

Red Aloe Vera 22 times more powerful than green aloe

The fleshy and curly leaves of Aloe Vera vary in colour, from green to bright copper-red. Red Aloe Vera, sometimes called Red Aloe, a temperature sensitive succulent, is a native to Africa. The plant that is characterized by its vibrant copper-red leaves is grown in a very small geography, in the hot and arid regions, of India. This makes Red Aloe Vera, a much sought after and very expensive plant in India.

Why is it that Red Aloe Vera is so sought after? Red Aloe Vera is also called the king of the aloe vera family. Red Aloe Vera leaves are rich in anti-oxidants like Vitamin A (β -carotene), Vitamins C and E, B12 and Folic Acid. Aloe emodin and aloin, the two phytochemicals found in red Aloe Vera provide powerful anti-inflammatory benefits- making it a potential treatment for superficial first-degree burns, other skin conditions like atopic dermatitis, or rashes. Red Aloe Vera is rich in saponins and sterols known for their cardio-protective effects.

High concentrations of salicylic acid and polysaccharides with powerful painkilling and anti-inflammatory properties, help relax tight muscles and provide a soothing effect. Aloe Vera is also indicated for use in headaches and migraines. Aloe gel calms the nervous system of the body, stimulates metabolism, and removes toxins from the body.

It is because of these properties and higher concentrations of the over 75 medicinal compounds that make Red Aloe Vera 22-times more potent as compared to its commonly found green variant.

The moisturizing effects of Red Aloe have also been studied in the treatment of dry skin associated with occupational exposure. Red Aloe Vera gel improves skin integrity, reduces the appearance of wrinkles and reduces erythema. It also has anti-acne effects. It can help treat skin conditions and improve the appear-



ance of the skin. An article published on the website of the National Eczema Association suggests that the anti-inflammatory properties of Red Aloe Vera gel may help relieve eczema flare-ups too. Red Aloe Vera contains collagen, which prevents aging and regenerates the skin.

Red Aloe Vera has been found useful in treating burns, scrapes, psoriasis, and even insect bites too. Red Aloe Vera promotes scalp health and the antifungal elements in the gel are known to eliminate dandruff. The combination of vitamins and minerals in Aloe can soothe reddened skin from breakouts and acne.

A 2016 Indian study evaluating eight clinical trials concluded that oral Red Aloe Vera significantly improved fasting blood sugar levels in people with pre-diabetes, but had limited effects in people with type 2 diabetes. Red Aloe Vera is taken orally as a supplement in the form of crushed leaves, juice, powder, or extract to improve blood sugar control in people with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.

Shinrin-Yoku: A Japanese therapy that may help relieve stress

Amidst the jostle of a city life, most people do not find the time to spend in nature. The sound of rustling leaves, the scent of trees, and a breath of fresh air may effortlessly refresh the mind as well as the body. City dwellers have been immersing themselves in a therapeutic "forest bathing" which in-



volves experiencing forests through your senses to destress and rejuvenate themselves called *Shinrin-Yoku*.

Shinrin means 'forest' and yoku means 'bath' in Japanese and involves taking in the natural environment through all five senses in a slow and mindful way. The practice emerged in Japan in the 1980s

as a way for busy office goers to de-stress and later caught the imagination of the rest of the world.

Although the mental health benefits of getting out into the great outdoors have long been recognized, so-called green prescriptions are now being widely used to treat physical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and lung diseases.

Studies have now shown the ability of forests to improve heart rate, lower blood pressure, increase immunity and promote healing. According to a study published in 2013 in the journal PNAS, contact with microbes in the environment can “train” our immune systems and reinforce the microbial communities on our skin, in our airways and guts.

A news report by the New Scientist Magazine has suggested that being in exerts positive effects on specific psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety and mood disorders. It is also known to

improve sleep and reduce stress, increase happiness and reduce negative emotions, promote positive social interactions and even help generate a sense of meaning to life. Being in green environments boosts various aspects of thinking, including attention, memory and creativity, in people both with and without depression, the report added. Urban vegetation can benefit people’s physical health by absorbing harmful airborne particulates and other pollutants produced by fossil fuel-powered transport and industry.

Being immersed in nature for at least 20 minutes daily or two hours once a week is beneficial for health and also boosts immunity. And by being fully immersed implies engaging all five senses — touching a tree trunk, listening to the sounds of birds, smelling the forest air, dipping one’s hands or feet in a running stream, sitting in a meditative state in natural environs, are part of forest bathing, reports The Free Press Journal.

