

The Aloe Vera Guide

Aloe vera



How to use this guide

The weight of the pot. The firmness of the leaves. The angle of the rosette. The depth of the dry mix. Good care begins by noticing what changed before deciding what to do.

THE ONE-CHANGE RULE

Change one condition.
Record what happened. Give
the plant time to answer.

Contents

PLANT IDENTITY	
BOTANICAL	<i>Aloe vera</i>
FAMILY	Asphodelaceae
ORIGIN	Arabian Peninsula
HABIT	Rosette-forming evergreen succulent

SECTION	PAGE
Plant profile	04
Care at a glance	05
Light	07
Placement	07
Watering	08
Humidity and temperature	09
Soil and fertilizer	10
Aloe vera anatomy	11

SECTION	PAGE
Leaf care and offsets	12
Troubleshooting	13
Repotting	14
Propagation	15
Seasonal care	16
Pet safety	17
Observation log	18

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Start with the condition you can observe. Avoid making several changes at once.
The printable log at the end is part of the care system, not an afterthought.



Plant profile

Aloe vera forms a low rosette of simple, fleshy leaves around a short central stem. Each lance-shaped leaf stores water in thick inner tissue and carries small pale teeth along its margin.

Care at a glance

Abundant light, rapid drainage, and a complete dry interval. Aloe vera stores water in its leaves and is injured more often by staying wet than by a short delay.

LIGHT

Give it abundant light near a bright window. Introduce stronger direct sun gradually so established leaves do not scorch.

WATER

Let the mix dry completely, then water thoroughly and drain completely. Never leave the pot standing in water.

HUMIDITY

Ordinary dry household air is suitable. Misting is unnecessary and water should not remain trapped in the rosette.

WARMTH

Warm indoor conditions suit it. Protect the plant from freezing temperatures, cold glass, and abrupt temperature changes.

SOIL

Use a porous cactus or succulent mix amended with coarse mineral material in a pot with an unobstructed drainage hole.

UPKEEP

Keep the leaf surfaces clean, remove fully failed lower leaves, and inspect the tight leaf bases for mealybugs or scale.

THE RELIABLE DEFAULT

Let the mix dry completely. Then soak the full root zone, drain completely, and empty the saucer.

Light

Window direction is only the beginning. Trees, buildings, season, curtains, and distance all change the light that reaches a leaf.

TOO INTENSE

Bleached, tan, or russet patches after a sudden move into intense direct sun.

USEFUL RANGE

Several hours of bright window light support a firm, compact rosette. Gentle direct sun can be useful after gradual acclimation.

TOO DIM

Long, narrow leaves, a loose rosette, weak leaning growth, or a plant stretching toward the window.

ADJUST SLOWLY

Move the plant in stages. Sudden changes can burn or stress established leaves.

ACCLIMATE BEFORE SUN

Aloe vera needs abundant light indoors, but leaves grown in dim conditions can burn if they are moved directly into strong sun. Increase exposure in stages.



Placement

Choose the brightest safe window and keep the rosette clear of cold glass. Rotate the pot occasionally for even growth, and acclimate it gradually before moving outdoors.

Watering

The calendar should remind you to inspect the pot, not instruct you to pour.



After the mix dries completely, water the soil at the pot's edge, then let the pot drain and empty the saucer.

01

CHECK THE MIX

Check well below the surface and lift the pot. If the deeper mix is cool or the pot still feels heavy, wait.

02

WATER EVENLY

When the mix is dry, wet it evenly until water exits the drainage hole. Keep the stream off the center of the rosette.

03

LET IT FINISH

Let the pot drain completely, then empty the saucer or decorative outer pot.

Humidity and temperature

Aloe vera is adapted to dry air. Abundant light, free drainage, and protection from freezing matter more than added humidity.

WARM ROOMS	Normal warm indoor conditions are suitable. Keep leaves away from freezing glass and bring outdoor pots inside before frost.
HUMIDITY	Low to average household humidity is generally adequate. Misting does not correct dry roots and can leave water sitting between leaves.
WINTER	Shorter days slow growth and water use. Check the mix rather than maintaining the same summer watering interval.

SEPARATE AIR FROM SOIL

The leaves store water. Humidity does not justify keeping the root zone wet.

Soil and fertilizer



A dry, granular succulent mix should fall apart easily and leave air around the roots.

