

Mammillaria heyderi near the Organ Mountains outside Las Cruces, NM

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Figs. 1–2 *Mammillaria heyderi* in fruit along the Sierra Vista Trail at Peña Blanca.

Recently, I documented *Cylindropuntia spinosior* (Engelmann) F.M. Knuth at Peña Blanca, which is at the southwestern-most corner of the Organ Mountains. But it is not the only interesting cactus at this easy to access locale. The widespread, but often elusive, *Mammillaria heyderi* Muehlenpfordt can also be found there, with at least one specimen right along the Sierra Vista Trail about a 20 minute walk north from the trailhead at Doña Ana County Road B059 (Figs 1 and 2). Even nicer, this plant was still in fruit in mid-March. Farther from CR B059 and off the main hiking trail, but right along one of the old jeep-tracks closer to the mountains, i.e. to the east, I stumbled upon the biggest specimen I have ever seen of this species, circa 15 cm (6 inch) in diameter (Figs. 3 through 5). For scale, the lens cap is 7 cm. This is flattest terrain on which I have seen *M. heyderi*—usually I find it growing on widely separated rocky outcrops in the Organ Mountains. As seems typical for this species, at Peña Blanca, *M. heyderi* very much grows out in the open. What was atypical was not finding other specimens of *M. heyderi* close to either one of these two plants. Often you find small colonies of dozens of plants, i.e. this is usually a philopatric species.



Fig. 2



Figs. 3-5 *Mammillaria heyderi* 15 cm diameter, closer to the mountains than the smaller specimen.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5