

Growth performance of dryland spineless cactus pastures planted in a semi-arid communal areas of Limpopo Province,

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Barriers in Fodder flows



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Aim

- To assess early vegetative growth of spineless *Opuntia ficus indica* cultivars for increasing forage supply and diversity in communal areas



Materials and methods

Description of study site

Three cultivars:

- Zastron,
- Skinners court and
- Malta

dryland pastures on
Sandy loams





Plant height

PI height	6 mths	12	18	22
Zastron	51.1a	56.8a	59.7b	70.2a
Skidders court	49.4a	65.7a	73.1a	95.3a
Malta	41.1b	52.1b	53.0b	56.3b

Cladode numbers

Cladodes	6 mths	12	18	22
Zastron	5a	13	16b	24
Skinners court	3a	11	19a	28
Malta	3b	15	21a	23

Cladode length

Cladode length	6 mths	12	18	22
Zastron	26.8	26.2	27.0	27.2
Skinners court	30.1	31.9	33.0	32.2
Malta	26.1	26.3	28.0	25.2

Cladode width

Cladode width	6 mths	12	18	22
Zastron	15.2	16.3	19.2	21.1a
Skinners court	14.2	14.3	15.5	15.1b
Malta	12.9	14.5	16.3	16.0b

Assessment

- 100 % establishment
- Rapid early growth
- No deaths in 12 months
- <5% pest infection
- Hail damage



Implications

- Intensification of cattle and small ruminant production
 - High biomass production
 - Improved clean water intake
 - Improved diet quality—soluble sugars (10%)

