



Health benefits of *Eclipta alba*

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Eclipta alba is a tropical herb that is used for centuries in ancient Indian practice - Ayurveda. *Eclipta* is highly appreciated for a variety of useful properties: it is used in any liver disorders, as well as at high pressure. But most of all *Eclipta alba* or as it is called by Indians - Bhringraj, known for its ability to stimulate hair growth and improve their structure. Bhringraj is a part of various remedies against the hair loss, and the main component of known Indian hair oil - Mahabhringraj. Historically, it is most commonly connected with Ayurvedic medicine, the traditional Indian form of treatment, but its undeniable benefits have popularized it around the globe. There are four main varieties of *eclipta* based on the colour of their flowers, but the most common is white *Eclipta alba*. The extracts from the leaves and flowers of these impressively powerful plants can be applied in numerous ways, both topically and internally, to soothe many ailments. However, the plant can also be eaten raw to get a direct dose of the nutritional benefits, but many people prefer a more concentrated and less “leafy” mode of consumption. It can be consumed as a juice, hair tonics, skin salves, and a variety of other forms of *Eclipta alba*, depending on health concern. Let's take a more in-depth look at the many impressive health benefits of *Eclipta alba*.



Maintains liver health : Although jaundice often sounds like a disease from the long-distant past, many people in the world still suffer from this condition that severely affects the liver and its functionality, resulting in a discoloration of the skin. Ayurvedic practitioners have long recognized the liver protective abilities of *Eclipta alba* and have used it to treat liver sicknesses such as jaundice and hepatitis and as part of a detoxification regime.

Antimicrobial effects : One of the most common historical uses of *Eclipta alba* is its use in the treatment of infections. Recent research has indicated that this historical use has some scientific basis.

Pain relieving property : Ayurveda uses *Eclipta alba*

for toothache by rubbing fresh leaves directly onto the affected gums. Several studies have been done to analyze the potential analgesic effects of the plant based on its traditional use in pain relief. A variety of researches demonstrated that *Eclipta alba* had pain relieving effects equivalent to codeine and aspirin. Other studies have demonstrated that *Eclipta alba* has pain killing abilities based on its ethanolic extract and alkaloids. Based on this evidence, *Eclipta alba* may be used as an alternative treatment to conventional pain killers.

Soothe the stomach : According to Ayurvedic medicine, *Eclipta alba* can be taken orally to treat an upset stomach.

When consumed orally, *Eclipta alba* has been found to calm any disturbances in the stomach, namely indigestion or constipation. It can restore normal functionality to these areas of the body due to the rich variety of chemicals and organic compounds found in the plant's extract.

Respiratory complaints : For people suffering from chronic respiratory infections and coughs, a bit of *Eclipta alba* can go a long way. *Eclipta alba* has expectorant properties which makes it useful for treating coughs and congestion associated with the common cold, influenza and chest infections.

Urinary infections : *Eclipta alba* also has certain antibacterial and antiseptic properties that make it highly effective at preventing and treating infections. It has been used in Ayurveda to ease discomfort and restore bladder function. Research has found that it also has diuretic abilities meaning that it can help promote urination. When taken for a urinary tract infection, *Eclipta alba* can quickly reduce discomfort and neutralize the bacteria to restore normal function to bladder.

Bowel inflammation : If anyone is suffering from the uncomfortable and embarrassing condition of hemorrhoids, finding relief can often be difficult. *Eclipta alba* has shown promising results in reducing the inflammation in that sensitive area and providing soothing, analgesic relief.

Hair health : *Eclipta alba* is good for hair; it maintains the strength and health of hair and perhaps more impressively it can also boost hair growth. It can be mixed in with shampoos to moisturize the scalp, preventing dry skin and consequent dandruff. Furthermore, it can strengthen follicles and follicle beds, preventing hair loss and slowing down conditions like male pattern baldness, while also providing a rich luster to locks. It can even promote the re-growth of hair that has already been lost, and speeds the growth of existing follicles.

Eye health : *Eclipta alba* is a rich source of carotene which is an antioxidant that is important to maintain healthy eyes. Carotene can eliminate the free radicals that cause macular degeneration and the formation of cataracts, so adding some *Eclipta alba* to herbal diet regimen can keep vision clear for years.

Heart health : *Eclipta alba* might help to reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Researchers suggested that its ability to reduce blood pressure might be related to its diuretic effects.

Cancer prevention: Although there is some controversy about the reliability of this herbal extract for the treatment of cancer, early research has shown that *Eclipta alba* can inhibit the growth of cancer cells in the liver. Ayurveda as well as other herbalists have traditionally used *Eclipta alba* to treat several types of cancer. Study also indicates that an ethanol extract of the plant has certain anticancer activities. Organic molecules in *Eclipta alba* disrupt the DNA molecules for the proliferation of cancer cells, thereby having a cytotoxic effect and killing those dangerous, mutated cells.

Insecticide : As well as its health benefits, *Eclipta alba* has a more practical use that can benefit those of us constantly bothered by bugs. A study published in 2011 was conducted to investigate the insecticide potential of the plant, specifically to combat mosquito borne illnesses. The research concluded that it had great potential being

both effective and an environmentally friendly alternative to the commonly used chemical insecticide products.

Oral Health : *Eclipta alba* is traditionally used as a remedy for several oral health problems. Because of its known antimicrobial effects, we can use a juice made from the leaves of the herb as a natural gargle to strengthen the teeth and the gums and keep infections at bay.

Popular home remedies of *Eclipta alba* :

- Gargling with a juice made of the herb's leaves can help to strengthen gums and prevent bacterial growth in the mouth.

- Simply eating 5 or 6 fresh *Eclipta alba* leaves each morning can promote all round health and is said to cure constipation.

- Eating the leaves also improves digestion and promotes appetite,

- In Ayurveda, 15 ml of *Eclipta alba* juice is mixed with an equal amount of milk and drunk first thing each morning to reduce blood pressure.

Using *Eclipta alba* in cooking : If this fresh herb is easily available, then there are more interesting ways to add this beneficial plant to diet instead of taking it as a supplement. In Southern parts of India, it is cooked and eaten with rice or added to a lentil dish.

Before adding the herb to dish, the stems should be removed and wash the leaves then cut them into very small pieces. Boil up the leaves, add onions, tomatoes and seasoning and cook thoroughly before eating as an accompaniment to a rice dish.

Side effects and precautions : While there are no regularly reported problems, there is always the chance on an allergic reaction in sensitive individuals. Lactating and breastfeeding mothers can use *Eclipta alba*, but pregnant mothers should consult their doctor before using this powerful herb.

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