



HAMATOCACTUS SETISPINUS

**HAMATOCACTUS SETISPINUS****Twisted-rib Cactus***Native of Texas and northern Mexico*

Family CACTACEAE

CACTUS Family

*Echinocactus setispinus* Engelm. Bost. Jour. Nat. Hist. 5: 246. 1845.*Echinocactus hamatus* Mühlenpf. Allg. Gartenz. 16: 18. 1848.*Echinopsis nodosa* Linke, Wochenschr. Gärtn. Pflanz. 1: 85. 1858.*Hamatocactus setispinus* Britt. & Rose, Cactaceae 3: 104. 1922.

The study of cacti has always been a fascinating one. Although the family is exclusively American, the interest in it has always been more pronounced in Europe. This interest rises and falls as it does in other special groups which catch the popular fancy, like the iris and dahlia. At the present time this interest is very great in Europe, in some places reaching the stage known as a "craze." Dealers are striving to get seeds and cuttings to supply the trade and making tempting offers for rare species to collectors who go into desert regions.

The recent comprehensive monograph on this family, published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, with its full descriptions and numerous illustrations, will greatly facilitate this study. In this work a number of new genera have been described, some of which are of ornamental importance. One of these is there called *Hamatocactus*, so named because of its hooked spines.

The only species, which is here illustrated, has long been known as *Echinocactus setispinus*, but Dr. George Engelmann, the great authority on Cacti, years ago called attention to the many ways in which it differs from all the other species of *Echinocactus*. In the texture of the stem and in its ribs it resembles some of the species of *Echinocereus*, but the flowers and fruits are very different.

The plant grows wild in dry thickets of southern Texas and northern Mexico, where it is quite common and variable. Indeed, some of these forms are so striking that they have been given varietal names. The plant has some twelve synonyms, only a part of which are recorded above. The specimen used for our illustration was sent by R. D. Camp in 1921 from the vicinity of Brownsville.

The twisted-rib cactus is a small globose or short-cylindric plant four to six inches high, usually growing singly; the surface is divided into somewhat spiral ribs, usually thirteen in number. Along the

edge of the ribs are borne clusters of spines about one half inch apart. The spines are twelve to twenty in each cluster, needle-like, except one in the center which is stouter and longer than the others and hooked at the distal end. The flowers are borne at the apex of the plant, either singly or in clusters; they are usually large and lemon-yellow in color with a red eye or center. The fruit is red, small, less than half an inch in diameter, and filled with small black seeds.

J. N. ROSE.