

# First Evidence for the Presence of Weddellite Crystallites in *Opuntia ficus indica* Parenchyma

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Calcium oxalate crystallites occur very often in the plants tissues and their role is still poorly known. We report here the experimental protocol leading to the isolation of two forms of calcium oxalate crystallites differing in their hydration level in the parenchymal tissues of *Opuntia ficus indica* (Miller). Whereas the whewellite crystallites are habitual in all *Opuntia* species, the weddellite form has never been isolated from these species before, which is probably due to their small size (about 1  $\mu\text{m}$ ). We have identified these forms using X-ray diffraction and scanning electron microscopy.

*Key words:* *Opuntia ficus indica*, Weddellite, Whewellite