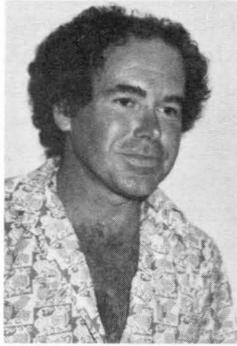




# agapornis acres

by Lee Horton

## ALOES



Lee Horton

The Aloe is perhaps not a very common plant, however, it is one that should be thought of seriously for avid, as well as, amateur gardeners. The main asset of the plant is its beautiful flowers and ease of care. If planted properly, each Aloe will produce many flowers, and with selection of species will produce them every month of the year. My personal joy is the fact that it is the most dramatic flowering plant I have

in the winter garden.

The Aloe is a very diverse member of the succulent family. Primarily indigenous to South Africa and Madagascar, it varies in size from a large tree (Aloe bainesii), shrub, ground cover or tiny miniatures. The miniatures are usually from Madagascar and measure in some cases less than one inch across.

Over a very long period of time, Aloes have evolved and adapted to various climatic conditions. Due to the very wide range over which the genus occurs, climates vary from one extreme to another. Some are arid and severe, experiencing long periods of drought and intense heat. Others are humid with a high rainfall and others may be very cold. With this diversity Aloes may be found growing in the desert, in tropical forest, under waterfalls and sometimes in snow.

A good rule of thumb to follow for successful growing of the majority of Aloe Genus, in your yard, is: If you can grow citrus, you can grow Aloes. It is best to ask the nursery or collector that you purchase the plants from if they will grow outside unprotected in your area.



Foreground Aloe Speciosa, Background Aloe Excelsa

You can grow a more tender type quite well, if you use a few rules that have proven successful for others. If your ground slopes, choose the highest spot, or plant against a south wall of the house in full sun, or near a tree or large shrub that will protect the Aloe from the north winds and cold. The planting of the Aloe itself is quite simple. There is only one basic requirement, and that is good drainage. We plant in a mixture of decomposed granite, steer or horse manure, and wood shavings. Nothing else is needed. Most of the varieties need water during the hot summer months. They will also appreciate feeding during this time, but this in itself is not a necessity. One point, which may be of interest, is the fact that an Aloe grown from a seed will adapt itself to your locale much quicker than a purchased plant or cutting.



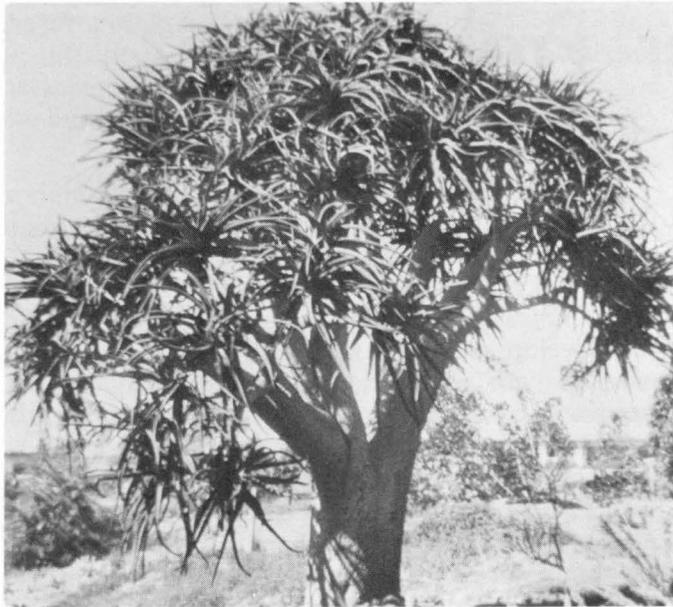
Aloe Spectabilis

Aloe Pillansii

Aloe Fosterii



Of the 139 known species of Aloes, there are most probably only 30 or so varieties available, even at the best nurseries. Landscapers seem to avoid using Aloes because they are not easily obtained in large sizes. However, this should not sway the



*Aloe Bainesii* 15 feet tall.

average gardener. If all you can find is a two inch liner, plant it anyway. The Aloe is a fast grower, and best of all, will do so without special care. For example, *Aloe bainesii* (the tree aloe) can be quite a formidable tree in less than ten years. Whether or not it was a cutting or a seedling, it grows fast.

There are a number of other plants which closely resemble Aloes. The Gasterias, which have blotched or spotted succulent leaves, but no thorns, are the most closely related, and many hybrids between Aloes and Gasterias are known. The leaf formation of many Haworthias resemble Aloes. Aloes are sometimes confused with Cacti. The Cactus Family is a very large one and is native to the Americas. South Africa has no indigenous Cacti, although they have many other succulents belonging to different genera.

Aloes have been collected for many years. Early

*Aloe Vera*  
*Background Aloe Marlqthii*

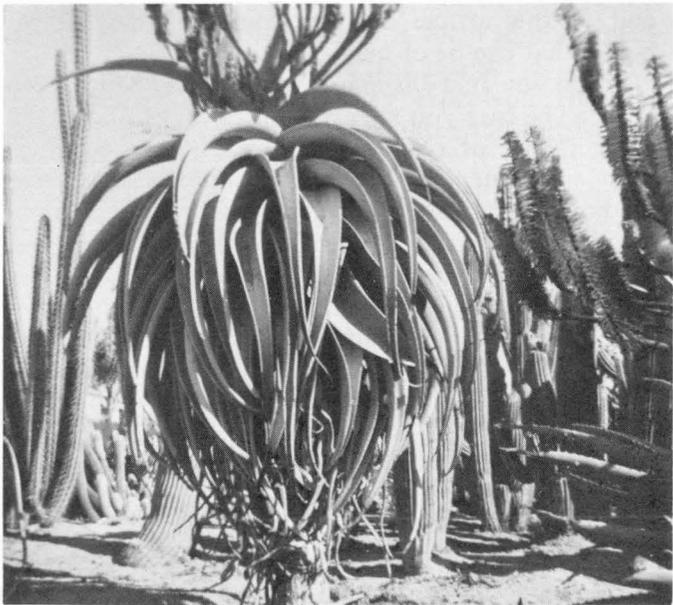


*Aloe Ferox*



collectors, such as Masson, Haworth, Oldenland and Thunberg, collected plants which were grown in the 'Gardens' in Cape Town, and sent overseas to other gardens throughout the world. In recent years, with so much interest in the genus, collectors have cleared out areas where rare species occurred. This is an appalling waste, and is, in fact, illegal in Africa. There are strict laws governing the removal of indigenous plant species from the veld, but, there are agencies through which plants may be obtained. By becoming a member of the Botanical Society of South Africa, Kirstenbosch, Newlands, Cape, seed of a large number and variety of indigenous plants, including Aloes, may be obtained.

A note of thanks to my good friend and neighbor, for his help with the Aloes, David Grigsby, of Grigsby's Cactus Garden, Vista, California ■



*Aloe Thraskii* 6 feet tall.

## A.F.A. to Draft Legislation Imposing Penalty for Bird Theft

The A.F.A., through its attorneys, is drafting legislation to establish minimum fines and penalties for persons apprehended in the act of stealing or in possession of stolen birds. Upon finalization of this draft, a bill will be introduced into the 1975 session of California legislature.

Under current law, persons caught stealing birds are being released without penalty, by the courts. Under A.F.A. proposed legislation, mandatory minimum penalties will be dealt to offenders. Members will be advised at the appropriate time, and asked to support this legislation in writing to their State Senators and Assemblymen ■