

## Aloe - Care Guide

### Caring For Aloe

Aloe are frost tender, succulent, evergreen perennials which grow in the wild in South Africa and the Arabian peninsula. They do make excellent and reliable greenhouse plants which are easy to grow. Just the sort of plant to get children interested in growing 'easy' plants. The two species we offer can be grown outside in milder coastal locations or in a hot, sun-baked rockery.

*Aloe aristata* is a clump forming succulent with rosettes of lance shaped dark green leaves edged with white. The leaves are up to 4in long and banded with small white spots and softish white spines. The flower spike can appear at any time of the year but usually in the autumn. The flower spikes grow to around 15-20in above the plant and the cylindrical flowers appear in orange-red panicles.

*Aloe striata* is another stemless succulent with lance shaped, fleshy and white margined leaves up to 18in long. The leaves are often reddish green and spotted or striped with a waxy-white bloom. Terminal panicles of tubular orange-red flowers appear (normally) in the summer and can be up to 18-24in above the leaves.

When growing aloe indoors use a loam based potting compost with the addition of plenty of grit or perlite. Water moderately in the growing season with a liquid feed perhaps twice. Water sparingly for the rest of the year and do not be too worried about the plants drying out and being baked. They enjoy this treatment and will flower better if kept slightly pot bound. If you prefer most garden centres will sell a cactus growing compost which is ideal for succulents such as aloe too.

The plants will produce offsets over time. These can be detached in late spring or early summer and potted on in the same compost.



Aloe



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Aloe aristata



Aloe striatula

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