Aloe sabaea, it all started with Aloe sabaea (Fig. 1). I was visiting the Ruth Bancroft Garden in Walnut Creek, California for the first time and when I saw that majestic tree aloe with its long twisted and pendulous leaves, I was hooked. It reminded me of the wonderful illustrations in the children's books written by Dr. Seuss. I knew then that I had to have one and I was lucky enough to meet Brian Kemble, the garden's curator, who was happy to send my brother and I home with Aloe sabaea plants of our very own.

Over the next few years I collected aloes with a passion. I read as much as I could about them, tracked down copies of both aloe books written by G. W. Reynolds and began volunteering at the Ruth Bancroft Garden. My brother and I spent many afternoons driving to the many nurseries in the San Francisco Bay Area in search of new species to add to our collection. Our shared enthusiasm helped us become much closer and is a passion we continue to share. We spent many Wednesday afternoons volunteering at the Ruth Bancroft Garden, which has a large number of aloes in its collection. It has flowering sized plants of species rarely seen in cultivation, such as Aloe sabaea, A. medibiana, A. powysiorum, A. ukambensis, A. sheilae and many others. Repotting seedlings and adult plants, maintaining the greenhouse and

![Aloe sabaea](image1.jpg)

1 Aloe sabaea Schweinf., from Yemen and Saudi Arabia. This particular plant is from an International Succulent Introductions offering in 1976, ISI 953, HBG 34022, from seeds collected by John Lavransos (Lav. 11407) at Karia, Yemen on April 3rd, 1974. All photographs by the author.