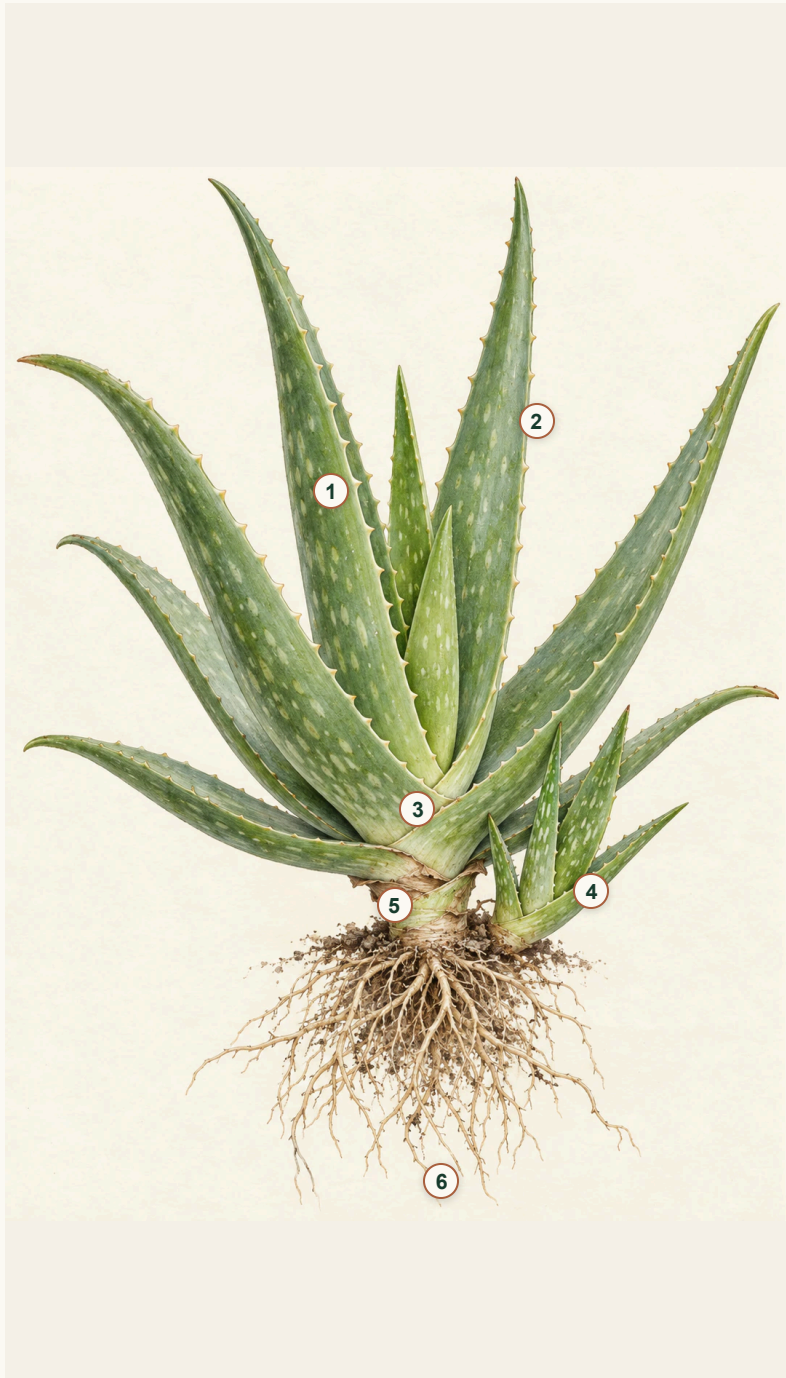
POTTING MIX

Choose a cactus or succulent mix amended with coarse sand, small pumice, granite grit, or perlite. Avoid dense garden soil and sealed containers.

FERTILIZER

Aloe has modest nutrient needs. Use a light application of houseplant fertilizer during active spring or summer growth and follow the label.

Aloe vera anatomy



Numbered markers correspond to the definitions at right.

1 LEAF BLADE

A simple, lance-shaped succulent leaf with water-storing inner tissue.

2 MARGINAL TEETH

The small pale serrations spaced along each leaf edge.

3 ROSETTE

The circular arrangement of leaves around the central growing point.

4 OFFSET

A young rosette produced beside the parent plant.

5 SHORT STEM

The compact central structure from which the rosette and offsets arise.

6 ROOTS

The pale, branching absorptive system below the short stem.

Leaf care and offsets



CLEAN WITHOUT SOAKING

Use a soft brush or barely damp cloth to lift dust. Keep water from collecting deep in the rosette.

PROTECT THE SURFACE

Skip leaf polish and abrasive wiping. The natural waxy surface helps reduce water loss.

READ NEW GROWTH

Young leaves and offsets may show pale spotting. Track firmness and upright growth instead of judging the plant by one color mark.

REMOVE FAILED LEAVES CLEANLY

Cut a fully dead or collapsing outer leaf near its base with a clean blade. Do not tear healthy tissue from the crown.

OFFSETS ARE NORMAL

A healthy mature plant may produce small rosettes at its base. Leave them attached for a fuller pot or separate rooted offsets during repotting.

Troubleshooting

Check the pattern, the root zone, and the recent change before reaching for a remedy.

