PLANT FACT SHEET

Cynara cardunculus L.

GENUS *Cynara* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Cardoon, Prickly Artichoke

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Stem, Vegetable

The leaf ribs are cooked in stews.
The flower heads are eaten raw or cooked after removing the spines. They are often eaten in a sauce of olive oil.
The dried flower heads are used as rennet for cheese.
The young leaf stems and leaves are blanched then cooked and eaten.
The roots can be eaten. They are boiled.

DESCRIPTION

A perennial herb. It grows 1.5-1.8 m high and 1.2-1.5 m across. It has a fleshy taproot. The leaves are large and silvery green. They are woolly and white underneath. They are divided into narrow primary and secondary lobes. The secondary lobes end in a harsh spine. The flowers are thistle flower heads. They can be 8 cm across. The base of the flower head is prickly and the top is purple. There are several cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

It can tolerate light frost. It suits a Mediterranean climate. It grows in full sun. It can grow in dry arid areas with a winter rainfall of 100-300 mm. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 7-11.

NOTES

There are about 10 Cynara species. Chemical composition (seeds): high values for the following amino acids - Adenine, Aspartic acid, Glutamic acid, Isoleucine and Leucine. Very high values for Phenylalanine and Valine.
The flowers are high in antioxidants.
It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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