



SNOW LOTUS

Aromatherapy, Education, Inspiration

## **Eucalyptus Essential Oils**

### ***Differentiating Three Important Eucalypti for Respiratory Conditions***

Peter Holmes, L.Ac., M.H.

Originating in South-eastern Australia, the huge family of eucalyptus trees is now found all over the world; the original Australian production of the oil first began in 1852 and today the oil is distilled in countries as far apart as Spain, Brazil, Morocco and China. Eucalyptus oil is well known for its use in respiratory conditions, and especially in the treatment of cough. But like all natural remedies, Eucalyptus too is better for certain types of cough than others. In addition, it is clinically important to differentiate between the three major species of eucalyptus listed, as each one will emphasize some of the clinical indications they have in common.

The highly pungent scent quality of Eucalyptus makes it raise the Yang Qi up to the head and the upper warmer in general. This brings much of its therapeutic focus on issues of mind/shen weakness on one hand and on upper respiratory conditions on the other. By increasing Qi flow to the brain, and especially when used by direct inhalation techniques, this oil can relieve symptoms such as mental fatigue, inability to concentrate, brain fog, and so on, which also come under the pattern phlegm misting the mind. For this function I would recommend using *Eucalyptus radiata*, the Narrow-leaf eucalyptus, as the main source, as it is gentler and less fatiguing to the olfactory sense than the somewhat stronger *E. globulus*, the Blue-gum eucalyptus. Combining the Narrow-leaf with the Lemon-scented species of Eucalyptus is also an excellent idea, especially in a work environment where accuracy and good organization of the jobs performed are important factors.

Eucalyptus is also one of the most important agents for treating upper respiratory infections and inflammations, i.e. to release the exterior pathogens and, as such, will blend well with the likes of Rosemary and Ravintsara. Narrow-leaf eucalyptus is the most effective for this task, and combines especially well with more gentle and anti-inflammatory, soothing oils such as Lavender and Blue tansy in the case of sinusitis and rhinitis, for instance. The important thing here is that Eucalyptus cools the exterior to dispel wind-heat rather than wind-cold. It is for acute and heat onsets of colds and flus, not for the chronic, cold versions that are mostly due to Qi and/or Blood deficiency. If coughing is also an issue, then Eucalyptus is indicated all the more, and liniments designed for chest rubs should be a major part of the treatment protocol (see above for topical dilutions).

The Eucalyptus oils are well-suited to treat further heat types of Lung pathologies, especially phlegm-heat and phlegm-heat-dryness lodging in the Lung. Again, acute forms of bronchitis (both viral and bacterial) can be treated here, not chronic ones, and especially with coughing, fever and difficult expectoration present, as Eucalyptus expels phlegm really well (but does not transform phlegm). With severe Lung phlegm-heat, the Lemon-scented eucalyptus, *Eucalyptus citriodora*, should be the first choice. Its lemon-scented energy effectively clears heat much better than the other two species. Of course, it is always possible to combine the other species of Eucalyptus with a good heat-clearing oil such as May chang, Lemongrass or Melissa. Combining two or all three of these species can also be very effective in many cases, as this results in a mutual enhancement of functions.

Eucalyptus combines well and easily. If cough causes chest congestion and pain, I always think of adding Cypress, which is brilliant for moving the accumulated Qi out of the Lungs. If the cough is from constrained Qi, e.g. stress-related (as it often is in children), I will often combine it with Marjoram, Tropical basil or Lavender to remove the underlying constraint. With copious expectoration of sputum present, I think of adding Spearmint or Green myrtle, as these two excel at transforming as well as eliminating excess phlegm. With fever present, I will use Lavender, May chang, Lemongrass or Lemon in addition to clear the heat.