Engelmann, Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, vol. 8, pg. 301, 1856

26. O. ARENABIA, E. in B. C. R.: adscendens; articulis obovatis compressis seu teretiusculis tuberculatis; foliis minutis; pulvillis subconfertis pallide setosis; aculeis 1-4 robustioribus albidis fuscatisve, cum inferioribus brevioribus 2-6 albis; floris sulphurei ovario obovato; petalis emarginatis; stigmatibus 5; bacca oblonga spinulosa; umbilico infundibuliformi; seminibus magnis irregularibus.

Sandy bottoms of the Rio Grande near El Paso: fl. May. — Spreading 2-3 feet, $\frac{1}{2}-1$ foot high; roots stout, creeping horizontally; joints $1\frac{1}{2}-3$ inches long, 1-2 inches wide, and $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{3}{4}$ thick, more strongly tuberculated than the allied species; leaves only a line long; pulvilli 3-5 lines apart, very bristly, especially on the old joints; upper spines 9-15 lines long. Flower $2-2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Fruit about an inch long. Seeds $2\frac{1}{2}-3$ lines in diameter. This is the only one of our Cactaceæ on which the Cochenille has been found.