HOUSEPLANTS · INDOORS, NEAR A BRIGHT WINDOW WITH SPACE FOR SPREADING LEAVES

Let's grow aloe vera.

Aloe vera

This plan is for **True Aloe vera grown indoors**

Is this your plant? Look for Aloe vera or the synonym Aloe barbadensis on the label. Other aloes, agaves, and haworthias can look similar; this indoor plan is for true Aloe vera.

Aloe vera care is simple: bright light, dry mix between drinks, and very little feeding.

Keep its nursery pot **1 rooted plant**

Before you start

Start with a labeled Aloe vera in a draining 4–6-inch nursery pot. Choose bright indoor light, introduce stronger sun gradually, and let the mix dry through between waterings.

By jennyzhuang

Sources checked September 24, 2026 View sources ↗

LIGHT

Bright window light

Start with bright indirect light. Introduce stronger sun gradually to avoid leaf scorch.

WATER

Let the mix dry through

Check deeper than the surface. Water thoroughly only after the potting mix has dried.

FEEDING

Usually no extra feed

A healthy new plant can skip feeding. One light spring feed is optional after existing nutrients run out.

Aloe vera is harmful if eaten and its sap may irritate skin. Keep it away from chewing pets and children. Wear gloves when dividing it; this guide is for growing an ornamental plant, not for eating or preparing its leaves.

BEFORE YOU START

Your little kit.

- ✓ 1 labeled Aloe vera in a draining 4–6-inch nursery pot
- ✓ A watering can; optional ⅛-teaspoon measure for a later spring feed
- ✓ A saucer or an outer pot you can empty

THE SOIL

Keep the nursery mix if it drains and dries properly. At repotting, choose a bag labeled cactus and succulent potting mix. Do not use garden soil or a sealed glass planter.

Start with what's on this list. Add plant food only when the feeding section says it's needed.

YOUR SIMPLE GROWING PLAN

One pot. Here's the plan.

Indoors, near a bright window with space for spreading leaves. Start with **nursery plant**.

THE POT

Keep its nursery pot

This starter plan uses one small plant in a draining 4–6-inch-wide nursery pot. Keep it while roots have room and the mix drains; buying aloe is not a reason to repot it immediately.

HOW MANY

1 rooted plant

Buy a plant labeled Aloe vera or its synonym Aloe barbadensis. Choose firm leaves and a stable plant without a soft, wet base.

THE CONTAINER

Keep its nursery pot



No immediate repot

START WITH

1 rooted plant



Illustration · not to scale

Keep its nursery pot · 1 rooted plant This starter plan uses one small plant in a draining 4–6-inch-wide nursery pot. Keep it while roots have room and the mix drains; buying aloe is not a reason to repot it immediately. Buy a plant labeled Aloe vera or its synonym Aloe barbadensis. Choose firm leaves and a stable plant without a soft, wet base. Original illustration; not to scale.

01

Keep the draining pot

Check for an open drainage hole. Remove any sealed wrapper and empty the outer pot. Keep a healthy plant in its nursery pot while it settles in.

02

Choose a bright window

Give it bright indirect light near a sunny window. If it came from a dim shop, move it into stronger light gradually over 1–2 weeks. Avoid a sudden move onto a hot, exposed windowsill.

03

Check the whole pot

Use a weekly reminder to check, not to water. Feel below the surface and lift the pot. If deeper mix is damp or the pot still feels heavy, wait and check again.

04

Water, then let it dry

When the mix has dried through, wet the root ball slowly until the pot drains. Empty the saucer. Wait for the mix to dry again before the next drink.

When it is time to repot: check drainage and choose a container mix. Follow this plant's mix instructions.

