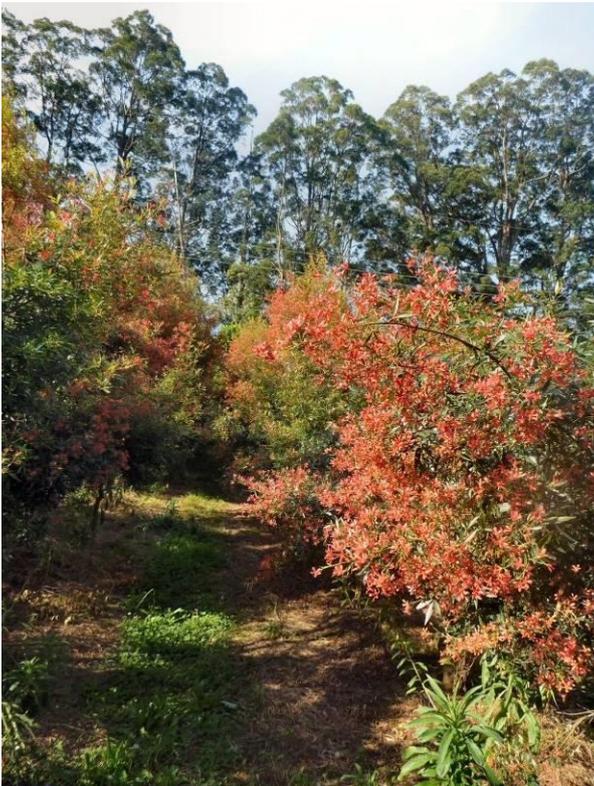




# Horticultural Therapy Association of Victoria Inc

Newsletter



Australian Christmas Bush



Flower display Monbulk, Victoria

Welcome to our latest issue.

Inside this issue are photographs from my recent visits to a local school garden as well as an overseas roof-top child-care garden – both are inspirational gardens.

As the warmer weather approaches I have included some gardening tips for the coming season-

- Check your irrigation to ensure that it is all working and that you will have adequate watering for the hot months ahead.
- Top up mulch to assist water retention for plants
- Dead head roses to ensure a longer flowering time.
- Prune azaleas back after flowering.

Most importantly - enjoy your garden!

Best wishes  
Paul de la Motte

# Plants for Sensory and Therapeutic Gardens

By Paul de la Motte

Common Name: **Aloe vera**

Botanical Name: Aloe barbadensis

Family: Asphodelaceae

Aloe vera is a succulent that originated in the middle east.

Aloe vera is a short stemmed succulent with serrated thick fleshy pale green leaves with small white flecks.

They grow from the base and can reach 100cm high including the flowers. The flower is a striking yellow, apricot to orange spike.

Reproduction is by small suckers sometimes called “pups”. The pups can easily be removed to create new plants.

## Growing conditions

Aloe veras are drought tolerant and grow well in most soil types but requires good drainage. It can be used as an attractive border plant with contrasting light green leaves and yellow flowers.

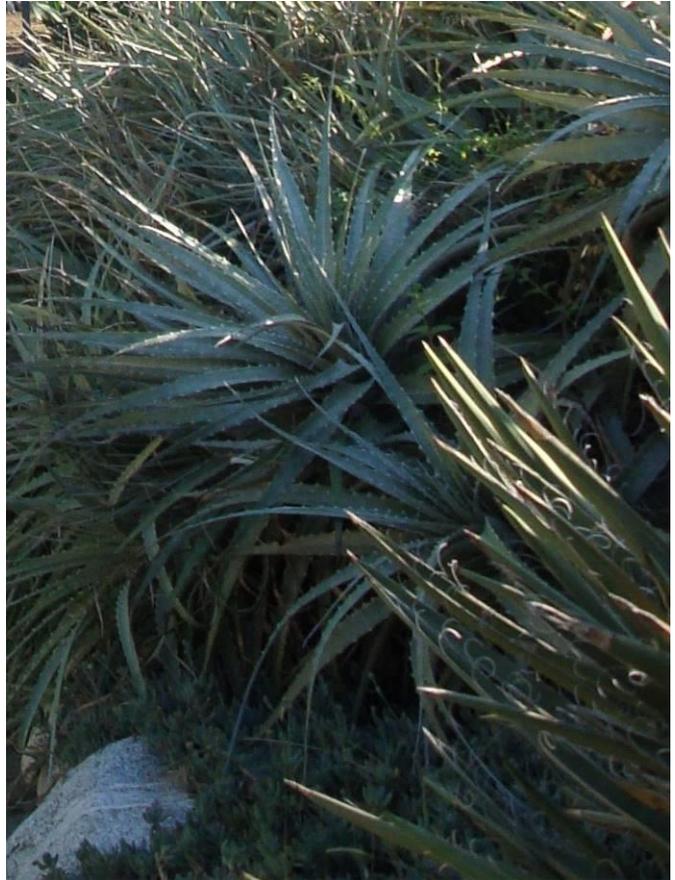
Aloes can also be grown successfully in pots and can tolerate periods indoors.

