

Cochemiea halei

on peninsular Baja California Sur

Cochemiea halei (also known as *Mammillaria halei*) is the only member of the small, segregate genus *Cochemiea* to completely lack hooked spines. It is almost exclusively found on Isla Santa Margarita and Isla Magdalena, both of which are Pacific islands off

Baja California Sur (the state making up the southern half of the Baja peninsula). Ira Wiggins, in his *Flora of Baja California* (1980), mentions that this species is occasionally found on the peninsula itself, but provides no further details. I happened across a single clump on the peninsular mainland in San Carlos, approximately 55 km west of the large agricultural center Ciudad Constitución.

▼ *Cochemiea halei* with *Simmondsia chinensis* and in fruit and flower.



► Top *Stenocereus eruca*,
the Creeping Devil.

Middle *Ferocactus*
townsendianus.

Bottom New growth on
Stenocereus gummosus.

A clump of a few hundred stems, in two discrete groups that may be separate plants, was found in stabilized, sandy soil approximately 20 meters from the Pacific Ocean growing amongst *Simmondsia chinensis* (Jojoba) and *Cylindropuntia cholla*. Despite the proximity to the ocean, the view here is hardly scenic, with the huge San Pedro Electric Generation Plant looming less than two kilometers to the east.

This specimen of *Cochemiea halei* had several withered floral remains, fresh fruits, and only a single open flower on the 8th of June, 2007. This plant appeared quite healthy and actively growing, but no other individuals were found in the immediate vicinity.

Sand dwellers, such as *Abronia* sp (Sand Verbena) and *Proboscidea parviflora* grew here along with succulents *Stenocereus eruca* (the Creeping Devil), *Ferocactus townsendianus*, and the following taxa that are ubiquitous throughout the peninsula: *Pachycereus pringlei*, *Stenocereus gummosus*, *Mammillaria dioica*, *Fouquieria diguetii*, *Bursera microphylla*, and *B. hindsiana*. The foggy Pacific contributed to most plants being covered in lichens, but not *Cochemiea halei*. ♦

