

Please Take One!



SUPPLEMENT OF THE MONTH: Milk Thistle

What is milk thistle and where is it found?

Milk thistle is a plant native to Mediterranean countries. It is closely related to the daisy and ragweed. Some people also call it Mary thistle and holy thistle. Milk thistle contains a flavonoid, called silymarin, which is extracted from the seeds of the plant. Silymarin appears to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that protect the liver from toxins.

What are the benefits?

Milk thistle is often used to treat liver problems including, cirrhosis, jaundice, and hepatitis. It has been shown to be effective in treating seasonal allergies and heartburn. Others take milk thistle to lower cholesterol, to improve diabetic blood sugar levels, and to reduce the rate of cancer cell growth. It is also used for loss of appetite, gallbladder issues, depression, and hangovers.

Are there interactions with food or medications?

Do not take milk thistle if you are allergic to ragweed or plants in the Asteraceae/Compositae plant family, like daisies and chrysanthemums. Consult a doctor before taking milk thistle if you are currently taking drugs broken down by the liver, antipsychotics, phenytoin, halothane, birth control pills, allergy drugs, drugs for high cholesterol, blood thinners, antianxiety drugs and some cancer drugs.

Are there side effects?

Sometimes, milk thistle can cause diarrhea, nausea, indigestion, intestinal gas, bloating, fullness or pain, and loss of appetite.