopa.gov](mailto:maricopacountyparks@maricopa.gov)

ENGELMANN PRICKLY PEAR



Photo by Nikki Bunnell,
Interpretive Ranger

This month, we are learning all about the Engelmann Prickly Pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*) cacti. Here are some fun and key facts:

- The fruits, called “tunas” in Spanish, are used commercially to make juices, jams, jellies, and more.
- The cacti pads are covered with long spines and less noticeable hair-like spines called glochids.
- Cacti serve as a home for packrats and birds and as a food source for native bees, rodents, rabbits, javelina, and desert tortoises, among others.

Sources:

- <https://www.desertmuseum.org/kids/oz/long-fact-sheets/Prickley%20Pear.php?print=y>
- <https://arboretum.arizona.edu/dunbar-spring-neighborhood-opuntia-engelmannii>
- A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert. Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press and University of California Press. 217-218 pp.