

1. Encourage Flowering: First, you'll need to get your mature Aloe Vera plant to flower. Aloe Vera typically flowers in late winter or early spring when it gets plenty of light, water, and food during the growing season. If your plant is indoors, moving it outside during the summer can help encourage blooming.
2. Pollination: Once your plant has flowered, pollination can occur. If you have multiple flowering Aloes, they may cross-pollinate naturally with the help of bees and other insects. However, if you only have one plant or wish to ensure pollination, you can do this manually using a small brush. Gently gather pollen on the brush from the stamens of one flower and transfer it to the stigma of another flower.
3. Harvest Seeds: After successful pollination, the flowers will eventually develop into seed pods. Once the pods dry out on the plant, you can harvest them. Open the pods carefully to retrieve the seeds.
4. Planting the Seeds: Prepare small pots with well-draining soil mix (cactus mix or regular potting mix with sand works well). Sprinkle the seeds on the soil surface, then cover them lightly with a fine layer of sand or soil.
5. Caring for Seedlings: Water the pots carefully so the seeds do not dislodge. Keep the soil lightly moist but not soggy. Place the pots in a bright location but out of direct sunlight. Germination can take a few weeks, so patience is needed here.
6. Transplanting: Once the seedlings have developed a few sets of leaves, you can gently transplant them into their own pots. Continue to care for them as you would a mature Aloe Vera plant.

Remember, this process takes time and patience, but it's a fascinating journey to experience the full lifecycle of your Aloe Vera.

Blessings on your gardening adventures!

## 6 Other Cacti

Several of the methods used to propagate Aloe Vera can also be applied to other cacti, including the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* spp.), which can thrive in warmer areas of Southern Ontario and other succulents that are hardy in the region.

- Pups or Offsets: Many cacti produce smaller plants, or pups, around their base. These can be removed and potted up separately, just like Aloe Vera pups. Allow the cut to callous over for a few days before potting it in a cactus mix.
- Leaf or Pad Cuttings: For cacti like prickly pear, you can take a pad cutting. Again, allow the cut end to callous over before planting it in a pot of cactus mix. This is one of the easiest and most successful methods for prickly pear cacti.
- Seed Propagation: Growing cacti from seeds is also possible, but it can be a very slow process. Just like with Aloe Vera, you'll need to wait for your cacti to flower, pollinate the flowers, and harvest the seed pods. Then, you can plant the seeds in a cactus mix and wait for them to germinate.

As for other cacti that can grow in Southern Ontario, there are several species of the genus *Opuntia* (prickly pear cacti) that are quite hardy, such as *Opuntia humifusa* and *Opuntia phaeacantha*. You may also want to consider some cold-hardy species of the *Echinocereus* genus. Keep in mind that while these cacti can tolerate the cold, they will need to be planted in a location with well-draining soil to prevent rot during the wet season.

Always remember that patience and careful observation of your plants will be key in successful propagation. Happy gardening!

# Lysis: Aloe Vera Propagation

Nursery in Owen Sound, run by Andrii Logan Zvorygin a Ukrainian-Canadian

✉ [lyis@liberit.ca](mailto:lyis@liberit.ca) 🌐 <https://lyis.ca> ☎ 226-537-0147

📷 @lyis.ca 🐦 @aizvo 📺 @lyisforestry 📺 LysisForestry

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Herein is a few ways of propagating Aloe Vera.

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## 1 Aloe Vera Care

Aloe Vera is a popular and easy-to-care-for succulent that thrives in the right conditions. Here's a guide on how to care for your Aloe Vera for optimal growth and pup production:

**Light:** Aloe Vera plants need plenty of bright, indirect sunlight. They do well in a south or west-facing window. However, protect them from intense direct sunlight, especially during the hot afternoon hours, as this can cause the leaves to scorch.

**Water:** Allow the top few centimeters of soil to dry out completely before watering your Aloe Vera plant. Then, water it thoroughly, so that water runs out of the drainage holes at the bottom of the pot, but ensure that it doesn't sit in waterlogged soil. Overwatering can lead to root rot. Aloe Vera is drought-resistant, and it's better to under-water than over-water.

**Soil:** Use a well-draining potting mix to avoid soggy soil. A cactus mix or a blend of regular potting soil and perlite or coarse sand are good options. The soil should drain quickly but hold enough water for the roots to access.

**Fertilizer:** Aloe Vera does not require much fertilizer. Feeding it with a balanced, water-soluble houseplant fertilizer diluted to half strength once in the spring and once in the summer should be sufficient. Avoid feeding in the winter when the plant is dormant.

**Pup Production:** A happy and healthy Aloe Vera plant will produce pups naturally. If your plant is getting the right amount of light, water, and nutrients, and it's planted in a suitable potting mix, it should start producing pups when it reaches maturity, which is around 3 to 4 years old.

**Repotting:** Aloe Vera should be repotted every couple of years to provide it with fresh soil and plenty of room for root growth. Spring is the best time to repot. However, be

careful not to choose a pot that's too big, as this can lead to excess moisture around the roots.

