PLANT FACT SHEET

Centaurea benedicta (L.) L.

GENUS *Centaurea* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Blessed thistle, Holy Thistle, Sacred Thistle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, flower, Roots, Flavouring

It is used for flavouring including drinks. The aerial parts are cooked as a stew.
The root can be boiled as a potherb.
Caution: It is poisonous in large amounts.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized annual thistle. It is softly hairy. The stems are usually only branched at the base. They are reddish-purple. The leaves are alternate and oblong. They are pale green. The veins underneath and prominent and white. The leaves at the base are often in a ring. They are divided into lobes along the stalk. These lower leaves have stalks. The upper leaves are smaller and partly clasp the stem. There are tips at the spine. The flower heads are yellow and pale green. They are 25-40 mm long. They occur singly. The florets are smaller, tube shaped and surrounded by a ruff of small upper leaves.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It grows on cultivated and waste land. It will grow on most soils. It is resistant to drought and frost.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed.

NOTES

It is used in medicine. There is only one Cnicus species.

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