

Town Gardener

Aloe Vera has medicinal qualities

By TOM CAVAN

Aloe Vera or Medicine Plant (its true horticultural name is *Aloe barbadensis*) has been a popular house plant for years. In many home remedy circles it's called Medicine Plant or Healing Plant.

As a folk medicine, Aloe Vera has many practical uses and more people are beginning to appreciate its diverse applications.

Common uses: Burns and scalds - squeeze the clear gel from the leaf, make a poultice, and bind loosely over the affected area.

Insect bites, poison oak, ivy, or sumac - liberally apply the gel squeezed from the leaf on affected areas. In severe cases a poultice is recommended, the gel will reduce itching, swelling and irritation.

For improved drinking water add a teaspoon of the Aloe Vera gel to a gallon of water. It will remove unpleasant flavors such as iron, fluoride and chlorine, and give it the taste of water from a pure mountain stream.

As a laxative: a teaspoon of gel taken with a large glass of water, orange juice, or any liquid will act as a general health tonic, mild laxative and a bowel regulator.

For the hair: many people swear that faithful applications of Aloe Vera will wake up dormant hair follicles, thus restoring hair growth. Apply the gel liberally to the scalp and massage it in deeply for the best results. Hair follicles that are dead cannot be helped by this or any other method. Women also

use this as a hair set and rub it into the scalp as a conditioner.

For minor cuts: apply as you would any salve and bandage.

For shaving cuts and nicks: If you cut your face shaving, simply dab a bit of gel on to stop the bleeding. It can be peeled off after it dries.

For acne and skin blemishes: Make a facepack of the gel, let it dry for about 30 minutes, then peel off. Don't wash your face for at least eight hours after the application.

Aloe Vera Uses From Around The World

MEXICO: Aloe Vera pulp is applied in a poultice to relieve the pain, itching and hot sensation that accompanies *crisipelas*, or St. Anthony's Fire.

PHILIPPINES: The gel is mixed with milk for the treatment of dysentery, intestinal problems and kidney infections.

How To Use Aloe
The easiest way to extract the

gel from the plant is to cut off a leaf and squeeze it gently like a tube of toothpaste. As its healing qualities are affected by time, it is best to cut a fresh piece for every application.

If you have any questions call the Grapevine Hotline - 519-833-2117 or write "The Town Gardener", R. R. 2 Erin, Ont., NOB 1T0.



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-Richard Corliss, TIME MAGAZINE

edward
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