In recent years, *Shinrin-yoku* has been gaining popularity in India, too, in Walks and retreats are now being conducted by various individuals --- most forest bathing facilitators are certified by an institute in Ireland --- and organized at locations ranging from Sanjay Van in Delhi to Shivalik foothills in Chandigarh, Aarey Forest in Mumbai to Cubbon Park in Bangalore, reported TOI.

While physicians in India have not yet begun to issue 'green prescriptions,' clinical psychologist Tanya Ginwala strives to include nature into her therapy. During therapy sessions, she encourages patients to go outside and relax on their balcony or take a walk in the garden. Weekend hikes and retreats near Dharamshala are led by Ginwala, who is also a licenced nature and adventure therapist. “People who have suffered trauma and those dealing with depression or anxiety benefit from being in nature,” she says.

Being spiritual could mean better quality of life in heart failure patients, claims study

A study led by the American College of Cardiology, has suggested that spirituality not only helps improve the quality of life for people with chronic diseases like cancer but also impacts heart failure patients.

In the study, researchers conducted a review of 47 articles in order to explore the current knowledge of spirituality in HF patients; describe associations between spirituality and QOL, as well as patient outcomes; and propose clinical applications and future directions for spirituality in this population. There were approximately 10 varying instruments used to measure spirituality.

It further concludes spirituality should be considered a potential target for palliative care interventions to improve patient-centred and clinical outcomes in these individuals.

"Patients who have heart failure experience a poorer quality of life compared to their peers, with high levels of depression, anxiety and spiritual distress," said



Rachel S. Tobin, MD, resident in Internal Medicine at Duke University Hospital, and lead author of the study in an ANI news report.

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) and other major cardiovascular societies recommend palliative care for heart failure patients. Spirituality is a core domain of palliative care, with the goal of identifying

and addressing spiritual concerns and providing patients with appropriate spiritual and religious resources. However, limited research has been conducted on spirituality's impact on patients with heart failure, and there are no known tools designed to measure it.

According to the researchers, spirituality is hard to define, but they reference several definitions that describe spirituality as how individuals find meaning and purpose in life, which can be separate from religious beliefs. There were approximately 10 varying instruments used to measure spirituality.

According to a news release from ACC, the researchers reference several definitions of spirituality that describe how individuals find meaning and purpose in life, which can be separate from religious beliefs. In addition, they explain that spirituality is a core

domain of palliative care – which is recommended for HF patients – with the goal of identifying and addressing spiritual concerns and providing patients with appropriate spiritual and religious resources.

“The literature suggests not only can spirituality improve QOL for the patient, it can help support caregivers and potentially help HF patients from needing to be readmitted to the hospital,” Tobin said. “What we have suggested and are now doing is developing a spirituality screening tool, similar to ones used to screen for depression. This can be used to identify HF patients in palliative care who are at risk for spiritual distress. However, this is just a start. More research needs to be done.” The study was published in the journal, *JACC Heart Failure*.

Herbal extract blend may improve cholesterol levels

An herbal formula consisting of several herbs popularized by Ayurveda, including *Commiphora mukul*, *Allium sativum*, *Camelia sinensis*, *Trigonella foenum-graecum*, *Zingiber officinale*, and *Cinnamomum verum*, was evidenced in a recent clinical study appearing in the *International Journal of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology* to improve cholesterol levels in a group of 100 patients with mild to moderately high cholesterol levels.

In the randomized, placebo-controlled trial, the group of participants receiving 1,000 mg of the ingredient, marketed as KaraHeart by supplier Karallief, daily for 120 days saw on average: 22-point reductions in total cholesterol concentrations, compared to 11-point reductions seen in the placebo; a two-point increase in HDL cholesterol compared to a two-point decrease in the placebo group (with high-risk patients experiencing a five-point increase); 13-point reductions in LDL cholesterol compared to a three-point increase in the placebo group; a 37-point reduction in triglycerides, compared to no reduction in the placebo group; a 7-point decrease in VLDL cholesterol compared to no reduction in the placebo group; and a 0.7-point reduction of total HDL-cholesterol ratio compared to no negligible reduction in the placebo group, reported Nutraceutical World.



“The therapeutic goal for treating hyperlipidemia and associated CVD is to manage the level of cholesterol in the blood,” the authors of the study concluded, noting the research being done in the nutrition space to develop a natural alternative to the cholesterol-lowering medications known as statins. “Karaheart, a synergistic herbal extract blend, helped manage cholesterol levels by normalizing lipid parameters. Karaheart did not alter the vital signs of any of the patients and did not cause any serious adverse side effects, making it a safe and effective treatment option for patients with mild to moderate hyperlipidemia.”