



# Garden Clippings



*Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 68*

## Aloe Vera

### History

Aloe vera is believed to have originated in the warm, dry climates of Africa. Although it appears to be a cactus, it isn't. It is in the same family as the lily.

Over 240 species grow mainly in dry regions in Africa, Asia, and Europe, but throughout the world there are over 400 different aloe plants.

Aloe vera has been used for medicinal purposes since Biblical times. This plant is very easy to grow and is helpful in treating scrapes, cuts and burns.

### Description

Aloe vera is 95% water and is considered to be a succulent (a plant that retains water and is soft to the touch) and may flower if it has the right conditions.

It grows in many sizes from 10 inches to 30 feet. It grows in a rosette formation, which helps the plant to catch as much water as it possibly can when it's grown in the wild.

### Temperature

Aloes are in the same family as the cactus and, therefore, like a lot of sun. If you live in a climate where you have warm summers and cold winters, the aloe can be grown inside and placed in a window where the sun will get to it. During the summer, you can place it outside, but it must be brought in during the winter.

### Water

The aloe vera stores a large quantity of water within its leaves and root system. The plant will become somewhat dormant during the winter and will need very little moisture. At this time, watering should be minimal. Allow the soil to completely dry out before giving the plant a cup or two of water.

During the summer, you should do the opposite; the soil should be completely soaked but then be allowed to dry again before re-watering.

### Light

Because the aloe vera is related to the cactus, it likes to be in full sun. Although it will do best in full sun, it will also tolerate partial shade.

### Value

For many years, the aloe plant has been used for medicinal purposes. The middle of the leaf is used on cuts, scrapes, burns and blisters.

It is now also used to produce drinks and is put into creams that treat sunburns. The drinks are used to help with different types of cancer, and conditions such as acne and dry skin.

Jayne Yetman, Class of 2004

### Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery

Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus, 135 Taylor Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0

phone: (905) 641-2252, ext. 4464; fax: (905) 988-4309; e-mail: [jthomson@niagaracollege.ca](mailto:jthomson@niagaracollege.ca)

Website: <http://www.niagaracollegegreenhouse.com>