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Título: INCIDENCE OF SPIPES IN PROMISING GENOTYPES OF *Nopalea cochenillifera Salm-Dyck*

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Forage cactus (*Nopalea cochenillifera, Salm-Dyck*) is currently one of the feed bases for herds in arid and semi-arid regions, especially during dry periods, as it has high biomass production and high water use efficiency. However, one of the limiting factors for its use is the presence of spines, therefore, breeding programs have dedicated efforts to reducing them in cladodes. Given the above, the present work aims to evaluate the presence of thorns in 11 promising cactus materials of the genus Nopalea, cultivated by the genetic improvement program of the Agronomic Institute of Pernambuco (IPA). The work is the result of a partnership between IPA and UFRPE. The experiment was conducted at IPA at the Arcoverde Experimental Station, located in the transition zone between the Agreste and Sertão of the state, located at latitude 8° 26' 4.6" S, longitude 37° 03' 26.26" WGr and altitude of 686 m, implemented in 2011 and collected in 2023, the statistical design used in the present work was randomized blocks, with 11 treatments and 3 replications, totaling 33 experimental units. The promising materials corresponding to the treatments under evaluation are 01 -IPA-number17-02- (DP-Provisional name); 02-IPA-number17-05 – (DP); 03 -IPA-F21Improved – (DP); 04 - IPA-number17-19 – (DP); 05-IPA-number17-07 – (DP); 06-IPA-number17–14- (DP); 07 - IPA10OOO4-Miúda IPA; 08 - IPA-number17-17 – (DP); 09 - IPA200205-Sertânia; 10 -IPA-F21 Tissue Culture – (DP); 11 - IPA - F 21 x Miúda – (DP). A rating scale from 1 to 4 was established, with 1 referring to the non-occurrence of spines. The results were subjected to analysis of variance, comparing the means of the treatments using the Tukey test, at 5% probability. The treatments differed statistically, with the highest occurrence of thorns for material 11, with an average of 3.67. The other treatments did not differ statistically, with averages between 1 and 2. Therefore, it can be seen that the cactus genotypes under evaluation have a low occurrence of spines.
Key words: forage cactus, semi-arid, biomass productivity

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