

אֲלוֹהַּ – Aloe Vera –

Aloe Arborescens or Barbadosensis Miller

Aloe: A Superior Skin Healer and Emergency Burn Treater

During Chanukah time, the fiery bright orange flower stalks of my aloe vera come into flower. How fitting that this kind of aloe is also called ‘candelabra aloe.’ Whenever I, anyone in my family or students burn ourselves, I only have to take a few steps out my front door with a household scissor and cut off a few of the outermost aloe leaves at the base of the plant. I then carefully cut away the little spikes, removing the hard, spiny edges on both side of each leaf, making sure to cut as close to the spines as possible, to avoid losing a lot of gel in the process. Then I slice the leaf in half on the long side and scrape up the gel from both sides of the skin with a spoon. Applying the gel to cuts and burns really helps them heal faster. If anyone gets a sunburn, I find it easiest to just rub half an aloe leaf with the spines removed on the affected area, squeezing the gel from the leaves directly into the sunburn. The aloe vera plant is well known for its healing effect on the skin. It treats sunburns and protects the skin from skin cancer. Aloe is dramatically effective on burns of all types. I recommend keeping aloe in your kitchen or nearby, just in case you burn yourself while cooking. Aloe is also excellent for dermatitis, eczema, frostbite, cold sores, acne, cuts, inflammation, insect stings, poison oak, skin ulcers, [psoriasis](#) and [genital herpes](#). Recently, the eczema I had suffered on my feet, for several years, flared up and became so severe that my mother sat me down and forced me to make an appointment with the dermatologist. Although, supposedly a medical expert on skin ailments, all the dermatologist could offer was a prescription for steroids, which I naturally tossed in the garbage. Instead, I made my own healing ointment from a base of shea-butter and coconut oil, with a generous amount of aloe vera gel. Together with prayers to Hashem, the eczema gradually healed. Now, after three months, it is almost completely gone. Below, I will share my ‘Anti Itch Eczema Ointment’ recipe with you.



Which Kind of Aloe is Most Medicinal?

Although there are hundreds of different aloe vera species, I have only met two kinds in Israel. Aloe Arborescens that grows in my garden, and Aloe Barbadosensis Miller, which my neighbor has. Since I have benefited greatly from my aloe plant, I was a bit dismayed when my neighbor informed me, that only her kind of aloe was the medicinal one. So, I ventured into the world-wide-net to discover the true medicinal aloe. Scientifically, ‘aloe vera’ doesn’t exist. ‘vera’ means ‘true’ and this name has been given to the variety Aloe Barbadosensis. Today, however, new research has discovered that this kind of aloe doesn’t deserve this name. Although this variety is most commonly sold around the world, Aloe Arborescens is much richer in medicinal properties. Aloe Barbadosensis can be recognized by its larger and flatter leaves with white spots when the plant is young and yellow flowers. Aloe Arborescens is a larger, multi-headed, sprawling succulent with bright orange flowers. Its name indicates that it sometimes reaches tree size. Its leaves are armed with small spikes along its edges and are arranged in rosettes situated at the end of branches. According to phytology technician and herbalist Dr. Aldo Facetti, Aloe Arborescens is richer in medicinal substances and contains more than 70% cell growth regulators needed to fight cancer, compared to Aloe Barbadosensis, which contains 40% of these properties (Peuser Michael, *The Capillaries Determine Our Destination, Aloe, Empress of Medicinal Plants* P.66, St. Hubertus. Sao Paulo/ S.P., 2003æ Father Romano Zago Ofm, Romano Zago, *Cancer can be Cured* p. 13). In addition, Aloe Arborescens is more resistant to harsh climate conditions.

Below you can see some of the differences in mineral content of the two aloe plants:

	Aloe Arborescens Mg / 100 ml	Barbadensis (vera) Mg / 100 ml
Calcium	103	13
Magnesium	69	13
Potassium	287	46
Iron	0.4	0.1
Manganese	5.6	1.2
Boron	103	79
Protein	7.9	00

Compared to Aloe Vera, Aloe Arborescens has at least three times higher concentration of minerals and protein. However, it seems that both plants have comparable amounts of vitamin, A, C, E, B2, B6, and B12.

Is Aloe Mentioned in the Torah?

The Hebrew word אֶהָלִים/*ohalim*, mentioned in the Torah several times, is translated by most Bible translations – including The Jerusalem Bible and [Chabad](#) – as ‘Aloes.’ Bilam mentions it in his blessing:

ספר במדבר פרק כד פסוק ו וַיִּתְּנֵם כַּאֲהָלִים וַיִּתְּנֵם כַּאֲהָלִים נָטַע הָשָׁם כַּאֲרָזִים עָלַי מַיִם:

“They extend like streams, like gardens by the river, like aloes, which Hashem planted, like cedars by the water” (*Bamidbar 24:6*).

Although Rashi translates the word אֶהָלִים/*ohalim* as אֶלְוַיִּין/*alvayin*, which is the Hebrew word for aloes (commentary to *Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 110b*), there are other opinions. According to Targum Yonatan on *Iyov 9:30*, אַהֲלָא/*ahala* is the same as בּוֹר/*bor* – ‘lye’ used for soap, which scholars identify as [iceplants](#). They come up in large numbers after the rains, covering the Arava. Thus, according to this theory, Bilam was comparing the tents אֶהָלִים/*ohalim* of Israel to the אֶהָלִים/*ohalim* – ‘lye plants’ covering the plain.

ספר משלי פרק ז פסוק יז וַיִּפְתֵּי מִשְׁכְּבִי מֵר אֶהָלִים וְקִנְמוֹן:

“I have perfumed my couch with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon” (*Mishlei 7:17*).

