

## XERISCAPE

### NATURE'S CHOICE OF LANDSCAPE



#### **Aloe**

Aloes are striking succulents from southern and eastern Africa that offer some of the best color for Arizona landscapes with their impressive and long-lasting show of flowers during the winter and early spring. Aloes have numerous forms ranging from low groundcovers to tree-like species. Small clustering forms work well in containers and the tree forms work well as accents or planted in mass, particularly with groundcovers and wildflowers. Their tubular flowers borne on long flowering stalks range in color from yellow to coral to intense red-orange and attract hummingbirds. The sharp-tipped leaves have pale to reddish brown teeth along the margins. The rosettes do not die after flowering, and many species of aloe produce offsets that spread to cover large areas.

Aloes have a wide range of hardiness, but most species suffer some damage to their rosettes and flower stalks at 24 degrees Fahrenheit. They are attractive in containers where they can be moved to provide protection from frost or sunburn. They can take full winter sun and are heat and drought tolerant, but look better in the summer with partial or filtered shade and occasional watering. Aloes are tolerant of most soils, but require good drainage. Aloes are very easy to grow and require little maintenance other than removing dead flower stalks and dividing crowded clusters. Although largely pest-free in our area, they can be affected by the aloe mite which causes unsightly growth on the flower stalk and leaves. Prompt removal of the affected plant parts will prevent the spread of this problem.

#### *Aloe saponaria*

##### **Tiger Aloe**

A low-growing, clustering aloe with green, tiger-striped leaves has an impressive spring display of coral flowers on stalks that rise 2 feet above the plant. Tiger aloe, also called African aloe, works well in the filtered shade of palo verde or other desert trees. The foot long leaves have reddish-brown teeth and may be pale to deep green, depending on the amount of sunlight. Partial shade and a little supplemental water keeps the leaves green and plump for a tropical look. This aloe covers large areas rapidly and may need offsets removed often to prevent over-crowding.

#### *Aloe striata*

##### **Coral Aloe**

This large South African succulent has pale gray fleshy leaves that can grow to 20 inches long with fine, exotic parallel lines running lengthwise. It grows slowly to 2 feet tall and wide. Clusters of coral red to orange flowers are borne on tall stalks in winter or spring.

#### *Aloe vera*

##### **Medicinal Aloe**

This 2 foot high aloe with light green leaves forms clusters up to 6 feet in diameter with brilliant yellow flowers in the spring. The sap of medicinal aloe has been used since ancient times to treat burns and skin problems. Used a groundcover under desert trees, this plant provides early spring color and unique texture in the landscape. It can also be used as an indoor or outdoor potted specimen.