

ALOE ALBIFLORA

by Sue Haffner

Aloe albiflora is an attractive small growing species that is distinct among the aloes for its white bell-shaped flowers (“*albiflora*”). Described in 1940 by aloe authority G.W. Reynolds, it is native to a small area of Tulear Province Madagascar, east of Tsivory. It is described as stemless, proliferating, forming small compact clusters of around seven leaves each. When not in flower, the plant may be mistaken for *Aloe bellatula* or *A. parvula*. Its 5-6 inch gray-green leaves are marked all over with numerous dull white spots and each leaf has margins characterized by narrow cartilaginous borders fringed with tiny white teeth. The unusual flowers are white with brown or green mid-stripes. Reynolds describes the flower thusly: “under a lens against the light, the whole perianth glistens as if composed of countless minute water globules.” One early plant explorer, A. Bertrand, even proposed this plant for a new genus, *Guillauminia*, on the basis of the flowers, but this split was rejected. (There actually is another white-flowered aloe, *A. calcairophila*, a much different looking species.) *Aloe albiflora* has been in cultivation for many years. In California it starts flowering in October, with two to three inflorescences in succession. Culture is as for other aloes, though some authors think it requires more winter protection, as it is native to a very warm area.



(Illus. From Curtis's botanical magazine, v. CLXXX, pt. II (1974))