

Medicinal Aloe, *True Aloe*, *sabbar saqal*

GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: slow-growing
Humidity	: very arid, semi-arid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings, division
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: high (5000 ppm)
Hardiness	: +3°C

SHAPE

Type	: cacti, succulents
Height	: 0.6 m-0.9 m
Spread	: 0.8 m-1.4 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: yellow, orange
Size	: 70 cm - 90 cm
Period	: March - May

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 3 cm

Since ancient times, the medicinal Aloe has been planted for its numerous healing qualities. Its exact origin is said to be northern Africa. It is often found on farms and in gardens in the Arriyadh area. Compounds of medicinal Aloe ease the healing of wounds. Upright, succulent leaves form dense rosettes of a bluish-green hue. To cope with drought, they even turn dull red. The small serrations along the margins do not present a hazard. Leaves form basal rosettes of about 60 cm height. In spring, yellow flowers grow like torches increasing the plant's height to some 90 cm. These are followed by capsules later on. Pollination is performed by bees and birds; self-pollination is not possible. Heat and sun are no problem, and clumps become wider, even if neglected. For a handsome appearance, they should be groomed occasionally by removing dead leaves and floral stalks. The Aloe can easily be grown in well-drained containers. Potting soil should consist mainly of coarse sand, alkaline garden soil and some humus. Fertilisation is best provided by slow-releasing granules that are added to the soil in early spring and again in summer. Dividing Aloe clumps brings many offsets – the easy and quick way to achieve new plants. Seeds germinate easily too, but obviously take more time to show results. The seeds are ripe when the capsule is dry. It splits open to release winged seeds that are dispersed by wind. Seedlings demand good ventilation and are quickly killed by overwatering. Pests are rare, but scale or mealybugs sometimes infest it.

