



MILK THISTLE (*Silybum marianum*)

FACT SHEET 45



INTRODUCTION

Milk thistle, which is known by several other names including St Mary's thistle and Holy thistle, is a tall prickly plant which is native to the Mediterranean region but which now grows worldwide. Growing up to a maximum height of 10 feet, it has wide leaves which have white veins or blotches. The flowers are reddish-purple in colour and produce hard skinned fruits which contain seeds that look very similar to sunflower seeds. The seeds contain the medicinally active part of the plant and are frequently used to help both liver and gall bladder problems. In the past however, as its name might suggest, the plant was also used to promote the production of milk in breastfeeding mothers.

THE CONSTITUENTS OF MILK THISTLE

Sometimes Milk Thistle is referred to as Silymarin. This is actually a mixture of the herb's active components, including Silybinin which is sometimes also called Silibinin or Silybin. The seeds contain other substances including flavones, a compound called silydianin, an essential oil, various bitter substances and mucilage.

THE BENEFITS OF MILK THISTLE

Milk thistle acts primarily on the liver and the gall bladder. It can be used to help with hepatitis (inflammation of the liver), cirrhosis (fibrosis) of the liver and inflammation of the gallbladder (cholecystitis). It is also thought to protect the liver from the damaging effect of poisons and toxins as well as helping to regenerate damaged cells. Other research has shown that it may have some action in lowering cholesterol levels. It can help where there is a low tolerance of dietary fats and it may be of benefit in reducing the growth of cancer cells in certain types of cancers.

HOW DENES CAN HELP

Denes have produced a supplement called **Milk Thistle Plus** based on a combination of Milk Thistle and Dandelion Root. Each tablet contains:

Milk Thistle Seed extract	25mg (Silymarin content 20mg)
Dandelion Root powder	25mg

Milk Thistle Plus is designed to support the liver and is specifically indicated in helping with liver disease (including jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis and cholecystitis) and in helping recovery from cases where there has been poisoning or damage from either drugs or toxins.

The suggested dose is:

Cats, toy & small dogs	1 tablet daily
Medium dogs	1 twice daily
Large dogs	2 twice daily
Very large dogs	3 twice daily

Milk Thistle Plus tablets are available in packs of 100 tablets

Other useful Denes products in treating liver problems:

Denes Homeopathic **Phosphorus 30c**

Denes Homeopathic **Nux vomica 30c**

Other useful fact sheets to read:

- Liver disease

If you have any queries concerning your pet's health or feeding problems, you can contact us for free pet care advice by:

- Visiting our website www.denes.com
- Emailing us at info@denes.com
- Calling us on **01273 325364** Mon-Fri, 9am – 12Noon
- Writing to us at:
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