

BARBED-WIRE CACTUS

Acanthocereus tetragonus (L.) Humm.

Synonyms: none

Family: Cactaceae (cactus)

FNAI Ranks: G5/S3

Legal Status: US-none FL-Threatened

Wetland Status: US-FAC*+ FL-FAC



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Field Description: A sprawling, trailing cactus that winds and supports itself on surrounding vegetation in rock barrens and hammocks. The succulent stems are 3 and 4-angled, dark green, and jointed, and may reach 20 feet long or more. The stems bear evenly spaced clusters of up to 7 spines of varying length to over 1 inch long; new spines emerge pinkish/purplish. Night-blooming flowers are large (3 inches or longer) and striking with numerous white petals and golden yellow centers. The edible fruits are bright red fruit, approx. 2 inches long, and roughly pear-shaped, with numerous small, black seeds.

Similar Species: None

Related Rare Species: None in FL.

Habitat: Disturbed, dry, coastal hammocks. At Boca Chica, found on only one site - in the rock barren area just south of Old Boca Chica Road, about « mile beyond

barbed-wire cactus*Acanthocereus tetragonus*

the barricade where the old road moves off the berm onto a filled strip behind or through the rock barren.

Best Survey Season: All year.

Range-wide Distribution: Native to coastal areas of South Florida and Texas. Also found in the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Conservation Status: 2011 Status: Ca. 100 individuals found at Old Boca Chica Road site.

Protection and Management: Control invasives.

References: Wunderlin and Hansen 2011.