PLANT FACT SHEET

Cynara scolymus L.

GENUS *Cynara* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Globe artichoke

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Flowers, Vegetable, Stems

The fleshy bracts of the flower and the base of the flower head are boiled and eaten. They can be used in soups. They can be eaten raw, boiled, steamed, baked, fried, stuffed or marinated.
The small side shoots are pickled, preserved in oil, or used in soups and stews.
(To stop the cut artichoke turning brown in air, they can be dipped in lemon juice.)
The tender inner portion of the flower stalk can be eaten raw or cooked.

DESCRIPTION

A thistle like perennial plant. It grows 1-2 m high and spreads to 1 m across. It forms a clump. It has deeply lobed leaves. The leaves are 80 cm long. They are greyish green above. They have a woolly, white surface underneath. They do not have spines. The flower is purple and surrounded by green bracts. It forms a large head. The flower head is about 8-15 cm across. There are several cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

A Mediterranean plant. It can be grown in the highlands in the tropics. It suits drier areas. It prefers deep, rich, alkaline soils in an open sunny position. It is frost resistant but drought tender. It suits plant hardiness zones 6-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown by seed or suckers. It is best to grow the seeds in a nursery and then transplant them. It can also be grown by dividing up a mature clump. Suckers and offshoots produce uniform crops. Seedlings are transplanted when 15 cm high. A spacing of 120-200 cm is suitable.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants from seeds produce flowers after 240 days and plants from suckers flower earlier. The flower buds can be produced over a 2 or 3 year period. The buds are harvested when full size but before the bracts open.

NOTES

The leaves are used in medicine for treatment of bile/liver conditions. There are about 10 Cynara species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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