Remember, every plant is unique and may have slightly different care needs based on its environment. Monitor your Aloe Vera plant closely and adjust its care as needed. Happy gardening!

## 2 Aloe Vera Pot Size

Choosing the right pot size for your Aloe Vera plant is key to its growth and overall health. The pot size can impact the plant's water requirements, root growth, stability, and ability to produce pups. Here's a guide to selecting the ideal pot size at different stages of your Aloe Vera's growth cycle:

**Seedlings or Small Pups:** If you're starting with an Aloe Vera seedling or a small pup, a pot with a diameter of about 8-10 cm should be suitable. This provides enough space for the young roots to grow while preventing the soil from staying too wet, which can lead to root rot.

**Young Plants:** As your Aloe Vera grows, it will eventually need a larger pot. When the plant's leaves start to overhang the edges of the current pot, it's usually time to move it to a larger one. A pot with a diameter of about 15-20 cm is generally suitable for a young plant.

**Mature Plants:** Mature Aloe Vera plants can eventually be moved into pots that are 25-30 cm in diameter. It's better to gradually increase the pot size as your plant grows rather than moving a small plant into a very large pot.

**Depth:** Aloe Vera has a shallow, spreading root system, so it prefers wide pots rather than deep ones. The pot should be deep enough to allow the roots to spread out (typically at least as deep as it is wide), but it doesn't need to be much deeper than that.

**Drainage:** No matter what size or stage of growth your Aloe Vera is at, make sure you choose a pot with good drainage holes. This prevents water from sitting in the bottom of the pot, which can lead to root rot.

**Materials:** Terracotta or other porous materials can be beneficial as they allow excess moisture to evaporate, reducing the chance of overwatering.

Always remember that Aloe Vera, like all plants, can have slightly different care needs based on its specific environment, so it's important to monitor your plant and adjust its care as needed. Happy gardening!

## 3 Aloe Vera from Pups

Dear Friend,

Aloe Vera is a wonderfully hardy and beneficial plant that can be easily propagated from an existing one. Here's a simple guide to help you clone your Aloe Vera:

1. **Identify a Healthy Aloe Plant:** Start with a healthy Aloe Vera that has plenty of plump leaves and is at least a few years old. The plant should be free from any signs of disease or stress.
2. **Remove an Aloe Pup:** Aloe Vera plants often produce smaller offshoots known as pups. Look for these around the base of your plant. They should be a good size (around one fifth to one third the size of the parent plant) and have at least four leaves of their own.
3. **Separate the Pup:** Using a clean, sharp knife, carefully cut the pup away from the main plant. Try to get as much of the pup's root as you can without damaging the parent plant. If the pup doesn't have roots, that's okay; it can still be propagated.

4. **Let it Dry:** After you have separated the pup, allow the cut ends to dry for a few days before you plant it. This helps prevent rot and disease.
5. **Prepare a Pot:** Fill a small pot with a well-draining potting mix. Cactus mix or a blend of regular potting soil and coarse sand works well for Aloe Vera.
6. **Plant the Pup:** Once the cut end of the pup has dried, you can plant it. Make a small hole in the center of your pot, place the pup in the hole, and gently backfill with soil. The top of the pup should be level with or slightly above the soil surface.
7. **Care for the Pup:** Place the pot in a bright, indirect light. Water sparingly until the plant is well established (about once every two weeks), and then you can water it more regularly.

In a few months, you should see the pup growing and thriving on its own, ready to produce its own pups when it matures.

Blessings on your gardening endeavors!

## 4 Aloe Vera from Cuttings

Dear Friend,

Cloning Aloe Vera through leaf cuttings is another popular method. Although it takes a bit more patience compared to using pups, it's definitely worth a try. Here's how to do it:

1. **Choose a Healthy Leaf:** From a mature, healthy Aloe Vera plant, select a thick, robust leaf from the outermost section of the plant. It should be at least 8 cm long.
2. **Cut the Leaf:** Using a sharp, clean knife, cut the leaf from the plant at a downward angle, close to the base.
3. **Let it Dry:** Allow the cut leaf to sit in a warm, dry location for a few days until a film forms over the cut area. This helps prevent rot when you plant the leaf.
4. **Prepare a Pot:** Fill a small pot with a well-draining potting mix. A cactus mix or a combination of regular potting soil and coarse sand works well for Aloe Vera.
5. **Plant the Leaf:** Place the dried end of the leaf in the soil about 3 cm deep and pack the soil lightly around it. Make sure that the leaf is standing upright.
6. **Care for the Leaf:** Place the pot in a location with bright, indirect sunlight. Water the soil lightly, keeping it just barely moist, and let it dry out completely between waterings.

After several weeks to a few months, you should start to see new Aloe plants growing from the base of the leaf. Once they are a substantial size, you can separate these new plants and pot them up individually.

Patience is key with this method, but with care, you can be rewarded with a new generation of Aloe plants.

Blessings on your gardening journey!

## 5 Aloe Vera from Seed

Dear Friend,

Propagating Aloe Vera from seeds is a longer process than using pups or leaves, but it can be quite rewarding to see the lifecycle of these wonderful plants. Here's a guide to help you achieve this: