



# *Eyebright*

*For bright eyes, try Eyebright!* This nutrient-rich herb has been used for centuries to ease eyestrain, conjunctivitis, sore and runny eyes, and is also thought to relieve allergies and hay fever. Eyebright is an antioxidant that fights free-radical damage and promotes overall eye health.

**Information:** Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at [www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Botanical:** *Euphrasia officinalis*

**Family:** *Orobanchae* (broomrape) - formerly *Scrophulariaceae* (snapdragon)

**Other common names:** Euphrasia, Ocularia, Red Eyebright, Meadow Eyebright

**History:** Eyebright is a creeping herb with small, scallop-edged, spotted white flowers and a black center, somewhat resembling a bloodshot eye. Its botanical genus, *Euphrasia*, includes about 450 species of herbaceous flowering plants that are semi-parasitic on grasses. Many species may be found in alpine or sub-alpine meadows where snow is common. Flowers usually are borne terminally and have a lower petal shaped like a lip. Some species have yellow markings on the lower petal to act as a guide to pollinating insects. It is a delicate annual plant that is difficult to grow and reaches a height of only about eight inches. The plant attaches itself by underground suckers to the roots of neighboring grass plants and drains nutrients from them, and to be cultivated, Eyebright must be given nurse or host plants upon whose roots it may feed. There are several species of Eyebright that may be used interchangeably, including *Euphrasia officinalis*, *Euphrasia stricta* and *Euphrasia rostkoviana*. Eyebright was first introduced into medical literature in the works of the pioneering naturalist, St. Hildegard (1098-1179), and was also recorded as a medicinal herb for "all evils of the eye" in the fourteenth century. However, its legendary use is said to go back to the beginning of time. Eyebright's genus name and alternate name, Euphrasia, is derived from the Greek, *euphrosyne*, meaning "good cheer."

Certainly, Eyebright brought euphoria and good cheer to Adam when the Archangel, Michael, used the herb to cure him after he was afflicted with blindness for eating the forbidden fruit in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. For centuries, Eyebright has been the herb of choice for various diseases of the eye and has also been used since the Middle Ages as a tonic and astringent. Some of Eyebright's constituents include flavonoids, iridoid glycosides, essential oils, caffeic and ferulic acids, tannins, calcium, chromium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, B-vitamins, beta-carotene and vitamins C, D and E.

**Beneficial Uses:** Eyebright, as its name suggests, is the most widely recommended herb for eyestrain, eye inflammations, conjunctivitis (pink eye), stinging and weeping eyes, and over-sensitivity to light. Taken internally, Eyebright is thought to maintain good vision and promote general eye health.

The tannin content in Eyebright accounts for its astringent properties. It tightens membranes surrounding the eyes and prevents secretion of fluids, reducing excess phlegm and mucus in the eyes, sinuses and upper respiratory tract. It also soothes

the mucous membranes, easing catarrh and relieving the discomforts of minor irritations.

Eyebright is said to be effective in treating allergies, itchy and/or watery eyes and runny nose and is also thought to combat hay fever. The herb is a bitter, astringent herb that is used to relieve inflammation and infectious conditions associated with colds, coughs and sore throats.

Used externally, Eyebright is a fine eyewash, and its antiseptic qualities have been known to relieve not

only inflammations and eye infections (sties), but also weeping eczema and herpes.

**Contraindications:** Currently, there are no warnings or contraindications with the use of Eyebright. However, overuse or large amounts (more than the recommended dosage) may produce swelling of the eyelids, changes in vision, tears, sneezing, sweating, difficulty in seeing in bright light or stomach upset.