



OPUNTIA SANTA-RITA ROSE

ON OPUNTIA SANTA-RITA, A SPECIES OF CACTUS OF ORNAMENTAL VALUE

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For several years there has been growing in the New York Botanical Garden a strange *Opuntia* which somewhat suggests *O. macrocentra*, but which is more highly colored and more weakly armed, or not infrequently entirely unarmed. Upon my visit to Tucson, Arizona, in 1908, I found plants of this species in cultivation at the Desert Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and growing spontaneously in waste places in the town itself and in the mountain ranges to the southeast of Tucson. An illustration of this new species recently appeared in the *Plant World* (vol. XI, p. 224, fig. 6) in connection with which Dr. D. T. MacDougal speaks of this cactus as follows: "The highly colored reddish joints and the delicately tinged flowers make this a very attractive plant, and it may be found in some of the gardens at Tucson." It is, indeed, one of the most attractive of all the *Opuntias*, and is to be especially recommended for planting in the Southwest. If planted in mass, where it could occasionally be irrigated, I know of no other cactus which would be so striking or effective.

It is to be regretted that persons in charge of public parks and large private or university grounds in that part of the country have not taken advantage of the various *Opuntias* to obtain unique and pleasing landscape effects. An attempt to show what can be done in this line is to be seen at Mesilla Park, New Mexico, where Prof. E. O. Wooton has very effective groups of these plants.

The description of the species is as follows:

OPUNTIA SANTA-RITA (Griffiths and Hare) Rose

Opuntia chlorotica santa-rita Griffiths and Hare, Bull. N. Mex. Coll. Agr. 60: 64, 1906.

PLATE XV

Plant 60 to 140 cm. high, nearly as broad as high, with a short and somewhat definite trunk; joints orbicular or broader than long, blue-green, with the space about the areoles and the margins deep purple, or sometimes, especially when young, pinkish or purplish

throughout; areoles 1.5 cm. apart, bearing chestnut-brown bristles; spines usually wanting, when present single or sometimes two, 2 to 4 cm. long, needle-like, chestnut-brown; ovary purplish, shortly oblong; flowers very handsome, of deep yellow color, 6 to 7 cm. broad.

Collected by J. N. Rose in waste ground in Tucson, Arizona, April 26, 1908 (no. 11922). This species is common on the foothills about Tucson and extends south nearly or quite to the Mexican border.

This plant was described in 1906 by Griffiths and Hare as a subspecies of *Opuntia chlorotica*, but it seems to me to be a distinct species.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XV.—Made from a photograph taken by Dr. D. T. MacDougal at Surritas, Arizona, February, 1907, and here used through the courtesy of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.