



Bhringaraj (*Eclipta prostrata* L.) for mental improving ability

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ABSTRACT

Present communication records the traditional uses of *Eclipta prostrata* L. (Asteraceae) reputed traditional healers known as *Vaidyas* or *Hakeem* were identified on the basis of a pilot survey before the study commenced. Usually the elderly (age group 55-75) herbal healers were preferred. After collecting, healthy plant is shade dried, powdered and paste is prepared.

Key words: *Eclipta* spp., Bhringaraj, Asteraceae, Traditional medicines.

INTRODUCTION

Plants have medicinal value (Pareek and Kumar 2014a,b) Different plants like *Allium* (Anushree and Kumar 2014) *Rumex crispus* L. (Pareek and Kumar 2014 c) The herb Bhringaraj of *Eclipta prostrata* (also called *Eclipta alba*) is a plant belonging to the Asteraceae family. There are four varieties of the herb bhringaraj, based on its colour yellow, white, blue and red. The white and yellow ones play an important role in ancient medicine. The white variety is more commonly available, as it grows wildly in moist places, as a weed. The latin name for the yellow variety is *Wedelia chinensis* and is not as easily available as the white one. It can be easily propagated. Buy fresh herbs from the market, and when still fresh, select a few with a couple of nodes. Plant the cutting and water well. The plant will form roots within a fortnight and will be ready to be plucked in about three months. One gets the most health benefits from it when eaten raw. It can also be dried in shade and powdered.

MORPHOLOGY

An annual commonly found growing in waste ground. Stems are erect or prostrate, entirely velvety, often rooting at nodes, oppositely arranged stalkless, oblong, lance-shaped, or elliptic leaves are 2.5-7.5 cm long. It has a short, flat or round, brown stem and small white daisy-like flowers on a long stalk. *Eclipta* grows abundantly in the tropics and is used with success in Ayurvedic medicine.

Bhringaraj was used by Hindus in their Shradh, the ceremony for paying respect to a recently deceased person. This plant is one of the Hindu's "Ten Auspicious Flowers" and is sometimes called, "the king of hair."

FORMULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

Antibacterial activity: Ethyl acetate and methanol extracts were found to be most effective, both extract showed antibacterial activity against 61% of bacteria tested. Minimum growth inhibition activity (39%) was shown by benzene extract. *Streptococcus haemolyticus* Group-B, *Streptococcus faecalis*, *Pseudomonas aerations*, *Salmonella typhi* and *Plesimonas shigelloides* were resistant to all tested extracts.

Acidity: In order to cure acidity plant decoction is administered with cow milk thrice a day before each meal for 15 days. Spicy food is not permitted during this therapy.

Hair fall: Leaf extract is given orally twice a day with cow milk for 3 months till complete cure is achieved,

Alopecia: Alopecia is a disease which causes bald patches of hairs can be cured. Equal amounts of fresh extract of *Allium cepa* L. (Liliaceae, Pyaz) bulb and *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss leaves (meliaceae, Neem) is applied for of cure of Alopecia.

Premature graying hair: Fresh leaf extract is gently applied to hair.

Asthma: Whole plant ash is given orally with honey, thrice a day for 3 months. The treatment is continued till complete cure is obtained.

Bronchitis & pneumonia: The plant extract can also cure bronchitis and pneumonia. Whole plant decoction is given orally twice a day with honey for 7 days. The treatment is continued till complete cure is obtained.

Burns: Leaf extract is applied as paste on burns. Whole plant extract is also given orally twice a day for 15 days. Leaf paste is used for external application. The treatment is continued till complete cur is obtained.

Constipation: The root powder acts as cure of constipation. It is given orally once a day for 3 days.

Diarrhoea and dysentery: Plant decoction is given orally thrice a day for 7 days. The treatment is continued till complete cure is obtained.

Loss of appetite: Leaf decoction is given orally before each meal, twice a day for 15 days till complete cure is obtained. Leaf powder is given orally after each meal for 15 days.

