

Lifelines

IT'S 95 PER CENT WATER, YET MANY CLAIM ALOE VERA IS A WONDER TONIC

IT IS plain cactus juice. Freshly squeezed from succulent desert plants. Hailed by millions as a miracle treatment for everything from spots to arthritic joints.

The beauty industry discovered aloe vera years ago as a magic ingredient to soothe skin and shine hair.

Now enthusiasts swear it makes them feel on top of the

world — amazing claims for a product which is 95 per cent water and five per cent minerals, vitamins, amino-acids and trace elements?

So what's so special about it? Aloe vera has been hailed as a health-giving elixir for 4,000 years. Cleopatra swore by it and those who use it today say when smoothed on the skin or taken

as a drink it has an amazing healing effect.

Beauty companies latched on to the benefits years ago and there are countless products on the chemists' shelves which include aloe vera.

But its power as a medicine is only just being marketed on a large scale in Britain.

Taken internally, the juice

and gel are said to relieve the symptoms of conditions from asthma and irritable bowel syndrome to sinusitis and ear inflammation.

The world leader in pure aloe vera products is Forever Living, a company which has its UK base in luxurious Longbridge Manor in Warwick.

It's American owner, Rex

Maughan, who lists TV's Southfork Ranch in Dallas among his assets, has built his company into a multi-million dollar business based on aloe vera grown on Texas plantations in the Rio Grande valley.

His 4,500-strong UK sales staff expect to sell 28 million worth of aloe vera this year, three times last year's figure.

CURED by cactus juice!

PAM MURCHEK believes cactus juice changed her life by taking away the bone-grinding pain of arthritis.

Four days after downing a morning glass of liquid from the desert plant, Pam says the pain of her crippling disease disappeared.

"I know how this must sound," she laughs, "but it's a miracle. Sometimes I can't believe it myself."

The relief is so complete that 53-year-old Pam and her husband have just spent a holiday in Portugal playing golf every day.

For years, arthritis in her hands, arms and legs meant Pam's life was destroyed by extreme pain.

She could not sleep and needed help even to get out of

juice!

By **BARBARA ARGUMENT**

bed. She walked with the aid of sticks and feared driving would soon be impossible.

Every day was a miserable fight against acute pain. She went for regular physiotherapy which seemed to make her worse. A specialist

suggested cortisone injections in her knees and eventual joint replacement

"Nothing helped. I'd had arthritis for years in my arms and hands but then an X-ray showed how badly my legs were affected. It just got worse and worse."

In September a neighbour who sells aloe vera products suggested daily doses of the gel might help.

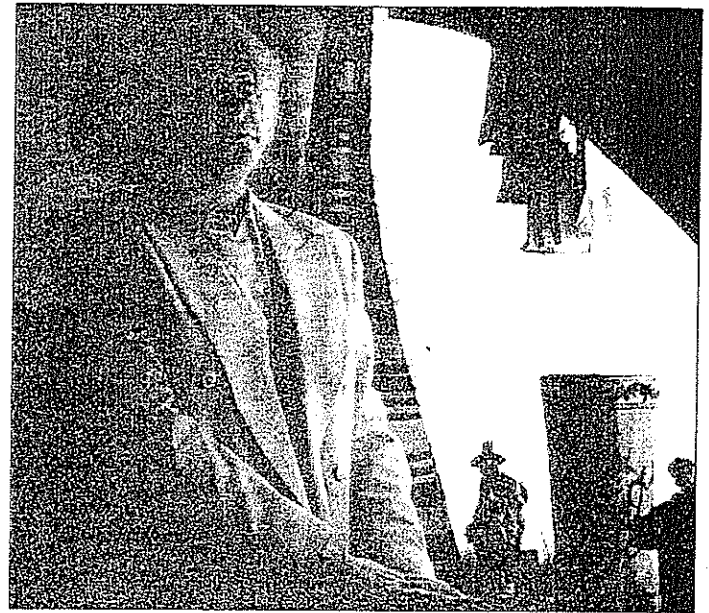
"I was desperate at this point," says Pam. "I was willing to try anything no matter what it cost. But I didn't hold out any hope that it would help."

Days later she got out of bed and realised with astonishment, she had done it without her husband's help.

"It was incredible," laughs Pam, who lives in Hunningham near Warwick.

"The villagers who used to see me walk around crying with pain were astonished. I think they all buy the stuff now!"

"I suppose I still have the problem in my bones and muscles if you look on a X-ray, but I feel no pain and it's just wonderful."



CURED AND CONVERTED: Pam Murchek says Aloe Vera cleared up her arthritis in four days while Fran Ousley and her daughter India (below) have both benefited from its healing properties. Pictures: MARTIN NEEVES



The expert view

COVENTRY-BASED alternative therapist Michael Burns says Caribbean people swear by the benefits of aloe vera. "They lob the leaves off and suck the juice, like it was sugar cane. A teaspoon is regarded as a panacea for everything."

Mr Burns says taken as a tonic it cleanses the system and would have a de-toxifying effect on the joints.

"That would reduce pain and inflammation over a period. But I would say taken over four days it would seem to be rather an instant cure, although I wouldn't dismiss it out of hand."

Consultant Frank Dudley-Hart of the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council was puzzled by the pain-relief powers of aloe vera.

"Never heard of it," he said. "What do you do with it, swallow it?"

"One of these things comes out every month and we do put some of them on trial. I must say they hardly ever prove to do any good."

What's in aloe vera?

VITAMINS - A B1 B2 B6 B12 C and E

MINERALS — calcium, chromium, copper, magnesium, manganese, zinc, sodium chloride, potassium

AMINO ACIDS — it takes hundreds of them to make one molecule of protein

ENZYMES — a catalyst for breaking down food

SAPONINS — have natural cleansing and antiseptic qualities

LIGNIN — can penetrate the skin

ANTHRAQUINONES — anti-biotic, anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory.

Stimulate the bowel, have an enzyme-like action and pain-killing properties.

So what does it help?

Conditions including: Acne, arthritis, blood pressure, colitis, digestive problems, gum disease, infections, kidney and liver ailments, recovery after operations, pain relief, bruising, rashes, sprains, sunburn, tonsillitis, ulcers, varicose veins and stings.

Gel eased India's suffering

TINY tot India Ousley gave the family a fright when she fell and crunched the bridge of her nose on a heavy table.

Immediately a deep, white groove appeared in her flesh, quickly followed by a dark blue bruise which spread around her eyes and cheeks.

"Her sweet little face looked dreadful," said granny, Colleen Ousley.

"It began to puff up and she was crying in pain."

She rushed to spread aloe vera gel on India's face and says

after fall

immediately soothed the pain. "And I can tell you that in precisely four and a half hours there was not a mark on her face at all."

Alternative therapist Colleen decided to try the cactus juice for herself and is now not only a believer but a distributor.

"This product is unique," she says. "But I was still astonished at how it helped India."

"Because the whole family know its benefits we rushed for

the gel as soon as she was hurt. "It helped soothe the pain straight away but we were surprised at the speed of its' healing.

An injury which would normally take a week or more to go away was better within hours."

Colleen says she has noticed since taking the gel her skin has never looked so good and recommends it for acute skin problems like eczema and psoriasis.

Her daughter Fran, India's mum, also believes it helped restore the hair she lost after pregnancy.

Please call

For supplies and further information - Telephone

THE READING

ALOE VERA CENTRE