

The Thistle - National Emblem of Scotland



- The thistle was recorded as the "**National Flower**" dating back to the 13th century. No one knows for sure why the thistle has such a place of importance, but legend states that an invading Nordic army was attempting to ambush sleeping members of the Scottish army, only to walk barefoot on the thorny plant. This caused an outcry of pain, thus alerting Scots about the presence of the Norse invaders. As a result, the Scottish Army defeated the invaders and received thistle as their national symbol.
- The thistle has been an essential symbol of the Scottish heraldry for over 500 years. It appeared on silver coins issued in 1470 under King James III (1466 - 1488). In the early 16th century, The Order of the Thistle was the highest honor in the Scottish chivalry, founded by King James V with The Order's motto being "No One Provokes Me With Impunity." It also represents one of the highest honors that the country bestows on individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the life of Scotland and the UK. And it has become an integral part of Scotland's Coat of Arms.
- In the early 16th century, the marriage of King James IV of Scotland to Princess Margaret Tudor of England seemed to be the inspiration behind the poem entitled "The Thrissil and The Rois" (*The Thistle and The Rose*) written by the Scottish poet William Dunbar. The thistle represented King James, and roses represented Princess Margaret.
- **The Scottish Thistle is everywhere!** Thistles aren't only found in gardens, parks, and the countryside. The image of the thistle represents Scotland's heritage or culture. The popular symbol is found throughout Scotland, including on uniforms of international rugby teams and football clubs; on local businesses and large organizations and corporations, and even on uniforms of police officers.