PLANT FACT SHEET

Onopordum acanthium L.

GENUS *Onopordum* **FAMILY** Asteraceae

COMMON NAMES Scotch thistle, Cotton thistle, Heraldic thistle

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Stems, Stalks, Leaves, Root, Oil

The receptacle of the flowers and the tender stalks are peeled and boiled and eaten.
An oil from the seeds is eaten.
Young roots are peeled and used in salads. They are cooked.
The basal leaves are peeled and used in stews.

DESCRIPTION

A herb. The young plant is a ring of leaves near the ground. A mature plant is 1.5 m high. The stem is round in cross section. It is hollow and has a mass of fine white hairs. The plant is woolly white in appearance. The leaves have lobes and also have strong spines. The flowering stems are leafy. The leaf blades continue down the stem. The flowers are reddish to purple. They are surrounded by many spiny bracts. These end in long orange spines.

HABITAT

It grows in temperate places. It grows in drier places. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 1,000 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 6-10. Tasmania Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. They can easily become self sown and a problem.

NOTES

There are about 40 Onopordum species. They are thistle of the Mediterranean region.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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