

Herbs For Healing Newsletter

Herb of the month: *the liver tonic* **Milk Thistle**

The one and only time I ever found milkthistle growing in the wild was on a walk along the coast from Kimmeridge in the Purbeck Hills.

There were not just one or two but dozens of them.

Their prickles on the edge of the leaves are quite long and very sharp. The leaves themselves are dark green with white veins.

Milkthistle has been used as food and as medicine

Almost all parts of the plant can be eaten. The young shoots when lightly cooked taste like a delicate cabbage, the roots are similar to Salsify. Leaves and stem are edible too, also the lower part of the flower heads.



Milk Thistle growing on the Purbeck Hills

Much research has been done on milk thistle in Germany and the US



It is one the most potent plants for protecting and restoring the liver. It helps to regenerate damaged liver tissue in case of hepatitis and cirrhosis.

According S H Buhner human trials have followed about 2000 patients for up to 4years.

They showed that liver function improved significantly in cases of chronic alcoholic liver disease, toxic liver damage and type II hyperlipidemia when milkthistle was taken.

In these tests, milkthistle improved poor appetite and relieved nausea and itching, it decreased cholesterol levels and in general lead to better results in liver function tests.

Milkthistle was also shown to alleviate symptoms of bloating, abdominal pressure, constipation and aids bile flow.

It is most valuable in treating the side-effects of pharmaceutical drugs, anaesthetic medication and any kind of poisoning, and is also useful in the treatment of the skin condition psoriasis.

..continues overleaf

The liver plays a central role in our health

The liver plays a central role in our health. Often it is under-appreciated for the huge range of body functions it performs.

When the liver works well, the whole of the digestive process work better with far-reaching effects on physical and mental wellbeing. This positively affects the memory and disposition.

The famous English herbalist, Gerard, stated:

My opinion is that this is the best remedy that grows against all melancholy diseases.



The seeds are used for medicinal purposes.

The seeds are very tough and contain starch, protein and oil. Fatty acid content is 20-25%. The main ones are linoleic acid and oleic acid. Linoleic acid is an essential fatty acid needed for the synthesis of prostaglandins.

High amounts of linoleic acid can reduce chronic inflammation in the body by increasing the synthesis of prostaglandins.

Milkthistle found to have anti-allergic & anti-inflammatory properties

Two recent clinical trials have found that milkthistle has anti-allergic and anti-inflammatory properties.

In 2009 another double blind trial was published in Iraq which showed that treatment with milkthistle significantly reduced the participants' blood levels of inflammatory chemicals.

220 patients with painful knee osteoarthritis were tested and found that their condition improved with milkthistle (Higher Nature Newsletter July/August 2012).



In association with:

**Transition Town
Sturminster Newton**

Towards Self-Sufficiency and Resilience

stur.transitiontown1@googlemail.com

www.transitiontownsturminsternewton.wordpress.com



Luzia Barclay DBTh MIRCH
Registered Medical Herbalist

Salisbury Herbal Practice
54 Hamilton Road
Salisbury SP1 3TQ

Telephone: 01722 330663
Email: info@luzia.co.uk
Site: www.herbsforhealing.org.uk