King Solomon mentions אֶהָלִים/*ohalim* together with myrrh and cinnamon, which are scented plants from which you can make perfume. Likewise, אֶהָלוֹת/*ahalot* is mentioned in *Tehillim 45:9*: מֵר וְאֶהָלוֹת – “myrrh, aloes and cassia,” and in *Shir HaShirim 4:14*: מֵר וְאֶהָלוֹת עִם כָּל רֵאשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים – “myrrh and aloes – with all the choice perfumes.” The fact that *Ahal* is mentioned together with myrrh each time signifies that it was a scented plant used for perfume. Thus Ibn Ezra comments that אֶהָלוֹת/*ahalot* is a kind of perfume (*Shir HaShirim 4:14*). Since, aloes are not known to have any aromatic fragrance, Rabbi [Yonah ibn Ganah](#) (c. 990 – c. 1050 CE), explains אֶהָלִים/*ahalim* to refer to sandalwood (*Sefer Ha-Shorashim, Bamidbar 24:6*). However, Targum Yonatan on *Shir HaShirim 4:14* and *Tehillim 45:9* translates *ahalot* as אַקְסִיל אֶלוּאִין – ‘aloes wood’ which very likely refers to the only aromatic aloe known by the ancients as [Socotrine aloe](#) (*Aloe socotrina*), native to the island of [Socotra](#) in the Arabian sea. The midrash asks why this plant is called אֶהָלוֹת/*ahalot* – spelled the same way as אֶהָלִים/*ohalim* – ‘tents.’ Rabbi Abba son of Yuden in the name of Rabbi Yehuda said, because it grows near tents. Since *ahalot* grow best in shade, they spread in the shade of the tents to get protection from direct sun (*Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah* with Mahazav). The fact that aloes grow best in dry sites in full sun, seems to indicate that the identity of the biblical אֶהָלוֹת/*ahalot*, commonly translated, as ‘aloes,’ remains questionable.

Internal Medicinal Properties of Aloe

Not only is Aloe exceptionally healing to the skin, it is also excellent for treating internal inflammation, specifically of the colon. Taken internally as a juice, Aloe is known to aid in the healing of stomach disorders, ulcers, constipation, hemorrhoids, colitis, and all colon problems. You can make a cocktail of diluted aloe juice with ground flax seeds. This winning combination is amazing for periodically cleansing the colon. Although aloe is about 99% water, the remaining 1% is extremely powerful. This is likely because the close to 100 ingredients work extremely well together (synergistically). Aloe contains many minerals, vital to the growth process and healthy function of all the body's systems. It is one of the only known natural vegetarian sources of Vitamin B12, however, it appears there are only trace amounts of B12 at best in Aloe Vera. Yet, taking aloe together with Vitamin B12 increases the absorption and bio-availability of the B12 to the body. Due to its zinc and enzymes, aloe boosts the immune system, stimulating the immune defenses against acute infections. It also provides an amazing number of vitamins such as Vitamin A and minerals that help reduce inflammation and [fight free radical damage](#). [Vitamin C](#) protects the body from colds and viruses, cardiovascular disease, and even skin wrinkling. [Vitamin E](#) is a powerful antioxidant that reduces free radical damage, fights inflammation and helps naturally slow the aging of cells. In addition, Aloe Arborescens has been found to significantly reduce blood glucose and assist the regularization of glucose in the blood, particularly in diabetic patients. Recent studies promote aloe as a natural anti-cancer remedy (Nacci, Giuseppe, M.D. Thousand Plants Against Cancer Without Chemo-Therapy, chapter 9, 2008).

Moisturizes Hair and Scalp

Aloe vera is a great natural treatment for dry hair and itchy scalp. Its nourishing properties, and numerous vitamins and minerals keep your hair strong and healthy. Aloe's antibacterial and antifungal properties help with dandruff, and the gel's enzymes rid the scalp of dead cells and promote the regeneration of skin tissue around the hair follicles. Aloe also helps stop the itching associated with dandruff or a dried scalp. Too many **shampoos and conditioners are full of chemicals** that damage hair and can even cause inflammation and skin irritation. Adding aloe, or applying aloe gel to your hair as an alternative to hair gel, are effective ways to keep your scalp free of bacteria and uncomfortable skin reactions.

Hands On:

Aloe has been used throughout history by many cultures for all kinds of skin conditions, including wound healing, inflammation and fungus. This 'Anti Itch Eczema Ointment' soothes rashes and most kinds of skin irritations. It certainly helped heal my severe eczema. For its internal medicinal properties, I'm including a simple smoothie recipe below.

Anti Itch Eczema Ointment

- ½ cup raw shea butter
- ½ cup coconut oil (optional: ¼ cup olive oil or almond oil)
- 1 tablespoon local honey
- ¼ cup ground oatmeal
- Gel from one large aloe leaf
- 30 drops of lavender essential oil
- 8 drops of tea tree essential oil

Using a double boiler, melt the shea butter and coconut oil until they're combined.

Add the oatmeal while stirring continuously.

Once everything has melted and is well blended, add the aloe, honey, lavender and tea tree oils. Continue to blend.

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Slightly cool the ingredients so that it begins to thicken.

(Optionally use your mixer to mix for several minutes until ointment has a frothy appearance).

Transfer to a mason jar or other glass container.

Store in the refrigerator, but remove 15 min before use, to soften the ointment, making it easier to apply.

Aloe Vera Smoothie

1. Place the clean aloe gel of one leaf in the blender.
2. Add any fresh fruit of your choice. Lemon, lime, orange, and other citrus flavors blend particularly well with aloe.
3. Add a cup of cold water and blend them together before sampling the taste.
4. If it's too strong, you can dilute it with more water. If it is too bitter, you can add more sweet fruits like dates or honey.