## Therapeutic Uses

The plant is known for keeping skin hydrated and clear and is a very effective treatment for burns, particularly sunburn.

Aloes are rich in antioxidants such as vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin E and contain seven of the eight essential amino acids.

Overall Aloe vera can be a great addition to any therapeutic or sensory garden.



A large Aloe clump



Detail of leaves

## The Patch Primary School garden programme.

The HTAV recently visited The Patch Primary school in the Dandenong Ranges, east of Melbourne.

Michelle Rayner runs the garden programme which involves pairing prep students with grade 5 students to participate in a range of activities.

On our arrival the students had commenced an activity based on giving each pair of students a sheet with clues to find objects and plants that they needed to find in the garden.



Meeting room / outside classroom and herb/pizza garden

An example of one of the clues: "What am I ? Where am I ?"

" I am soft to the touch, like a green feather bed  
I live in the shade, and will happily spread  
I love moisture, and drizzle, and filling in gaps  
And the fairy folk use me for taking a nap  
Find me where you may find my nappers!"



The activity benches.

When the various objects and plants were found, they were collected and each team potted them up.

The school had a number of garden areas including an outdoor classroom, a sheltered meeting area, an activity courtyard with benches, a composting area and many themed gardens.



Pizza oven and outside classroom/ meeting area.

While watching the activity it was obvious that the physical and social benefits to the students were reinforced through the programme.

Thank you to Michelle and the school for allowing us to sit in on such a fantastic activity.

A great programme and an inspiration for other primary schools.



“Veggie Heaven” and some garden artwork



# YMCA Childcare Centre Rooftop Garden, Vancouver City, CANADA

By Paul de la Motte

While on a recent visit to Canada, I came upon an interesting roof top garden in Vancouver, which I hope can inspire organisations to build similar gardens here in our cities.

Situated above the Vancouver YMCA in British Columbia is the Early Childhood and Family Development Centre (FDC). The FDC offers safe places where kids and families can play and socialize together. Whether they want to take up an activity with their child or encourage them to try something new, there are plenty of ways to get involved. As well as child minding, the centre allows parents to share resources and exchange ideas with other families in a friendly environment that's open to everyone.

Part of this facility is a rooftop garden with a whole host of garden features, which is used as part of the programme.

The garden has a large central paved area, with tables, chairs, a barbeque and a gazebo, suitable for socializing with other parents and their children.



View of garden from above



View of play area sandpit and glasshouse

This area is surrounded by a number of specialized gardening areas including:

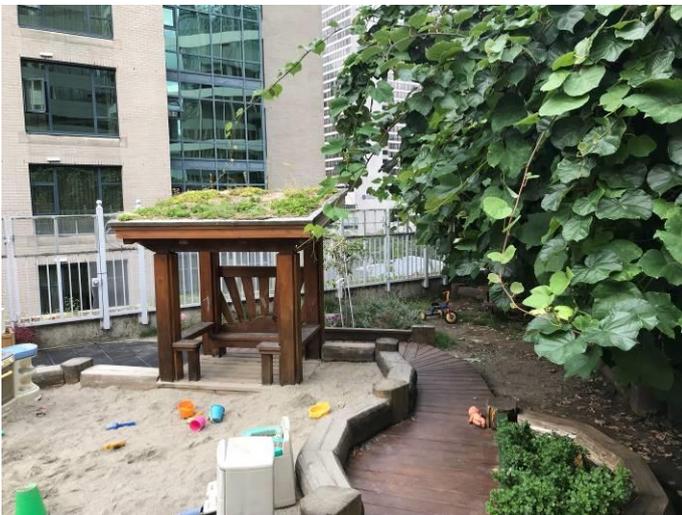
- Raised garden beds and cold weather frames, full of vegetables, herbs and flowers.
- Small orchard with grapes, fruit trees and other soft fruit vines.
- Glasshouse and conservatory.
- Secure grassed area for small children



Kiwifruit and grapes growing in the orchard area



Cold weather frames and raised beds containing basil, eggplant, tomatoes and kale



Sandpit with kiwifruit vine



Courtyard seating area

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