Oatstraw (Avena sativa) - A Supreme Nourisher

The top two-thirds of this herb is collected before the oat matures, so it is more than just the 'straw'. It has been used for some time as a nerve relaxant, general tonic, and beauty enhancer. Try some, and see for yourself. It is our most popular herb.

**Plant constituents:** Saponins, alkaloids, sterols, fibre, flavonoids, silicic acid, starch, proteins (including gluten), vitamins (especially B-vitamins) and minerals (especially calcium), carotenoids, amino acids including tryptophan and methionine.

**Actions:** Nervine and general tonic, nutritive, demulcent, diuretic, diaphoretic, tonic for sexual vitality, cooling. After regular ingestion of oatstraw decoctions, people generally notice their skin getting softer and/or more hydrated. It moisturizes from the inside out.

**Indications:** This is a good herb to take as a general tonic. It nourishes many organ systems, helps maintain restful sleep patterns, improves clear thinking, and is safe for use long-term. It is safe in pregnancy and for children. In addition to its tonic properties, it is indicated in the following cases:

- **Nervous system**
  - helpful for stress or distress
  - helps in cases of drug withdrawal (including nicotine and caffeine)
  - good for recovery / convalescence after chronic illness
  - helpful in hyperactive states

- **Cardiovascular system**
  - helps to lower cholesterol
  - restores elasticity to veins, in cases of varicosities and hemorrhoids
  - balances blood sugar

- **Reproductive system**
  - eases vaginal dryness and hot flashes in menopausal women
  - nourishes adrenal glands (hormonal system)
  - nourishes thyroid, ovaries, uterus

- **Musculo-skeletal system**
  - builds strong, dense, pliable bones, firm teeth and nails

- **Digestive system**
  - an important herb for digestive distress including ulcers, dyspepsia
  - balances blood sugar
  - safe for children suffering from colic

**Contra-indications:** This herb is safe to use every day. Do not use if you have sensitivities to gluten.

**Storage:** Store in a cool, dark place in a sealed container. Oatstraw will be good for about a year. It can be decocted the way it is, or you can grind it in a clean coffee grinder just before decocting it to release more of the goodness.

**Preparation:** Decoction is best! Bring one litre of spring water to a boil, add half a cup of oatstraw and simmer on low, covered, for 20 minutes. Strain and drink hot or cold. Two to three cups per day are nice. It will keep in the fridge for 2 days, or you can make a large batch and freeze daily portions. For extra flavour you may wish to add half a lemon or lime, some grated ginger, and/or a pinch of licorice root to the decoction. Enjoy!!