

EFFECTIVE INGREDIENTS OF ALOE VERA

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"During the past three years, there has been considerably revived interest in aloe vera as a cosmetic ingredient. Several major cosmetic and consumer products companies have incorporated it into their products and others currently are at the developmental or pilot stage with their own lines of aloe vera cosmetics....

"Aloe extracts derived from Aloe U.S.P. are different from aloe gel products. Aloe extracts contain resins, anthraquinones and anthraglycosides as main constituents which, besides their well-known laxative properties, have the properties of screening off erythemogenic UV rays. On the other hand, the gel products usually do not contain anthraquinones, though they do possess the well-known moisturizing, emollient and healing properties attributed to aloe vera.... Since the reputation of aloe vera as a wound-healer and as a cosmetic component is based on its gel (except perhaps as a sunscreen), aloe vera gel should be the ingredient to use in cosmetics....

"The chemistry of aloe vera (gel) has been investigated on and off during the past several decades. However, few of the studies have been well controlled or confirmed. Substances reported to occur in aloe vera gel include polysaccharides containing glucose, mannose, galactose, xylose, arabinose, tannins, steroids, organic acids, antibiotic principle(s), glucuronic acid, enzymes (oxidase, catalase and amylase), trace sugars, calcium oxalate, a protein containing 18 amino acids, "wound healing hormones," biogenic stimulators, saponin, vitamins, chloride, sulfate, iron, calcium copper, sodium, potassium, manganese, etc. None of the studies took into consideration seasonal, climatic and soil variations which may strongly affect composition of the gel. Hence, research designed with these conditions in mind should be undertaken to determine with accuracy its chemical constitution....

"It is commonly believed that the moisturizing emollient and healing properties of aloe gel are due to the polysaccharides present. The major polysaccharide present has been determined to be a glucomannan. Other polysaccharides containing galactose and uronic acids as well as pentoses are also present. It is probable that the gel's beneficial properties are not due to the polysaccharides alone but rather from a synergistic effect of these compounds with other substances present in the gel....

"Use of aloe vera in cosmetics is not a new practice, since it predates the advent of the Christian Era. Current use of this remarkable plant in cosmetics only serves to signify a renewed interest and general recognition of the beneficial properties of this age-old plant.