



**Medicine at Your Feet:
Healing Plants of the
Hawaiian Kingdom**

Single Plants: A PDF file

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Medicine at your Feet:
Healing Plants of the Hawaiian Kingdom
Aloe vera (Aloi)

by David Bruce Leonard, L.Ac.

"A weed is a plant whose virtues have not been discovered"

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Just what you need... another
Roast Duck Production



*"A peasant must stand a long time on a hillside with his
mouth open before a roast duck flies in."*

-- Chinese proverb

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E kala mai, please do not pirate (copy or give away) this PDF file. It has taken eight years to research and write the book from which this material is taken. Your purchase allows us to continue research on the healing properties of medicinal plants and the restoration of our native Hawaiian ecosystems. Ten percent of the profits from this work are given to Hawaiian cultural and environmental restoration groups.

Thank you for your kind support of this work and our 'Āina. Aloha no kākou.

Mahalo,

David Bruce Leonard

WARNING

Caution: Many plants used as medicine are poisonous! They can kill you. Never attempt to use herbal medicine without the guidance of a traditional elder or a licensed healthcare provider. If you wish to act on some of the information in this book, you must consult with a professional. Do not try to be your own doctor.



***Aloe vera* (Aloi)**

PLANT NAME: *Aloe vera*

OTHER NAMES OR SIMILARLY USED SPECIES: *A. ferox*, *A. barbadensis*, *A. vulgaris*, *A. perfoliata*, *A. capensis*, *A. perryi*, *A. bainesii*, *A. saponaria*

COMMON NAMES: **Aloi**, pānini 'awa'awa [Hawai'i]; **aloe** [English]; **lu hui**, nu hui, no hui, xiang dan [China]; rokai [Japan]; rapahoe [Tahiti]; kumari, kattarvala [India]; ghui kumari [Nepal]; sink-am-bible [Creole].

PHARMACEUTICAL NAME: Herba Aloes

FAMILY: Liliaceae (Lily family).

CATEGORY: Downward draining herbs - purgatives.

PROPERTIES: Bitter cold [China]; Leaves: bitter hot (?) moist. Gel: salty cool moist. Bitter, cool [India].

PLANT PART USED: Different parts of Aloe have different effects on the body. The yellow sap that emerges from near the skin of a sliced Aloe plant is called "bitter aloes" (luhui). It is dried, energetically cold, and used as an irritant laxative... a purgative. See *Cautions and Contraindications*.

The Aloe gel from the center of the leaf is much milder. The gel is used internally to soothe the digestive tract and topically for burns.

TOXICITY: Chronic long-term toxicity.

CAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS:

CAUTION FOR INTERNAL LONG-TERM USE

- Not during pregnancy, menstruation, with hemorrhoids or liver / gall bladder degeneration.
- Long-term use can lead to loss of electrolytes, especially potassium. Long-term use can (rarely) lead to hyperaldosteronism, heart arrhythmias, nephropathies, edemas, and accelerated bone deterioration, albuminuria and hematuria.

ENERGETIC CAUTIONS:

- Not in rectal bleeding from cold deficiency.
- Not with spleen qi deficiency ~

PREPARATION OF MEDICINE:

- Pills powder or gel. Fresh or dried.
- Gel topical as needed.
- Aloe vera leaf of length 15-18 cm. Boil in water and add sugar for oral use [China].
- 1 leaf about 15 cm in length mashed and soaked in a cup of water for 20 minutes, then strained and drunk [Belize].

DOSAGE: Bitter aloes (luhui): 0.01-0.6 gram (laxative). 1.0 to 1.5 g (drastic). Gel: Topical as needed. Gel internal: 2-6 oz twice a day.

STATUS IN HAWAII: Alien. No pest factor.

