

ALOE

Biological Source

Aloe is the dried juice collected by incision, from the bases of the leaves of various species of Aloe. *Aloe perryi* Baker, *Aloe vera* Linn or *Aloe barbadensis* Mil and *Aloe ferox* Miller., belonging to family Liliaceae.

Aloe perryi Baker is found in Socotra and Zanzibar islands and in their neighbouring areas and so the aloes obtained from this species is known as Socotrine or Zanzibar aloe. *Aloe vera* Linn is also known as *Aloe vulgairis* Lamarek, or *Aloe barbadensis* Mil. or *Aloe officinalis* Forskal. It was formerly produced on the island of Barbados, where it was largely cultivated, having been introduced at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is now almost entirely made on the Dutch islands of Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire. The aloes obtained from this species is known as Curacao or Barbados aloe. *Aloe ferox* Miller and hybrids of this species with *Aloe africana* and *Aloe spicata*, *A. platylepia* and other species of Aloe grows in Cape Colony and so is known as Cape aloe.

Geographical Source

Aloes are indigenous to East and South Africa, but have been introduced into the West Indies and into tropical countries, and will even flourish in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

Chemical Constituents

The most important constituents of Aloes are the three isomers of Aloins, Barbaloin, β -barboloin and Isobarbaloin, which constitute the so-called 'crystalline' Aloin, present in the drug at from 10 to 30%. Other constituents are amor-phous Aloin, resin, emodin and Aloe-emodin. Barbaloin is present in all the varieties; it is slightly yellow coloured, bitter, water soluble, crystalline glycoside. Isobarbaloin is a crystalline substance, present in Curacao aloe and in trace amount in Cape aloe and absent in Socotrine and Zanzibar aloe. The chief constituents of Socotrine and Zanzibar aloe are Barbaloin and β -Barbaloin.

Chemical Tests

Boil 1 gm of drug with 100 ml water, allow it to cool; add 1 gm kieselguhr, stir it well and filter through filter paper.

1. *Borax Test:* Take 10 ml of aloe solution and to it add 0.5 gm of borax and heat; a green coloured fluorescence is produced indicating the presence of aloe-emodin anthranol.
2. *Modified Anthraquinone Test:* To 0.1 gm of drug, 5 ml of 5% solution of ferric chloride is added followed by the addition of 5 ml dilute hydrochloric acid. The mixture is heated on water bath for 5–6 min and cooled. An organic solvent (benzene or chloroform) is added and shaken. Separate the organic solvent layer and add an equal volume of dilute ammonia. The ammoniacal layer produces pinkish red colour.
3. *Bromine Test:* To 5 ml of aloe solution, add equal volume of bromine solution; bulky yellow precipitate is formed due to the presence of tetrabromaloin.
4. *Nitrous Acid Test:* To 5 ml of aloe solution, add little of sodium nitrite and few drops of dilute acetic acid; it produces Pink or purplish colour. Zanzibar and Socotrine aloes give negative test.
5. *Nitric Acid Test:* 2 ml of concentrated nitric acid is added to 5 ml of aloe solution; Curacao aloe gives deep reddish-brown colour, Socotrine aloe gives pale yellowish-brown colour, Zanzibar aloe gives yellowish-brown colour and Cape aloe first produces brown colour which on standing changes to green.
6. *Cupraloin Test:* 1 ml of the aloe solution is diluted to 5 ml with water and to it 1 drop of copper sulphate solution is added. Bright yellow colour is produced which on addition of 10 drops of saturated solution of sodium chloride changes to purple and the colour persists if 15–20 drops of 90% alcohol is added. This test is positive for Curacao aloe, faint for Cape aloe and negative for Zanzibar and Socotrine aloes.

Uses

The drug Aloe is one of the safest and stimulating purgatives, in higher doses may act as abortifacient. Its action is exerted mainly on the large intestine; also it is useful as a vermifuge. The plant is emmenagogue, emollient, stimulant, stomachic, tonic and vulnerary. Extracts of the plant have antibacterial activity. The clear gel of the leaf makes an excellent treatment for wounds, burns and other skin disorders, placing a protective coat over the affected area, speeding up the rate of healing and reducing the risk of infection. To obtain this gel, the leaves can be cut in half along their length and the inner pulp rubbed over the affected area of skin. This has an immediate soothing effect on all sorts of burns and other skin problems.

CASTOR OIL

Synonyms

Castor bean oil, castor oil seed, oleum ricini, ricinus oil, oil of palma christi, cold-drawn castor oil.

Biological Source

Castor oil is the fixed oil obtained by cold expression of the seeds of *Ricinus communis* Linn., belonging to family Euphorbiaceae.

Geographical Source

It is mainly found in India, Brazil, America, China, Thailand; in India it is cultivated in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka.

Chemical Constituents

Castor oil consists of glyceride of ricinoleic acid, isoricinoleic, stearic, and dihydroxy stearic acids. Ricinoleic acid is responsible for laxative property. Castor oil also contains vitamin F. 90% of the fatty acid content is ricinoleic acid. The ricinoleic acid is an 18-carbon acid having a double bond in the 9–10 position and a hydroxyl group on the 12th carbon. This combination of hydroxyl group and unsaturation occurs only in castor oil.

Identification Tests

About 5 ml of light petroleum (50° to 60°) when mixed with 10 ml of castor oil at 15.5° shows a clear solution, but if the amount of light petroleum is increased to 15 ml, the mixture becomes turbid. This test is not shown by other oils.

Uses

Castor oil is mild purgative, fungistatic, used as an ointment base, as plasticizer, wetting agents, as a lubricating agent. Ricinoleic acid is used in contraceptive creams and jellies; it is also used as an emollient in the preparation of lipsticks, in tooth formulation, as an ingredient in hair oil. The dehydrated oil is used in the manufacture of linoleum and alkyl resin. The main use of castor oil is the industrial production of coatings, also employed to make pharmaceuticals and cosmetics in the textile and leather industries and for manufacturing plastics and fibres.

Marketed Products

It is one of the ingredients of the preparations known as Lip balm and Muscle and joint rub (Himalaya Drug Company).