

OATS

PLANT NAME:

Oats (*Avena sativa*)

SIZE:

HEIGHT: 4-5 feet

WIDTH/SPREAD: Grows in clumps

SPACING: 8 inches

LIFE CYCLE:

Annual

MATURITY:

45-60 days

HARDINESS ZONES:

Zones 2-12

PREFERRED GROWING CONDITIONS:

SUN: Full Sun

SOIL: Prefers soil high in organic matter

WATER: No special requirements

CONTAINER: Will do nicely in a container. Use two 15 inch round clay pots. After harvest empty container into compost.

PROPAGATION METHODS:

Sow seeds directly outdoors in mid-to late spring.

GERMINATION TEMPERATURE & PERIOD:

No special treatment required.

BLOOMS:

The grass has a light green grain spikelet that turn golden upon full maturity. Flowering will occur approximately one month after planting, depending on weather.

CARE:

No special care required.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

PESTS: No significant pests

DISEASE: No significant disease

COMPANION PLANTING

Plant as a cover crop and turn into soil as a green manure.

HARVEST:

To harvest the oatseed, pick in the milky oat stage (when the green grains get plump and spurt out a milky juice when squeezed). There is about a one week window. Strip the grains from the spikelet by pulling them through your fingertips. Have a bucket or bag ready to catch the oat grains as you move through the patch. If you are harvesting oatstraw, cut and dry the aerial parts (leaves, stems) when the plant is in the milky oat stage. If you want the oats for cooking, let the grains come to full maturity and then harvest them.

DRYING:

Dry on open screens in warm temperatures.

HERBAL PREPARATIONS:

Infusion, tincture

MEDICINAL BENEFITS:

Oats are a whole-body tonic for all ages. It is valuable for the nervous system, skin and bone health. Also quite good for male and female reproductive health.

