PLANT FACT SHEET

Cirsium eriophorum (L.) Scop.

GENUS *Cirsium* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Woolly thistle, Woolly-headed thistle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Stem, Root - starch

The young leaves and shoots are eaten as a salad.
The young stalks are peeled and soaked in water to remove the bitterness then eaten. They can be used in pies like rhubarb. The pulpy receptacles are eaten like artichoke.
Root used as famine food after boiling in water.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. It is a medium sized thistle. It takes 2 years to complete its life-cycle. It grows 1.5 m high. The stems are unwinged. They are white and cottony. They are branched above. The leaves are divided into leaflets. There are long rigid spines. The leaves are white and cottony underneath. The flower heads are large. They are 25-50 mm across. They are reddish-purple. They usually occur singly. They are erect. The flower bracts have cobwebby hairs between them. The outer bracts curve backwards and have spines at their tips.

HABITAT

It is a Mediterranean climate plant. It grows in rough grassland and scrub.

NOTES

There are about 150-250 Cirsium species. They grow in temperate regions.

REFERENCES

Blamey, M and Grey-Wilson, C., 2005, Wild flowers of the Mediterranean. A & C Black London. p 451

Facciola, S., 1998, Cornucopia 2: a Source Book of Edible Plants. Kampong Publications, p 36

Famine foods

Hedrick, U.P., 1919, (Ed.), Sturtevant's edible plants of the world. p 205 (As Cnicus eriophorus)

PARMENTIER

Plants for a Future database, The Field, Penpol, Lostwithiel, Cornwall, PL22 0NG, UK. http://www.scs.leeds.ac.uk/pfaf/

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/bff6bfb3-e295-4742-b9e2-b8dbe18b9ee8