MERIDIAN AFFINITIES: Large intestine, stomach, liver

WESTERN FUNCTIONS REPORTED:

Abortifacient (*A. barbadensis*) [Trinidad]; **alterative**; analgesic; antiasthmatic; antibacterial; **anticarcinogenic**; **antifertility**; **antifungal**; **antileukopenic**; **antipeptic ulcer**; **antipyretic**; **antiseptic** (*A. barbadensis*) [Trinidad]; **antithelmintic**; antitumor; **antiulceration**; **antiviral**; **aperient** [Japan, Malaya]; **aphrodesiac**; **bitter tonic**; **burn healing**; **cathartic** (*A. zebria*) [China]; **CNS depressant**; **decoagulant** (*A. barbadensis*) [Trinidad]; **demulcent** (*A. barbadensis*) [Panama]; **diuretic** (*A. barbadensis*) [Haiti]; **ecbolic** (*A. barbadensis*) [Egypt]; **embryotoxic**; **emmenagogue** (*A. barbadensis*) [China, Egypt, India, Turkey]; **emollient** (*A. barbadensis*) [Haiti, Trinidad]; **expels worms**; **hair stimulant**; **heals wounds**; **hypocholesterolemic**; **hypoglycemic**; **hypolipemic**; **insecticidal**; **larvicide** (*A. barbadensis*) [Haiti]; **laxative** (*A. barbadensis*) [Africa, Bahamas, China, Panama]; **liver sedative**; **liver stimulant**; **local anaesthetic**; **mitogenic**; **promotes bile flow**; **promotes menstruation**; **purgative** [Egypt, Haiti, India, Lesotho, Nepal, Trinidad, Turkey]; **refrigerant**; **rejuvenative**; **removes stagnation**; **sedative**; **stimulant** (*A. barbadensis*) [Haiti, Turkey]; **stimulates appetite**; **stomachic** [China, India, Spain]; **stops bleeding**; **teratogenic**; **tonic** (*A. barbadensis*) [Egypt]; **uterine stimulant**; **vulnerable**.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE ENERGETIC FUNCTIONS (~ = extrapolated):

- 1) Clears heat and moves the bowels.
- 2) Drains heat and fire.
- 3) Clears liver heat and damp heat.
- 4) Cools the blood ~.
- 5) Invigorates blood ~.
- 6) Promotes the menses ~.
- 7) Promotes healing and benefits the skin ~.
- 8) Benefits the digestion ~.
- 9) Kills parasites.

OTHER ENERGETIC FUNCTIONS: For pitta and kapha (The gel is a tonic for excess fire.). Will aggravate vatta in low doses [Ayurveda].

Aloi Common Medicinal Uses

- **Burns**
 - **Constipation**
-

Aloi Cross-Cultural Medicinal Uses

COSMETIC

- **Baldness** (topical) [Ancient Greece, Belize, India].

CARDIOVASCULAR

- **Anemia**, [China]; **arteriosclerosis** [Europe]; **bleeding** [China, Dominican Republic, India]; **hemophilia** [India]; **varicose veins** [Europe].

DERMATOLOGICAL

- **Inflammatory skin conditions** [Haiti, India]; **skin disorders, skin diseases** [Europe, India, Native American]; **eczema**, [China, Europe].
- **Burns, sunburn** (gel topical) [Universal]; **blisters** [Hawai'i]; **rashes, bedsores, diaper rash, boils, scars, to prevent scarring; "black skin spots"** [Belize].
- **Herpes** [Hawai'i, India].

DIGESTIVE

- As a "**purgative for the lazy and the weak**" [Belize]; **constipation** [Africa, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Belize, China, India, Trinidad (rectal suppository)]; **irritability from constipation** [China]
- **Stomach disorders** [Ancient Greece, Europe, Native American]; **stomachache** [Tonga]; **indigestion, gas** [Europe, Haiti (in rum), India].
- **Peptic ulcers and irritable bowel syndrome** [Europe, India]; **tenesmus** [Russia].
- **To promote appetite and digestion** [Caribbean]; **obesity** [India].
- **Hemorrhoids** [Ancient Greece, India].

ENDOCRINE

- **Diabetes** [Europe, Haiti (in rum)].

HEAD AND THROAT

- **Dental caries** [China]; **mouth and gum disease** [Ancient Greece].
- **Nasal inflammation** [China].
- **Eye infections and inflammation** [Caribbean, Europe, India].
- **Headaches, migraine headaches** [Africa, Ancient Greece, China, Java, Native American].

