

## The History of Aloe Vera

Historical evidence indicates that Aloe vera originated in the warm, dry climate of Africa, although today the plant is found worldwide. From Europe, the Spanish carried Aloe to their New World possessions in South America and the Caribbean. Spanish missionaries in the West always planted Aloe around their settlements and carried it on their journeys to aid the sick.

Today Aloe is used worldwide, particularly in the US, Canada and Japan – both internally as a drink and in cosmetics and ointments. Japan currently imports over fifty million dollars of Aloe per year to treat people with ulcers and digestive problems

Historians have written that Aristotle persuaded Alexander the Great to conquer the island Socotra (East Africa), in order to have enough Aloe to treat the wounds of his soldiers. African Congo hunters rubbed their bodies with Aloe to reduce perspiration and human scent, enabling them to approach their prey with less chance of detection.

Central American Indians and Mexicans continue to use the plant as their ancestors did for burns, blister prevention, peptic and duodenal ulcers, dysentery, longevity, sexual prowess and bladder and kidney infections. In Java, it is favored as a hair conditioner; they claim that Aloe rubbed into the scalp stimulates hair growth.

It seems impossible that the common Aloe plant – member of the lily plant – the same family as garlic and onions, could possess such miraculous healing powers for an incredible variety of ailments. However, there is no denying that man's use of Aloe dates back over 2,300 years. Back then, a Greek named Dioscorides recorded that Aloe could be used for wounds, stomach disorders and pain, constipation, headache, itching, loss of hair, mouth and gum diseases, kidney ailments, blistering, skin care, sunburn and blemishes. Throughout this time, it was employed for its cure-all powers all over the world. Have folk remedies been passed down through the ages because of superstition, custom, or because they really work?

Can Aloe vera treat ailments ranging from arthritis to acne? Many scientists say yes! Maybe our forebears didn't know why Aloe was so medicinally effective, but when they found it producing such miracles, they knew they were on to a good thing. Now, since Aloe has been "rediscovered," we're on to a good thing too. From cosmetics to pulmonary tuberculosis, scientists are finding that the claims made for this miracle plant were not fanciful flights of the imagination or blind superstition but what other people have known for centuries – that Aloe vera really works!

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