CLAIMS

1. Extract of the leaves of *Cynara* species varieties, said extract having a caffeoylquinic acid content of 30 to 45%, a flavonoid content of 8 to 16% and a cynaropicrin content of 13 ± 2%~~10 to 18%~~.

2. Extracts according to claim 1, wherein the caffeoylquinic acid content is 35 ± 2%, and the flavonoid content is 12 ± 2%~~ and the cynaropicrin content is 13 ± 2%~~.

3. Extracts according to claim 1 or 2 obtainable from young leaves of selected *Cynara scolymus* or *Cynara carduncolus* cultivars.

4. Extracts according to claim 3 obtainable from *Cynara scolymus* cultivars.

5. Extracts according to claim 4, wherein the cultivar is the spiny purple variety.

6. Extracts according to claims 1-5 for use in the pharmacological prevention and/or treatment of hyperglycaemia, hypercholesterolaemia, hypertension and hepatic steatosis.

7. Extracts for use according to claim 6, wherein prevention and/or treatment is/are achieved by means of changing the LDL/HDL ratio by increasing HDL cholesterol.

8. Pharmaceutical compositions comprising an extract according to claims 1-5 as active ingredient, in admixture with at least one excipient or carrier.

9. Compositions according to claim 8, wherein the carrier is an oil comprising omega-3 unsaturated fatty acids.

10. Use of extracts according to claims 1-5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the pharmacological prevention and/or treatment of hyperglycaemia, hypercholesterolaemia, hypertension and hepatic steatosis.

11. Use of extracts according to claim 10, wherein prevention and/or treatment is/are achieved by means of changing the LDL/HDL ratio by increasing HDL cholesterol.