Other ways to start

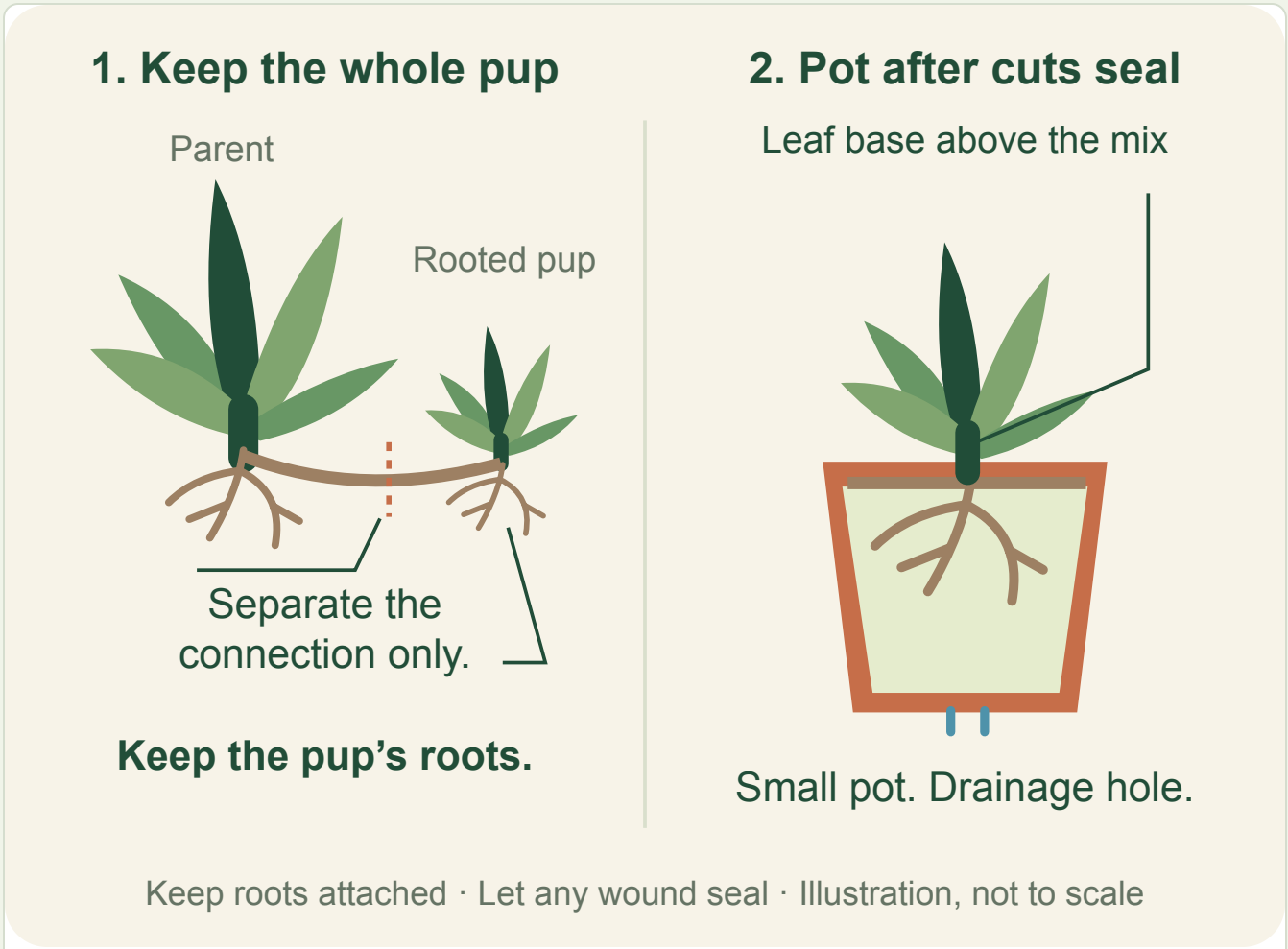
Start with a rooted pup

A pup is a small whole plant growing beside the parent. Choose one with its own roots. Gently separate it during repotting, keeping those roots attached. If you must cut the connection, use a clean sharp blade and let the wound dry and seal before potting. The diagram below shows what to keep.

Skip the single-leaf shortcut

For this beginner plan, choose a nursery plant or a rooted pup. Iowa State lists division for aloe; a detached fleshy leaf is not a dependable shortcut to a new plant. Seed is possible but slower and less convenient indoors.

A pup has leaves, a base, and roots.



Keep the pup's roots attached. This drawing shows a whole young plant, not a detached leaf. Iowa State describes division with roots. If separation leaves a cut, let that wound dry and seal before potting. Use a small draining pot and keep the leaf base above the mix. Follow the pup aftercare steps below.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Water & fertilizer at a glance.

WATER WHEN

Check weekly. Wait until the mix has dried through; wet the roots, drain, and empty the saucer.

FERTILIZER

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

AMOUNT

⅛ teaspoon in 1 US gallon of water

WHAT THAT AMOUNT COVERS

Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED

Optional: one light feed in spring while actively growing.