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT TO INSPECT	FIRST RESPONSE
Thin or inward-curling leaves	An extended dry period, intense heat, or damaged roots that cannot take up water.	Check the full root zone. Water thoroughly only if the mix is dry; inspect the roots if it remains wet.
Bleached or russet patches	Recent exposure to direct afternoon sun or a rapid move into stronger light.	Move back from direct sun and let the damaged areas remain as evidence while new growth develops.
Soft, translucent leaf bases	Persistently wet mix, blocked drainage, water trapped in the rosette, or root decline.	Stop watering. Inspect the crown, drainage, and roots before changing anything else.
Long, weak, leaning leaves	Insufficient light or one-sided light over an extended period.	Move gradually toward a brighter window and rotate the pot. Do not move directly into harsh sun.
Cottony clusters or scale	Tight leaf bases, leaf undersides, and roots for white cottony material or fixed brown bumps.	Separate the plant, confirm the pest, and follow a labeled treatment.

DO NOT STACK REMEDIES

Extra water, fertilizer, repotting, homemade pesticide, and a new location applied together can increase stress and erase the evidence. Change one condition at a time unless roots are actively failing.

Repotting



Healthy roots are firm and pale to tan; soft, dark, or foul-smelling tissue requires closer inspection.

01

PREPARE

Choose a draining pot one size larger and prepare fresh mix.

02

INSPECT

Look before teasing. Healthy roots are firm and pale or tan rather than soft, dark, and foul-smelling.

03

SET

Keep the base of the rosette above the mix and loosen only roots that release without force.

04

SETTLE

Backfill gently. If roots were cut, let wounds dry before the next watering.

WHEN TO ACT

Repot when roots are crowded, offsets have filled the rim, the plant has become unstable, or the mix no longer drains normally. Choose a pot only slightly wider than the root mass; excess mix stays wet longer.

Propagation

Rooted offsets are the dependable route to a new Aloe vera. Wait until a pup has its own small rosette and roots before separating it from the parent.



A useful offset has a compact rosette, a sound basal connection, and its own pale roots.

01

CHOOSE

Choose a healthy offset a few inches tall with several firm leaves and visible roots.

02

EXPOSE

Remove the parent from its pot and loosen enough dry mix to see the offset's connection and roots.

03

SEPARATE

Ease the offset away. If it will not release, sever the narrow connection with a clean sharp blade.

04

REPLANT

Let a fresh cut dry, then pot the offset at its former depth in a small draining container.

USE OFFSETS, NOT LEAF PIECES

Extension guidance recommends division by offsets for Aloe vera. A detached leaf often fails to produce a viable new rosette and is not the method used in this guide.

Seasonal care

Indoor seasons are shaped by daylight, heating, cooling, and windows. The plant's pace remains the primary signal.

OBSERVE	SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
LIGHT	Increase direct sun gradually.	Watch hot midday glass.	Watch shorter days.	Use the brightest safe place.
WATER	Growth and drying may accelerate.	Water only after complete drying.	Intervals may widen.	Confirm dryness first.
FEED	Begin with growth.	Continue at label rate.	Reduce as growth slows.	Pause if inactive.
PROJECTS	Repot or separate rooted offsets.	Inspect the rosette and drainage.	Clean leaves and inspect pests.	Protect from cold glass.

THE USEFUL SCHEDULE

Schedule observations. Let the observations determine the care.

Pet safety

Aloe vera is toxic to dogs and cats when ingested. The whole leaf contains compounds that can cause gastrointestinal illness.

PRACTICAL PRECAUTIONS

Place the plant where pets and children cannot chew the fleshy leaves or offsets.

Collect cut leaves, offsets, and repotting debris promptly.

Wear gloves if the yellow latex irritates your skin, and wash after pruning or division.

Keep fertilizers, pesticides, and potting materials secured.

WHAT TO DO

Reported signs include vomiting, lethargy, and diarrhea. Contact a veterinarian or animal poison-control service promptly after a suspected exposure.

ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL

(888) 426-4435

A consultation fee may apply.

Keep cut leaves and separated offsets out of reach as well as the mature plant. Do not induce vomiting unless a veterinary professional directs you to do so.

Observation log: before a change

Use one page for one care decision. Print extra copies of pages 18-19 whenever you need them.

PLANT NAME OR IDENTIFYING NOTE

DATE

LOCATION AND WINDOW DIRECTION

WHAT I OBSERVED

POTTING MIX BEFORE WATERING

☐ Wet ☐ Moist ☐ Dry at surface ☐ Dry deeper ☐ Not checked

ONE ACTION I TOOK

Observation log: follow-up

Return after enough time has passed to notice a meaningful response. Avoid adding a second change too quickly.

FOLLOW-UP DATE

DAYS SINCE THE CHANGE

WHAT CHANGED NEXT

WHAT STAYED THE SAME

MY NEXT OBSERVATION DATE AND WHY

☐ Continue
 ☐ Reassess
 ☐ Seek expert help
 ☐ No further action

Continue observing

Keep the guide. Reprint the log. Let observation become the routine.