

Oatstraw and Oat Tops Profile

Also known as

Avena sativa, Oats, Common Oats, and sometimes referred to as "avena."

Introduction

Oat straw is, as its name suggests, the above-ground parts of the oat plant left after harvesting the grain. Oats are one of the plants that humans have eaten since prehistoric times. The German E Commission states that oats, both straw and tops, are said to be good for chronic anxiety and stress. In Europe, oat straw is a long-trusted additive to soaps and skin conditioners. Oats are a staple of breakfast cereals, as well as being known to help the body in the management of healthy skin, hair, and nails. Recently, there has been some articles written claiming oatstraw may help with erectile dysfunction, and as such is a popular ingredient in alternatives to Viagra.

Constituents

Carbohydrates, silicic acid.

Parts Used

The threshed and dried stem and leaf, and the dried or fresh milky tops.

Typical Preparations

Baths, tinctures, teas, and skin care products.

Summary

Modern European herbal medicine, paid for by insurance, uses oat straw as a nervous system restorative and to strengthen a weakened constitution, as well as to treat genital herpes and shingles. There is no doubt that the silicic acid in the herb is soothing on skin. What about the use of oat straw as a sexual stimulant? A single scientific study a number of years ago found that oat straw stimulates the release of luteinizing hormone, however there is no scientific evidence that oat straw has an effect on the human body's use of testosterone. On the other hand, there is no conclusive scientific evidence that it doesn't.

Precautions

None, unless you are allergic to oats. Gluten sensitivity will not be activated by use of oat straw on the skin.

Botanical: Avena sativa (LINN.)

Family: N.O. Graminaceae

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---**Synonyms**---Groats. Oatmeal.

---**Part Used**---Seeds.

---**Habitat**---It is unknown when Oats were first introduced into Britain.

---**Description**---There are about twenty-five varieties cultivated. The nutritive quality of Oats is less in a given weight than that of any other cereal grain. In the best Oats it does not exceed 75 per cent. *Avena sativa*, the Common Oat, has a smooth stem, growing up to 4 feet high, with linear lanceolate, veined rough leaves; loose striate sheaves; stipules lacerate; panicle equal, loose; spikelets pedunculate, pendulous, twoflowered, both perfect, lower one mostly awned; paleae cartilaginous, embracing the caryopsis; root fibrous, annual. The Naked or Pilcorn Oat differs slightly from the other: calyces three-flowered, receptacle exceeding the calyx; petals awned at the back; the third floscule awnless; and the chief difference lies in the grains, which when ripe quit the husk and fall naked. The grains as found in commerce are enclosed in their pales and these grains divested of their paleae are used for medicinal and dietary purposes; the grains when separated from their integuments are termed groats, and these when crushed are called Embden groats. Oatmeal is ground grain.

---**Constituents**---Starch, gluten, albumen and other protein compounds, sugar, gum oil, and salts.

---**Medicinal Action and Uses**---Nervine, stimulant, antispasmodic. Oats are made into gruel. This is prepared by boiling 1 OZ. of oatmeal or groats in 3 pints of water till reduced to 1 quart, then straining it, sugar, lemons, wine, or raisins being added as flavouring. Gruel thus is a mild nutritious aliment, of easy digestion in inflammatory cases and fevers; it is very useful after parturition, and is sometimes employed in poisoning from acid substances. It is found useful also as a demulcent enema and boiled into a thick paste makes a good emollient poultice. Oatmeal is insoluble in alcohol, ether, and the oils, but the two first move an oleoresinous matter from it. It is to be avoided in dyspepsia accompanied with acidity of the stomach. The pericarp of Oats contains an amorphous alkaloid which acts as astimulant of the motor ganglia, increasing the excitability of the muscles, and in horses causes excitement. A tincture is made by permeating 4 OZ. of ground oatmeal to 1 pint diluted alcohol, keeping the first 5 1/2 OZ. (fluid), and evaporating the remainder down to 1/2 fluid ounce, and adding this to the first 5 1/2 fluid ounces. The extract and tincture are useful as a nerve and uterine tonic.

---**Dosage**---Fluid extract, 10 to 30 drops in hot water. (The last dose at night should be taken in cold water instead of hot, or it may induce sleeplessness. - EDITOR.)