Fever: The plant is also used to cure fever. The plant extract is given orally twice or thrice a day for 7 days or till the patient recovers fully.

Body pain: Extract from fresh leaves is given orally thrice a day for 5 days or till the patient recovers fully.

Jaundice: It also cures Jaundice. Fresh plant extract is given orally twice or thrice a day for 3 weeks or till the patient fully recovers. Leaf extract along with honey is given orally twice or thrice day for 15 days or till the patients recovers fully. Plant extract mixed with plant extract of *Boerhavia diffusa* L. (*Nyctaginaceae*, *Punarnava*) is given orally twice a day for 15 days or till the patient recovers fully.

General weakness: It is also used in complex plant formulations. Whole plant extract mixed with three gm fruit powder of *Phyllanthus emblica* L. (*Euphorbiaceae*, *Amla*) is given orally twice a day for 6 weeks or till the patient fully recovers.

Weakness of vision: Leaf extract is given orally twice a day with cow milk for 3 months till complete cure is obtained.

Gingivitis: Leaf extract is given orally twice a day for 3 weeks or till complete cure is achieved.

Haemorrhoids: Root extract is used to cure Haemorrhoids. Root extract is administered orally thrice a day. Spicy food is not permitted during the treatment.

High blood pressure: Plant decoction is given orally twice or thrice to cure high blood pressure. It is given for three months or till the patient recovers fully. This therapy is prescribed to adult patients only. Minimum intake of spices, fat and salt is advised during treatment.

Liver enlargement: Plant extract is given orally twice or thrice a day for one month or till the patient recovers fully. This therapy is prescribed to adult patents only. Minimum intake of spices, fat and salt is advised during treatment.

Oedema: Plant extract is given twice a day for 7 days or till the patient fully recovers.

Palpitation of heart: Leaf extract mixed with honey is given orally thrice a day for 5 days or till the patient recovers fully.

Paronychia or whitlo: Whole plant paste is applied externally.

Pimples: Fresh leaf extract is given orally twice a day with cow milk for 2 months till complete cure is achieved. Spicy food is prohibited (1-5).

Skin diseases: Plant paste is applied externally in eczema for 15 days. Leaf paste is applied externally to boils and extract is given orally twice a day for 15 days.

Spleen enlargement: Leaf extract mixed with honey is given orally, twice or thrice a day for 15 days or till the patient fully recovers.

Urinary tract infections: Plant extract is given orally twice a day for 15 days. The same recipe is used to wash genitalia externally; treatment continues till complete cure

Wounds: Leaf extract is used to wash open wounds.

Wrinkles: Leaf extract with *Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal (*Solanaceae*, *Ashwagandha*) root powder is given orally withcow mil twice a day for 3 months

DISCUSSION

Eclipta prostrata L. a medicinal herb, also known as Bhringraj belonging to family Asteraceae. The plant has hepatoprotective, antimicrobial and hair growth promoting properties. The important species plant is commonly used in hair oil all over India for healthy black and long hair. The plant has a reputation as an anti-aging agent in Ayurvedic medicine. Various secondary metabolites present in the plant are responsible for its medicinal value. In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in the demand and consumption of herbal medicinal drugs as they have less side effects. The main active principles of *E. alba* are wedelolactone and demethylwedelolactone, both of which possess anti hepatotoxic activity (Wagner et al., 1986 and Franca et al., 1995). There is an immense pressure on natural resources due to urbanization and industrialization, this coupled with the harvesting of plants as source of drug has threatened their

survival thus there is a great necessity for large scale multiplication of the plant which is simple, rapid, genetically stable. Sharma et al. (2013) developed method of in vitro multiplication of *Eclipta* sp. Bhansali and Kumar (2014) further developed methods using hairy root cultures to improve the contents of secondary metabolites.

CONCLUSION

Bhringraj is a plant of immense value. It cures large number of diseases without having any side effect. Besides curing diseases it also improves general health.

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