

# Artichoke Thistle

## *Cynara cardunculus*

Artichoke Thistle, also known as Cardoon, is a relative of the artichoke that's grown for its edible stalks and leaves. Some gardeners also treat cardoon as an ornamental. The broad, silvery leaves can grow up to five feet tall and form a great backdrop for other plants. Cardoon also makes an interesting focal point in container gardens. Cardoon should be planted in full sun in a rich, well-drained soil. In Florida, cardoon should be planted in fall or winter and will need to be protected from freezes. The above ground portion of the plant dies to the ground each year, but will regenerate itself from its large, deep taproot. The attractive foliage starts out silver, becoming gray-green as they grow. The leaves can reach lengths of up to 3'. As the leaves age, they can begin to lose their upright form. To keep a neat appearance, trim off the older leaves. They may go dormant in hot summers and will die back in winter. Mulch heavily to aid in winter survivability. Strong winds can damage this plant. Attracts bees, butterflies and pollinators. Can be invasive if not controlled.

**Type:** perennial; half-hardy annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7 through 10

**Uses:** edible; specimen; mass planting;  
Container; patio

**Origin:** native to mediterranean

**Height:** 3 to 6 feet      **Spread:** 2 to 3 feet

**Plant spacing:** 3 to 6 feet

**Light requirement:** full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; organic;  
acid; alkaline

**Drought tolerance:** good

**Salt tolerances:** moderate

**Invasive potential:** invasive if not controlled

**Pest resistance:** subject to root rot; gray mold;  
powdery mildew; snails; slugs;  
aphids

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Photo: Terumi Watson, University of Tennessee