HEPATIC

"Those who have jaundice should put aloe in cold water overnight and drink in the morning and before going to sleep. Repeat this three or four days and the person will be healed." - Hildegard of Bingen

- **Jaundice, hepatitis** [China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, India, Trinidad]; **headache and delirium from hepatitis** [China]; **gall bladder stimulant** [Egypt, Turkey].

INFECTION

- **Boils, carbuncles, sores** (*A. barbadensis*) [Bahamas, Guatemala, Haiti]; **infections** [Europe]; **fever** [China, Egypt, Haiti, India, Malaya].

LYMPHATIC

- **Scrofula** [China]; **enlarged spleen** [India]; **swollen glands** [India].

MUSCULOSKELETAL / TRAUMA

- **Bruises** [Bahamas, Mexico]; **bursitis** [India]; **swelling** [Africa, Bahamas, Malaya, Panama]; **burns** [Haiti, Malaya]; **extraction of thorns** (leaf topical, change bandage once per day for 3-5 days) [Belize]; **wounds** [Africa]; **sacral pain** [Russia].

NEUROLOGICAL

- **Convulsions** (adult and infantile) [China, India]; **irritability, dizziness** [China].

ONCOLOGY

- **Cancer** [India, Samoa]; **leukemia** [China]; **throat cancer** [USA].

PARASITES

- **Intestinal parasites** [China, Europe, India, Native American]; **malnutrition due to parasites** [China]; **ringworm** [Africa, China]; **roundworm** [China]; **threadworms** [Native American].

PEDIATRIC

- **Colic** [Europe]; **infantile malnutrition** [China]; **extracts of leaves used to stop children from biting fingernails** [Caribbean]; **used by nursing mothers to purge a child** [Europe]; **put on the breasts during weaning** [Caribbean]; **infantile convulsions** (adult and infantile) [China, India]; **irritability or dizziness** [China]; **pertussis** [China].

PSYCHOSPIRITUAL

- **Insomnia** [Ancient Greece].

REPRODUCTIVE

- **Bleeding** [India]; **late menstrual period** [Caribbean, Europe, India, Native American]; **late period with constipation** [USA]; **painful menses** [India]; **prolapsed uterus** [Russia]; **vaginitis** [India].
- **Post partum** [Bahamas, Lesotho].
- **Menopause** [India];
- **Prostatitis** [Russia];
- **Venereal diseases** [India]; **syphilis** [South Africa].

RESPIRATORY

- **Asthma** [Amboina, Curacao, Egypt, Haiti, India, Samoa]; **chest congestion** [Java]; **cough** [Egypt, Java].
- **Common cold** [Bahamas, Barbados, Curacao, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Lesotho]; **influenza** (*A. saponaria*) [Lesotho].

URINARY

- **Painful urination** [India]; **edema** [Bahamas].

VETERINARY

- **Topical for cuts on dogs' paws** (Wrap sliced leaf around wound and bandage. Change daily) [USA].

OTHER MEDICINAL USES

- **General debility** [India].

CONSTITUENTS:

1,8-dehydroxyanthraquinone, acemannan, aldopentose, aloe peptides, aloe-emodin, aloferon, aloin (also called barbaloin), aloin derivatives, amino acids, aminoacids. anthranols, anthraquinones, anthrol, anthrones, barbaloin, benzothiazolone, calcium oxalate. campesterol, cholesterol, chrysophanic acid, cyclohexane derivatives, dehydro-abietal, emodin, enzymes, glucomannan, glucose, isocitric acid, lipids, lupeol, methyl ester of dehydro-abietic acid, organic acids, para-coumaric acid, stigmasterol, sugars.

POSSIBLE DRUG INTERACTIONS:

- Can cause potassium deficiency when used with thiazide diuretics, licorice, and corticosteroids [Brinker 2001]. This can increase toxicity of digoxin [Brinker 2001; Chen 2004].
- Potentiates the hypoglycemic effects of glibenclamide, and (topically in mice) the anti-inflammatory effects of topical hydrocortisone [Okyar 2001].
- Can cause a strong odor when used for radiation burns [Leonard 2003].

CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINATIONS:

Headaches, irritability, and flank pain ("heat in the liver meridian"): With *Gentiana scabra* (long dan cao) and *Scutellaria baicalensis* (huang qin) [China].

