

Astragalus Root

By Kami McBride

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Astragalus is the perfect herb to get to know this season. It has a very pleasant taste and you can make tea with it or add it to your soups and grain dishes. Astragalus builds the immune system in preparation for winter. Fall is the best time to start drinking astragalus tea and adding astragalus root to your foods.

In preparation for cold and flu season, not only does astragalus inhibit viral growth, it enhances the immune system on many different levels. Astragalus is antiviral and strengthens the bodies' resistance to colds and flu. It increases the activity of natural killer cells and an overall ability of the body to scavenge pathogenic bacteria. This amazing root also helps to strengthen the lungs and is a great tea to drink during the fall for people who tend to have lung problems in the winter.

As the weather becomes colder, it is important to incorporate herbal digestive aids into the diet. As the sun goes down earlier, so does your digestive fire. Digestive capacity wanes as the nights get longer. Try to eat your dinner earlier in the evening once it is dark outside. Drinking astragalus tea helps with digestion, it increases digestive function and enhances nutrient assimilation.

This wonderful medicine increases resilience and stamina and invigorates the vital force. Astragalus is known to restore energy levels in healthy people and helps with rejuvenation after stressful life situations.

This golden root with a mildly sweet taste lends itself well to combining with many foods. We add astragalus to just about any grain and soup that is prepared during the fall and winter. Astragalus root comes cut in long thin wedges that look like a tongue depressor. Just throw 3 or 4 of these sticks into any soup that you make. Add them at the beginning of making the soup; leave the sticks in the pot of soup until the soup is finished. Don't serve them to anyone, let them just continue to steep in the soup broth until the soup is eaten.

Astragalus Rice

3 cups water

1 cup rice

3 sticks astragalus

Put all ingredients into a pot. Turn the stove on high and bring to a boil. Once you reach a boil, turn the stove down to the lowest setting, put the lid on the pot and cook until rice is ready. Take the astragalus sticks out before serving.

Astragalus Quinoa

1 cup water

1 cup quinoa

2 astragalus sticks

1 cup chopped seasonal vegetables

Put water, quinoa and astragalus into a pot and turn the stove on high. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat down to the lowest setting. Put the lid on the pot and let cook ten minutes. Add chopped vegetables and continue to cook on lowest setting until ready.

Astragalus Tea

4 cups water

4 sticks quinoa

Put water and astragalus into a quart jar and let sit at room temperature overnight. In the morning take the sticks out and enjoy the tea. This tea lasts for about 2 days.

Purchase bulk astragalus root:

<http://www.mountainroseherbs.com/bulkherb/bulkherb.html>

Astragalus capsules and tinctures:

<http://www.livingawareness.com/AffHerbProductsList.aspx?hAffCategory=3>

Kami McBride has helped thousands of people learn to use herbs in their daily lives in ways that are healthy, safe and fun and she teaches classes in herbal medicine and women's health. An intuitive and inspiring teacher, she works to revive the cultural art of home herbal care and teaches herbology as a relationship with the Earth and a way of life. Kami is the author of **105 Ways to Celebrate Menstruation**. For a schedule of classes or herbal consultations Kami can be reached at (707) 446-1290 or sign up for her free herbal e-newsletter at: www.livingawareness.com