

Name _____

Read the selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

Prickly Pear Cactus

Looking at the prickly pear cactus with its flat pads and inch-long thorns, you might think that it is not a useful plant, but you would be mistaken. People all over the world use the beautiful prickly pear cactus for many things.

Luther Burbank, a plant scientist, began studying the prickly pear cactus plants many years ago. He learned that if cactus plants are planted close together, they can grow to form a hedge ten to twenty feet high. This type of wall can keep out many animals.

Like all cactus plants, the prickly pears do not need much water and can live in almost any kind of dirt. They can be planted in places that do not have many plants at all. Thus, they help keep the soil in place.

Juice from the pads of the prickly pear is very useful. If you have burned yourself, you can put the juice on the burn to make it feel better. Some people mix the juice with other materials and use it on buildings to make them last longer.

The fresh pads of a prickly pear cactus without thorns can be fed to pigs and sheep. People can also eat the pads. Prickly pear jelly, bread, and soups are delicious. Even the seeds can be dried and made into flour.

Even though the prickly pear cactus may not look like a treasure, many people think it is a gem.

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Turn the page.

Answer the questions below.

1 What is the second paragraph *mostly* about?

- how to take care of this cactus
- why people plant this cactus
- what a scientist learned about this cactus
- when people should use this cactus

2 Paragraph 4 is mostly about which part of the prickly pear cactus?

- the thorns
- the juice
- the seeds
- the pads

3 Prickly pear cactus is used for all these things *except*

- food.
- walls.
- medicine.
- tires.

4 How are the prickly pear cactus and all other cactus plants alike?

- They need a special type of dirt.
- They do not need much water to grow.
- They were studied by Luther Burbank.
- They grow ten to twenty feet high.

5 Describe two uses of the prickly pear cactus.

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