WHEN TO START OR PAUSE

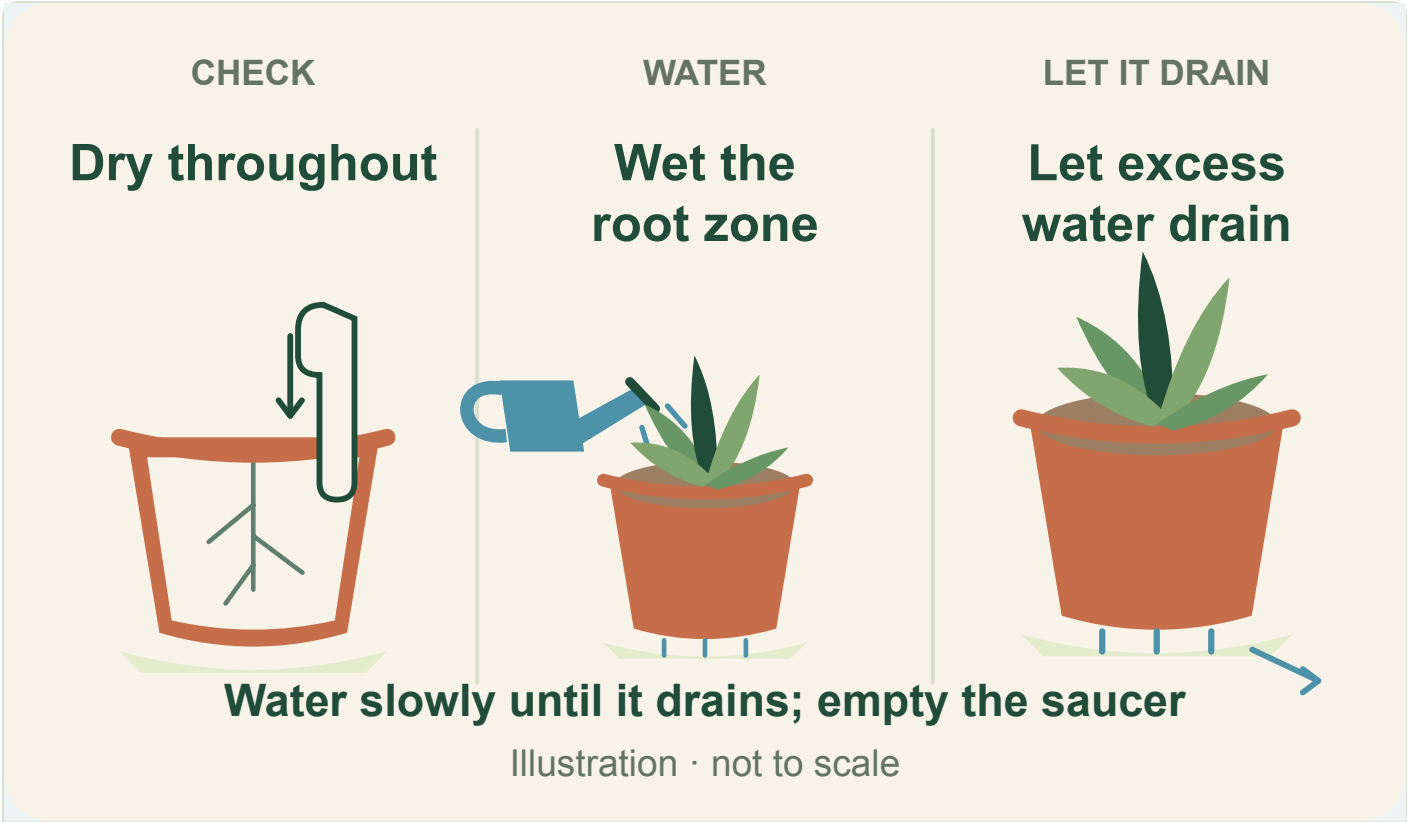
Usually no extra feed is needed. Wait until existing fertilizer ends; skip newly divided or repotted plants, struggling roots, and winter rest.

One-quarter of the product's indoor concentration. This optional starter routine is lighter and less frequent than its standard schedule.

01 / EVERYDAY CARE

When to water.

Check weekly, including below the dry-looking surface. Lift the pot and check the mix several inches down where you can do so without forcing through roots. When the mix has dried through and the pot feels light, water slowly until excess drains; then empty the saucer. A dim or cool winter room can lengthen the wait. There is no fixed number of cups or days for every aloe pot.



Check before watering. Check weekly. Wait until the mix has dried through; wet the roots, drain, and empty the saucer. Original illustration; not to scale.

> **The easy rule**
>
> Check first. Water only when the plant needs it.

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02 / PLANT FOOD

Exactly what to feed it.

Skip extra fertilizer for a healthy new aloe. Check the nursery and potting-mix labels before adding anything. Later, an established plant making new growth in spring can have one light feed after existing fertilizer has finished. Skip feeding after division or repotting, when roots are damaged, or while growth is resting in winter.



⅛ teaspoon in 1 US gallon of water Mix into water. Apply only enough solution to wet this pot and drain; the mixing batch is not the amount to pour on. Optional: one light feed in spring while actively growing. Usually no extra feed is needed. Wait until existing fertilizer ends; skip newly divided or repotted plants, struggling roots, and winter rest. Original illustration; not to scale.



