

BHRINGARAJA

Common name Eclipta (E), Bhangra (H), Maka (Marathi)

Sanskrit Bhringaraja, Kesharaja

Latin *Eclipta alba* – *Folium* (Compositae)

Bhringaraja oil is a famous hair tonic for maintaining dark hair and reversing baldness. It is often translated as 'King of the Hair', but literally means 'bee ruler'. It is decocted in coconut oil and as this is a 'cooling' oil it is used externally for 'hot' and inflammatory head problems such as headaches, sinusitis and ear infections. The herb also benefits heat problems.

ENERGETICS

Rasa (taste) Bitter, pungent, sweet

Virya (action) Cooling

Vipaka (post-digestive effect) Pungent

Guna (quality) Dry, light

Dosha effect Balances all 3 *doshas*; VPK=, mainly PV-, *Pitta rasayana*

Dhatu (tissue) Plasma, blood, bone, nerve, reproductive

Srota (channel) Circulatory, nervous, digestive, respiratory, urinary, reproductive

CONSTITUENTS

Triterpene glycosides and **Saponins** - Oleanane glycosides, eclalbasaponins, B-amyrin

Flavonoids – luteolin, apigenin, wedelolactone

Wedelic acid and **ecliptal**¹

BIO-MEDICAL ACTION

Alterative, anti-inflammatory, haemostatic, antipyretic, vulnerary, tonic, cholagogue, hepatoprotective

INDICATIONS

Head Premature greying of hair, alopecia and early baldness are often classified as a *pitta* imbalance caused by *pitta* literally 'burning' the hair follicle. Eclipta clears *pitta* and especially from the head. It also benefits loose teeth, hearing problems, dizziness, vertigo (*vata* problems in the head). It is restorative to *asthi dhatu* (bone) tissue imbalances. It tonifies *vata* and therefore by strengthening, it reduces excess *vata*. Bhringaraja prepared oil also dissolves obstructions in the sinuses, nose, ears and head; use as nose and ear drops.²

Liver Cirrhosis, hepatitis; it clears *ranjaka pitta* from its site and protects the liver. It increases bile flow and helps with the appetite. The blood is treated via its beneficial effect on liver function. It actually helps to build blood, strengthen *rakta dhatu* and reduce anemia. Combined with a capillary strengthening action this can prevent high blood pressure caused by *pitta* and *vata*.³ It also benefits the eyes and treats conjunctivitis, styes and redness.

Nerves Insomnia and mental agitation from high *pitta* and *vata*. It calms stress and reduces tension by tonifying *majja dhatu*. Bhringaraja increases blood and nourishes the brain.⁴

Skin Bhringaraja treats skin conditions via the nervous system and the liver helping to allay itching and inflammation; urticaria, eczema and ringworm caused by aggravations of the *rasa* and *rakta dhatu* are treated. It also helps to re-colour the skin after depigmentation.⁵

¹ Williamson

² Bhavaprakasha

³ Tillotson

⁴ Frawley and Lad

⁵ Bhavaprakasha

Lungs Its pungency can help alleviate mucus and treat asthma and bronchitis.

Reproduction Its *rasayana* properties rejuvenate deficiencies in *shukra dhatu*, helping to build sperm quality and quantity. The seeds especially are used for this.

Gynaecology It helps to prevent excessive uterine bleeding by clearing *pitta* from the *arthavasrotas* and uterus.

AYURVEDIC ACTION

Rasayana Rejuvenative

Medhya Promotes the intellect

Keshya Benefits hair

Dantya Benefits the teeth

Tvachya Benefits itching

Kushtaghna Destroys skin diseases

Rakta shodhana Purifies the blood

Rakta stambhana Stops bleeding

Ama nashaka Destroys *ama*

Vishaghna Destroys poisons in the body

Chakshushya Benefits the eyes

Krimighna Destroys worms

Yakritottejaka Benefits the liver

Pandughna Reduces anaemia

COMBINATIONS

+ Amalaki, Sariva, Triphala for hair problems from high *pitta*.

+ Manjishta, Kutki, Neem, Pippali for hepatitis and liver conditions.

+ Jatamansi, Brahmi and Shankhapushpi for mental disorders from high *vata* and *pitta*.

+ Black Pepper for stimulating *rasa* and *rakta-dhatu-agni* and treating anemia

+ Turmeric, Neem, Licorice for dermatological conditions due to high *kapha* and *vata*.

+ Manjishta, Ashoka, Lotus node for bleeding conditions from high *pitta*.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Any signs of cold in the digestive system.

SAFETY

No drug herb interactions are known

DOSAGE

250mg–5g/day or 5–15ml/day of a 1:5 @ 25% tincture.

NOTES

* Although there are 3 types described in Ayurveda (white, yellow and blue flowered) the white is most commonly used. Bhringaraja is an annual liking damp or wasteland areas and grows all over India.

- A classic rejuvenative for preventing ageing and slowing signs of old age.
- Use externally and internally for alopecia and skin inflammations.
- It has different energetic classifications. In early texts its *virya* appears to be pungent, but in more modern texts it appears to be cooling. Its effect on protecting the liver, healing the skin, reducing bleeding and calming the mind certainly reflect a cooling emphasis.