Worms: With *Quisqualis indica* [China].

Eczema: With *Glycyrrhiza uralensis* (gan cao / licorice), topical [China].

Radiation exposure: With *Eucalyptus* spp. (nuholani) or castor oil topical [Hutchens 1983].

To prevent intestinal irritation: With *Hyoscyamus* spp., *Humulus* spp. (hops), or *Ipecacuanha* spp. [Europe].

Colds, asthma, and for bruises: Beaten with egg whites and taken internally [Trinidad].

Stomach ulcers: Juice with seawater [Trinidad].

HABITAT: In a pot on your windowsill.

GATHERING: Can be smelly and messy.

RESEARCH:

Dermatology

- Accelerates wound healing in humans [Visuthikosol 1995, Davis 1989(c)], and in rats [Somboonwong 2000; Chithra 1998; Heggers], possibly due to the glycoprotein content [Choi 2001]. In another study of wound healing, 100mg / kg was given to mice for 2 months with no mention of toxicity but a reported decrease in wound diameter of 62.5% [Davis 1989].
- Useful for burns [Visuthikosol 1995]. May reduce inflammation in burns via reduction of cytokines and leukocyte adhesion [Duansak 2003], and increases microcirculation [Somboonwong 2000].

Inflammation

- Anthraquinones are anti-inflammatory (inhibiting arachidonic acid) [Vazquez 1996; Davis 1989(a); Davis 1989(b)].
- Anti-oxidant [Malterud 1993; Yagi 2002; Saada 2003].

Oncology

- Antineoplastic. Acemannan, a substance in aloe, increases immunity in mice whose immune systems had been damaged by radiation [Shimpo 2000, 2002; Saada 2003]. Some constituents are antimutagenic against leukemia & neuroectodermal tumors [Lee / Hong 2000(a); Lee / Kim 2000(b); Pecere 2000], inhibit chemical hepatocarcinogenesis [Shamaan 1998], and pancreatic cancer in lab animals [Furukawa 2002].

Immunity

- Extract is immunoregulatory [Qiu 2000; Womble 1988].
- May prevent ultraviolet radiation (UVB) induced immune suppression in the pancreas and in the skin [Lee / Han 1997].

Endocrine

- May prevent pancreatic tissue damage in lab animals [Beppu 2003; Furukawa 2002; Lee / Han 1997]. The leaves (but not gel) lower blood sugar in IDDM and NIDDM rats [Okyar 2001]. Aloes (the concentrated sap) also lowers blood glucose [Ghannam 1986].

Other

- Aloe inhibits hepatotoxicity, [Norikura 2002; Corsi 1998] and lowers hepatic cholesterol in rats [Lim 2003].
- Antiviral for Herpes 1 & 2 [Arvigo 2001].
- Aloe gel is being researched as a battlefield blood substitute to prevent hemorrhagic shock in wounded soldiers. The results in lab animal studies look promising [Macias 2004].

NOTES 'N QUOTES

"Aloes are one of the most sovereign agents we have among the herbal medicine being cleansing to the morbid matter of the stomach, liver, spleen, kidney and bladder. Does not gripe and is very healing and soothing to all the tissue it obliges." - - Alma Hutchens

- "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon (Proverbs 7:17).
- Greek physician Dioscorides wrote of *Aloe* for constipation, burns and kidney ailments. Pliny (Caius Plinius Secundus, A.D. 23-79) recommended rubbing the leaves on male genital ulcers [Greece].
- Mentioned in the New Testament as a purgative (John 19:39).
- Napoleon's wife Josephine used a milk / aloe gel lotion for her skin. It was used by Cleopatra for the same reason, and also used in Egyptian embalming processes [Egypt].
- Indigenous to the Sudan. *Aloe ferox* is indigenous to South Africa.
- In the African Congo Slukari hunters rub aloe over their bodies to hide their scent. Related species are used as an antidote to poison arrow wounds.

In India prepared aloe gel with honey and spices is called Kumaryasava and is used for anemia, poor digestion, and liver problems. Kumari means "young girl" or "virgin." Aloe is thought to bring the energy of youth and renewal to women.

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