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ALOE VERA: NATURE'S IDEAL MEDICINE

by Christopher Nyerges

What are the attributes of Aloe Vera – that succulent member of the Lily family – which have kept the plant in popular use for centuries? Although the Aloe Vera is the most commonly known of the Aloes, all can be used in more or less the same way.

The gel of this succulent plant is applied directly to the skin for burns, including sunburns. Pain subsides and the skin tissue regenerates quickly after application of the fresh gel. Scar formation is minimized after the application of the gel.

Research from the 1940s showed that the gel from the aloe plant had remarkable healing properties when used in burn and radiation therapy.

A fresh leaf of the aloe plant can be carried on camping trips and used to treat chapped lips, minor scratches and burns, and poison oak rash. The gel has also been used on such skin problems as acne, athlete's foot, and diaper rash.

Although there are several processed aloe liquids available at stores, even the best of these processed products are inferior to using the gel from the fresh leaf. The easiest and most economical way to use aloe is to grow your own. Buy a plant from a nursery or supermarket (or barter one from a neighbor), and grow it in a pot. It will quickly multiply, eventually giving you plenty of aloe plants.

When ready to use, you only remove about two or three inches of one of the succulent leaves. The scar will heal over on the living plant. Then, using a knife, split that cutting in half, as you might filet a fish. The moist inside part of the leaf can then be applied directly onto the affected skin.

Why is aloe so effective? The succulent leaves are rich in vitamin C, amino acids, and proteins. Some of the minerals found in aloe are potassium, calcium, sodium, manganese, magnesium, silicon, iron, and copper. The gel has both astringent and moisturizing properties on the skin.

In past years, I researched (by testing on myself) numerous reputed herbal cures to poison oak. I'd experiment whenever I happened to contract the rash. By far the best results were always obtained with the fresh gel of the Aloe Vera plant.

The burning and itching from Poison Oak immediately subsided upon application of the gel, and the rash began to immediately clear up. Other herbal "cures" provided some relief for the burning, but all too often there'd be a reoccurrence of the rash.

I have used Aloe Vera on cuts and scratches for years, with very good results. (Once when I didn't have access to aloe, I put raw honey on a serious wound I suffered as the result of a bicycle

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accident. While the honey did seem to relieve some pain and promote healing, it is not as “neat” to use as the aloe.)

My mother, Marie Nyerges, R.N., has used the aloe gel for years. In 1978, she had a serious sunburn and commercial medications did not provide a comfortable level of relief from the pain. However, when she applied the aloe gel, she experienced an immediate cooling sensation to her skin and was able to sleep on her back.

She has also healed various family pets with the aloe gel. One cat with an open ulcer was given aloe gel to drink, and aloe was applied directly to the ulcer. After three days, the wound had healed over.

Another cat had a flea collar that had been put on when she was a kitten, and it had never been adjusted. When Marie removed the collar, the cat’s neck was cut to the bone. The neck was treated with aloe gel, and the neck quickly healed.

THE MEDICINE FINALLY WORKED

In another case reported to me, a woman in a retirement home began breaking out with a hive-like rash which the woman described as “burning like fire”. This condition affected her thighs, back, shoulders, and neck. An R.N. who cared for the woman suggested the application of aloe gel in the first week, but the woman declined, and called the doctor instead.

The doctor gave her Atarax (taken internally) for itching and allergy, and the antibiotic Cortisone (taken externally), and tranquilizers so she could get to sleep. But the rash didn’t improve, and the woman still didn’t sleep for over six weeks.

Out of desperation, the woman asked the R.N. to apply some aloe gel. “Bring me anything,” she said, “I haven’t slept in 6-1/2 weeks!”

The R.N. applied the aloe gel over the affected parts of the woman’s body, which was covered with big red spots, and hot to the touch. The woman stated that she felt better immediately after the aloe was applied at 7:30 a.m. By 3:30 p.m. of that day, all the visible red spots had completely cleared, and the woman experienced none of the burning itching. That night was the first night that the woman had slept since the rash began.

The doctor’s response: “The medicine finally worked.” Gasp!! Why such ignorance among our well-paid “educated” doctors?

Whole books have been written on Aloe Vera, but this summary provides you with an overview of its most practical attributes. The plant is easy to grow, inexpensive, and highly effective.

I’d like to hear from doctors who have used Aloe Vera on an experimental basis, and from other readers who have used this plant, both successfully and unsuccessfully.

Nyerges has conducted Wild Plant Walks since 1974. His schedule is published in the Talking Leaves Newsletter, a copy of which is available from Survival News Service, Box 41834, Eagle Rock, CA 90041. He is the author of Guide to Wild Foods (\$15) and Testing Your Outdoor Survival Skills (\$12), both available from Survival News Service.