Snout beetle
Symptoms
This insect tunnels into the heart of the crown where it lays its eggs. The larvae tunnels into the stems, so that the plants start to rot and ultimately collapse.
Control
Plants can be treated by injecting insecticide into small holes drilled into the stem.

Scale insects
Symptoms
The white scale insects become visible as neat white rows on the leaves, especially on the lower surfaces. If untreated, the entire plant will eventually be covered by the insects and may die off.
Control
These and other scale insects can easily be killed off by the use of registered insecticides.

Mealy bug (Planococcus citri)
Symptoms
The mealy bug is a small, sucking insect which is covered with numerous fine white fluffy threads.
Control
Recommended pesticides can be used.

Harvesting methods
The crop is ready for harvesting after 18 months of cultivation. Harvesting is done in winter, thereby ensuring that the plant is reserved for the next season. The common method of harvesting is manual leaf cutting. Only 10 to 15 of the lower leaves of an adult Aloe ferox plant are harvested once a year. The leaves are cut with a sickle as close to the stem as possible.

Acknowledgement
South African National Botanical Institute and members of Agri-Africa/Karwil Consultancy are herewith acknowledged for the information provided.

Reference
www.Botanical.com
www.plantzafrica.com
**Scientific name:** Aloe ferox Mill  
**Common names:** Bitter aloe, Cape aloe, red aloe (English), bitteraalwyn, bergaalwyn (Afrikaans), iNlaba (isizulu), iKhala (isixhosa)  
**Family:** Aloaceae

### Background
Aloe ferox is a succulent plant belonging to the Aloaceae family, which includes the dwarf aloes (Haworthia, Poelnitzia and Astroloba) and gasterias (Gasteria), which are also aloe-like in appearance and growth. The Aloe ferox derives its name from the ferocious thorns (ferox in Latin) that cover the leathery surface of the leaves. It originates from the Swellendam area in the south-eastern parts of South Africa and is distributed throughout the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Southern KwaZulu-Natal, south-eastern part of the Free State, with a few localities in south-western Lesotho. It occurs in a wide range of habitats, on mountain slopes, rocky places and flat, open areas. The species shows a remarkable adaptability in terms of rainfall and flourishes in the extremely dry areas of the Karoo but also in relatively wet parts of the eastern part of the distribution.

### Climatic and soil requirements
Aloe ferox grows well in warm climates with a temperature ranging between 12 °C and 21 °C. The plant can be grown on a variety of soils, including sandy, loamy sands, and silty loams that are moderately fertile and well drained. Waterlogged, saline and alkaline soils are unsuitable for aloe cultivation.

### Uses
Aloe ferox is used in beverages and for medicinal purpose. The leaves boiled in water are taken for arthritis, eczema, toothache, sinusitis, conjunctivitis, hypertension, stress and stomach pains. Aloe bitters is widely used as a laxative and is effective. Several antibiotics, like streptomycin are also now being used widely as protective sprays. Aloe cancer (also called galls), leaf spots, bacterial infections and aloe rust. A few of these will lead to the rapid demise of the plants, or will certainly spoil their appearance.

### Disease control
Aloe ferox is prone to a variety of diseases, including aloe cancer (also called galls), leaf spots, bacterial infections and aloe rust. A few of these will lead to the rapid demise of the plants, or will certainly spoil their appearance.

**Aloe cancer**
Aloe cancer (also called galls) causes severe deformation of the leaves or inflorescences.  
**Control**
The infected areas should be removed with a sharp knife, taking care not to infect other plants and the wounds should be treated with a registered insecticide.

**Crown Gall**
Crown Gall is caused by a bacterium and by rapid proliferation of the cells of the plant, the bacterium providing the stimulus for the over-development.

**Aloe rust (Uromyces Aloes)**
**Symptoms**
Aloe rust is caused by a rust fungus that leaves black spots on the upper and lower leaf surfaces of aloe plants. The first signs of rust are small, orange-yellow spots on the leaves. These soon become larger and appear on both surfaces of the leaves and eventually burst open to form a black and yellow scaly crust.  
**Control**
Treatment with systemic fungicides is very effective. In severe infection, the use of antibiotics is advised. The best way to address the problem is to cut away the diseased leaves and immediately burn these, or paint each spot with an oily or bitumen mixture, thereby preventing the fungus from spreading.

### Pest control
The major insects identified in Aloe ferox Mill include Aloe snout beetle, scale insects, mealy bug and mites.

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