MEDICINAL PLANTS

Why it’s Cool
Holistic healing is popular, and not just among “new age” people. Young folks love incorporating into their living space a plant that provides medicinal or healing qualities. Aloe vera plants, known for their ability to bring relief to a kitchen burn or too much unprotected time in the sun, are among the most popular healing plants. (This, of course, is no news to florists. My grandpa, “Carnation Joe,” would pluck a leaf and apply it directly to a fresh hot glue burn, sometimes bandaging the leaf directly to the affected area overnight. Voila, the burn was almost completely healed by morning.)

Dress it Up
Try a reverse terrarium effect, by placing the aloe vera plant in a decorative clay pot and then inside a hurricane chimney vase. Skip the typical drainage rocks that would go in a traditional terrarium and don’t keep the lid on too long, to prevent humidity build-up (a big turn-off to succulents).

Promote It
Aloe vera plants are a tagline-lover’s dream. How about: “Feel the burn? Not with Aloe Vera.” Or “Beat the heat! Did your wife/hubby get too much sun this weekend?” And don’t ignore our industry’s ability to swoop in and save the day: “In hot water? Cool things down with an Aloe Vera plant.”

Nurture It
As a succulent, aloe vera plants love direct sunlight, warm temperatures and very little water. When root-bound, plants can be divided and shared.

J Schwanke, AAF, AIFD, PFCI, is the flower expert and host of “Fun with Flowers and J” on uBloom.com.

Sources: Find aloe vera plants through local nursery, wholesale suppliers; hurricane chimney vase is 100 percent post consumer glass from G3 Glass, a division of Garcia Group Glass. Clay pot variations available from pottery manufacturers and wholesale florists.