US PRODUCT REFERENCE

Miracle-Gro

Water Soluble All Purpose

24-8-16

Soluble: mix into water

Check the official US product ↗

Illustrated reference; check the manufacturer's current packaging and US label.

OPTIONAL · ⅛ TEASPOON PER US GALLON · ONCE IN SPRING

Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food (US 24-8-16)

Mix ⅛ teaspoon of Miracle-Gro Water Soluble All Purpose Plant Food, US 24-8-16, into 1 US gallon of water. At a needed watering, use only enough solution to wet the roots and drain; one gallon is the mixing batch, not a dose for one small pot. This is one-quarter of the manufacturer's indoor concentration. Our optional single spring feed combines Iowa State's light succulent rate with Arizona Extension's spring timing. It is a gentler starter routine, not the product's standard repeat schedule. Skip it if the plant is growing well without extra food.

Check the manufacturer's product page ↗

An optional example, not a required purchase. Use the dry US 24-8-16 formula, not a ready-to-use liquid or a different product with the same brand name.

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03 / WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

New leaves, pups, and possible flowers

Look for firm new leaves from the center over time. A mature plant may make small pups beside its base. Indoor flowers are a bonus rather than a care milestone; do not add fertilizer just to force a bloom.

Starting indoors and choosing a repotting season

You can buy a rooted plant indoors year-round. Repotting or separating pups is easiest in spring or early summer. Keep aloe away from freezing windows and cold drafts. If you take it outdoors in summer, wait for settled warm weather and introduce outdoor light gradually; bring it back before cold weather.

For regional planting windows, find your local Cooperative Extension office ↗.

Something looking off?

Why are the leaves soft or yellow?

Check the mix before watering. Soft leaves with persistently wet mix suggest a root or drainage problem; more water can make that worse. Empty any standing water and inspect the base and roots. Shriveled leaves with fully dry mix may need a thorough drink. Leaf color alone is not enough to diagnose the cause.

Why is my aloe leaning or stretching?

Weak, stretched growth can mean it needs more useful light. Move it closer to a bright window gradually and turn the pot periodically for even growth. Extra fertilizer cannot replace light. Existing stretched leaves will not become shorter.

Can I grow aloe in water like pothos?

Use cactus and succulent potting mix for this aloe plan, including its rooted pups. Aloe is not a standing-water houseplant. Keep the water-rooting method for plants suited to it, such as pothos.

Repotting and growing a rooted pup

Repot when roots need room

Check the roots if the plant becomes crowded, unstable, or difficult to water and drain. Choose a pot just large enough for them. For a crowded 4–6-inch starter pot, about 1 inch wider is a modest next step. Use drainage holes and fresh succulent mix. Keep the base where the leaves meet at its previous level; cover the roots without burying the lower leaves.

Pot and settle a rooted pup

Use a draining pot that fits the pup's roots, with little unused mix around them. If separation made a wound, leave it dry in a bright, sheltered place until sealed; Arizona Extension allows about a week. Then pot it in succulent mix at its old depth and water lightly to settle it. Let the mix dry between later waterings. Wait for established new growth before considering fertilizer.

BEHIND THIS GUIDE

Where the advice comes from.

Plant care is based on the sources below. Planting layouts and beginner routines combine that guidance into one practical plan; they are editorial choices, not results from a Plant Care Steps growing trial.

- NC State: Aloe vera identity, dry-between-waterings care, and ingestion caution ↗
  https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/aloe-vera/
- South Dakota State: indoor aloe light, water, and low fertilizer needs ↗
  https://extension.sdstate.edu/aloe-vera-houseplant-how
- Iowa State: succulent pots, drying checks, and reduced fertilizer strength ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/growing-succulents-indoors
- Iowa State: offsets with roots and succulent propagation methods ↗
  https://yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/how-to/how-propagate-succulents
- Arizona Extension: light spring feeding and letting cut pups seal ↗
  https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/attachment/AloeVera.pdf
- Minnesota Extension: easing houseplants into brighter light ↗
  https://extension.umn.edu/houseplants/spring-houseplant-care
- RHS: choosing the next pot and keeping stems at the right level ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/container-gardening/how-to-repot-a-plant
- RHS: Aloe vera offsets in spring or early summer ↗
  https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/981/aloe-vera/details
- Manufacturer: US fertilizer formula and application directions ↗
  https://scottsmiraclegro.com/en-us/brands/miracle-gro/products/plant-food-and-care/miracle-gro-water-soluble-all-purpose-plant-food.html

Something needs updating? Suggest a correction

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Compiled with AI assistance. These first-edition guides have not yet had an independent horticultural review. Read our editorial approach.