



Blessed Thistle

Promotes a healthy gastrointestinal system, stimulates good digestion, healthy liver, and gallbladder function and promotes general good health.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Centaurea benedicta* (also known as *Cnicus benedictus*)

Family: *Compositae* (daisy)

Other common names: St. Benedict Thistle, Holy Thistle, Spotted Thistle, Cardo Santo, Kardobenediktenkraut, Chardon Benit, Cnicus benedictus

History: Blessed Thistle is a native of the Mediterranean region and was first recorded as a medicinal herb in the first century A.D. It is an annual plant that reaches about two feet in height and bears leathery, hairy leaves and yellow flowers in a dense flowerhead. The herb was originally cultivated in monastery gardens and was once regarded with almost supernatural qualities as a "cure-all." In the sixteenth century, Blessed Thistle was widely recommended for plague, and in seventeenth-century England, the esteemed herbalist, Nicholas Culpeper, listed Blessed Thistle as a treatment for headaches, female complaints and for fevers. In North America, the Quinault Indians used the whole plant to create a birth control medicine, and the Zunis used it to treat venereal disease and to lower fever. Today, it is still highly regarded as a valuable supplement to maintain good health, and is used in Europe in the manufacture of "bitters" to be taken before meals to stimulate the appetite and help the digestive tract. Some of the constituents in Blessed

Thistle include tannins, beta-carotene, essential fatty acids, beta-sitosterol, luteolin, oleanolic acid, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Beneficial Uses: Blessed Thistle is a very bitter herb that works mainly as a tonic for the gastrointestinal and digestive system. Its "bitter" principle stimulates gastric secretions in the stomach and alleviates dyspepsia, indigestion, flatulence and colic. It also acts as an appetite stimulant and may be helpful in treating anorexia, particularly when it is associated with depression.

Used as a tonic for overall body health, Blessed Thistle is said to strengthen the heart and lungs and promote general healing. Blessed Thistle stimulates the production of bile by the liver and is often used by herbal healers to treat gallbladder and liver

disorders, such as jaundice and hepatitis. It is sometimes called a liver rejuvenator.

Blessed Thistle improves overall circulation and is considered an effective blood cleanser and purifier. Furthermore, it is thought to act as a brain food by increasing circulation to the brain. When oxygen is carried to the brain, it is believed that memory and brain function will be improved.

For the treatment of female disorders, Blessed Thistle is one of the oldest folk remedies, and even today, it is considered a fine natural hormone balancer that is often included in commercial herbal preparations designed specifically for women. One of its oldest applications is for the treatment of amenorrhea, which is the absence of the menstrual cycle after the onset of menstruation. The herb is used to alleviate menstrual headaches and cramps, PMS (premenstrual syndrome), as well as the headaches of women experiencing menopausal discomforts. Blessed Thistle is also used to stimulate lactation and increase milk flow in nursing mothers.

Blessed Thistle has been used as a diuretic and a "diaphoretic" which promotes perspiration, not only helping to reduce fevers, but also cleansing the system of toxins through the skin. It is also thought to be a fine blood cleanser.

Blessed Thistle is believed to have considerable antiseptic and antibacterial effects when used against a wide variety of organisms, including yeast infections (*Candida albicans*). The herb is also useful in the treatment of diarrhea.

Recent lab experiments have shown cytotoxicity activity against malignant cells when using extract of Blessed Thistle, as well as malignant tumor activity in animal tests.

Contraindications: Blessed Thistle has been used traditionally to stimulate menstruation and should be avoided during pregnancy. Excess use of Blessed Thistle (many times the recommended dosage) may cause vomiting, but Blessed Thistle is generally considered to be safe when used by mouth in recommended doses for short periods of time. Direct contact with Blessed Thistle can cause skin and eye irritation and should be handled carefully to avoid skin problems. If you are allergic to other members of the *Compositae* (daisy, ragwort, chamomile) family of plants, you may be allergic to Blessed Thistle.