

HISTORY OF ALOE VERA

The generations of past mention the healing methods of Aloe Vera plants being handed down through the centuries by word of mouth.

We find that the use of Aloe Vera appears throughout history with many testimonials of its medicinal values. The earliest record of Aloe Vera use comes from the Egyptians. There are records of the Egyptians drawing pictures of Aloe Vera plants on the walls of the temples. Many cultures such as the Egyptians would have even elevated the plant to a 'god-like' status. The healing properties of the Aloe Vera were utilized for centuries earning the name "Plant of Immortality".

One of the common myths about the Aloes was that the two Egyptian queens, Nefertiti and Cleopatra used Aloe Vera as part of their beauty treatments. However some sources refute these findings.

The Mahometans of Egypt thought of Aloe Vera as a religious symbol, and. they believed that the holy symbol hanging in the doorway would protect them from slanderous and evil influence.

The Egyptians used the Aloe Vera to make papyrus like scrolls as well as for treatment of tuberculosis. In ancient Egypt when a Pharaoh died, the funeral ceremony was by invitation only with a price tag included: a pound of Aloes. Egyptians used the odorous mixture of Aloe and myrrh for embalming and also placed it with the burial clothes. A man's wealth and esteem for the king were estimated by the number of pounds of Aloes he brought.

The aged people of Mesopotamia, a country located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in present day Iraq used the Aloe Vera to hold off the evil spirits from their residences. During the Crusades, the Knights of Templar created a drink of palm wine, Aloe pulp and hemp, which was named 'the Elixir of Jerusalem' and they believed that it added years to their health and life.

The island of Socotra which lies near the Horn of Africa became known for its Aloe Vera plantations as early as 500 BC. The Aloe produced was

used for trade to other countries such as Tibet, India and China. Aristotle convinced Alexander the Great to overtake the Isle of Socotra for their Aloe supply containing Aloin. The Hindu people thought that Aloe Vera grew in the Garden of Eden and named it the 'silent healer'.

The Chinese doctors of old thought that Aloe Vera had therapeutic properties so they called it 'harmonic remedy'. In China the juice of Aloes was used to wipe out all rashes. The Russians called Aloe Vera 'the Elixir of Longevity'. The Native American Indians used Aloe for its emollient and rejuvenating powers.

Aloe Vera was grown and used by King Solomon (971-931 BC). He highly valued its usage. In Psalm 45:8a it says, "All your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia." Aloes were used on the occasion of a king's wedding, maybe King Solomon's wedding. He most likely grew his own Aloe Vera. In Song of Solomon 4:14b it says, "...myrrh and aloes, along with all the finest spices." Aloes were esteemed high with the finest spices. The fleshy leaves contained Aloin, a substance which, dissolved in water and added to myrrh, was used in Biblical times for their highly perfected art of embalming.

John 19: 38-40 says, "And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for the fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight."

Aloe Vera had traveled to Persia and India by 600 BC. by Arab traders. The Arabs called Aloe the 'Desert Lily' for its internal and external uses. They discovered a way to separate the inner gel and the sap from the outer rind. With their bare feet they crushed the leaves, and then they put the pulp into the goatskin bags. The bags were then set in the sun to dry and the Aloe would become a powder.

Dioscorides gained most of his knowledge about Aloe Vera from traveling with the Roman armies. He first wrote of it in his 'De Materia Medica' in AD 41-68. His commentary uses Aloe Vera for boils, healing the foreskin,

soothing dry itchy skin, ulcerated genitals, tonsils, gum and throat irritations, bruising, and to stop bleeding wounds. Pliny the Elder, a physician from 23-79 AD, confirmed in his 'Natural History' the discoveries of Dioscorides.

Some additional uses that Pliny found for Aloe Vera included the healing of leprosy sores and it reduced perspiration as our first anti-perspirant. Two thousand years ago Pliny and Dioscorides saw a difference in the quality of different Aloe Vera plants and their processing before use.

Galen (AD 131-201), a physician to a Roman emperor, used Aloe Vera as a healing agent. Galen authored over 100 books on herbal and conventional medicine. He gained his knowledge from doctoring the Roman gladiators. Galen followed after the works of Hippocrates and Aristotle.

In the 7th century the Chinese Materia Medicas wrote of using the Aloe Vera for sinusitis and other skin conditions. "In the 15th century, a time which heralded a massive explosion in exploration by the then leading maritime powers, namely, Spain, Portugal, Holland, France and Britain, it was the Jesuit priests of Spain who were instrumental in bringing Aloe Vera back to the New World as they called it." Many give the Spanish credit for bringing Aloe Vera not only to the New World but passing it on to Central America, West Indies, California, Florida, and Texas.

Early Spanish missions had padres that would dispense the healing aids. Some padres would carry an Aloe Vera plant up to 50 miles to comfort the sick. Aloes were always found in the mission's yards. During Christopher Columbus' second voyage to America in 1494, a letter was written by his doctor, Dr. Diego Alvarez Chanca, said, "A species of Aloes we doctors use are growing in Hispaniola."

Christopher Columbus once said, "Four vegetables are indispensable for the well-being of man: Wheat, the grape, the olive, and aloe. The first nourishes him, the second raises his spirit, the third brings him harmony, and the fourth cures him."

Aloe Vera lost its potency for healing when it started being imported. The pulp worked best when fresh. This hindered Aloe Vera's reputation in the medical community. Europe and North America's medical profession quit using Aloe Vera and replaced it with drugs. The scientists determined that the oxidation process hindered the healing properties of Aloe Vera. It caused the plant to lose quality and effectiveness, gradually leading to its loss of popularity in areas where it is not grown.

In the 1950's many processing techniques were tried but they failed because of overheating the Aloe can cause it to lose its medicinal value. By the 1970's there was a breakthrough in processing techniques and they successfully; stabilized the leaf gel by using natural ingredients and cold pressing. They also found a way to separate the rind and Aloin. These new found processing techniques have created a new market for Aloe Vera.

Aloe sales currently supports a multi-billion dollar business worldwide. For thousands of years Aloe Vera was part of myths and legends but today it plays a role to help improve health and nutrition. Some say that Aloe existed as a predecessor to cortisone on the island of Hawaii in Kona. The Hawaiian people would mash the leaves and stems of Aloe to make a poultice for arthritic conditions. It was quite successful. “

Aloe Vera maintains being the only thing known to heal atomic burns...the U.S. Government purchased the entire crop from a man in Texas...to make a salve for atomic burns.” The invention of the x-ray and atomic bomb brought Aloe Vera back into popularity again as it protected against radiation burns. Aloe Vera acted as an old natural remedy that is definitely superior to many synthetic drugs and could be called a modern miracle plants.