



© Br. Alfred Brousseau, Saint Mary's College

Common Name: Barrel Cactus

Scientific Name: *Ferocactus Acanthodes*

Description: The Barrel Cactus can grow to over two meters tall. It has ribs that go from top to bottom with prickly spines all along the ribs. It is light green. In the spring it blooms. The flowers are yellow or reddish.

The Kumeyaay used this plant: They used the insides to drink when they didn't have water. They would smash the top off and then smash the insides to make a liquid to drink. They used the needles to tattoo their chins.

You can read about this plant in *Indians of the Oaks* on pages: 28, 29, and 37.

In the book you can read:

"I looked all about. I could see nothing but the desert and the prickly barrel-cactus plants. Pion walked up to one of the plants, picked up a big stone which was lying near it, and smashed off the top of the 'barrel.' Then he took a stick and pounded the stuff inside until it was soft and mushy."

"'K'yu!' he called. 'Make a cup of your hands and drink.'"

"I did as he said, and I tasted a warmish drink which I did not like. I made a face."

(page 29)

by Robin