

# If Dwarf Aloes of Madagascar are easy to propagate: Why are they still in CITES 1?

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*Aloe albiflora*, *Aloe alfredii*, *Aloe bakeri*, *Aloe bellatula*, *Aloe calcairophila*, *Aloe compressa* (Includes the var. *rugosquamosa*, *schistophila* and *paucituberculata*), *Aloe delphinensis*, *Aloe descoingsii*, *Aloe fragilis*, *Aloe haworthioides* (Includes the var. *aurantiaca*), *Aloe helena*, *Aloe laeta*, (Includes the var. *maniaensis*) *Aloe parallelifolia*, *Aloe parvula*, *Aloe pillansii*, *Aloe polyphylla*, *Aloe rauhii*, *Aloe suzannae*, *Aloe versicolor*, *Aloe vossii* are actually the Aloes included to the appendix 1 of (CITES (<http://www.cites.org>).



*Aloe bellatula* produced at the CPPS : easy to propagate! (Photo : J.L.).

Here is a list of some species of Malagasy Aloes which are still in CITES1: we indeed wonder why, because any nurseryman or gardener knows that they are extremely easy to propagate, as well as grow from seeds or offsets. There are: *Aloe albiflora*, *Aloe bellatula*, *Aloe descoingsii*, *Aloe fragilis*, *Aloe parvula*, *Aloe rauhii* that are either rare or not in their habitat, but it is a fact that their propagation in the greenhouse makes them

more and more common species in the same way as is nowadays the "common" *Echinocactus grusonii*. So, I have distributed, from each species and from a single clone at first, thousands of plants, a fact that has absolutely nothing to do with the plant's rarity in habitat or its possible disappearance from there. We henceforth produce seeds and plants in such quantity, that is to say, if the wild plants must have an evident status of protection to avoid their possible disappearance (1), the artificial production of these plants by growers should be blessed by the authorities, which is unfortunately very far from the present reality.

Once again, the rules of the CITES should comply with reality, and not in absurd rules copied from those aimed to protect wild animals, which, everybody knows, are in their immense majority more difficult than plants to reproduce in quantity.

The logic would be that these taxa should be removed from the CITES appendix I to be assigned to appendix II, like *Pachypodium brevicaule*. Which devil will thus take charge of it? In France, not so long ago, only a veterinarian was authorized to sign these famous papers. A botanical committee of UNESCO of which I am a member could certainly find among its members, the competent persons to establish lists on a strong basis, as well as to investigate what is happening in the habitat, and also what's happening in the countries which produce these plants. These persons would need to be competent also to determine if plants are taken from the habitat and put in cultivation, or whether they have been really artificially propagated plants. The incompetence was such (in the years 80-90 ) when *Ariocarpus* spp. plants were extracted from their habitat in Mexico and sold



*Aloe albiflora* produced at the CPPS (Photo : J.L.).



*Aloe parvula* in flower at the CPPS (Photo : J.L.).





*Aloe rauhii* produced at the CPPS (Photo : J.L).



*Aloe parvula* produced at the CPPS (Photo : J.L).

in a so called "production" in Texas where there were considered as nursery grown plants.

For example, on the CITES webpage, there is a photo gallery of cacti species: There is not a single photo of appendix 1 cacti and they ask for pictures!!! (2).

On the other hand, in 2004, we could again find in Spain CITES repression (the SEPRONA), who were capable of imposing a heavy fine to a small grower possessing no plant from habitat. A fine was imposed for he was growing 1138 *Agave victoria-reginae*! This fact would be funny if it was only the agents asked to make the inquiry who knew nothing about the "illegal" plants, but especially for the fact that their ignorance that *Agave victoria-reginae* is not in CITES1, this alone makes one think about the committed nonsenses. Today, this small grower dropped everything and sold his production of plants, demoralized. It is necessary to add that this person, of Swiss origin, saw his name published in the local press as a plants trafficker! And some still ask me why I am always at war against CITES? I am not at war against CITES, CITES is a necessary element for control and against abuses, I am in a permanent war against stupidity.

Text and photos: J.L.

(1) As regards Madagascar, this disappearance is mostly due to fires or to the establishment of cultivated crops.

(2) I thus proposed at the CITES webpage, the totality of my photo collection of appendix 1 cacti and other succulent plants... Still waiting an answer...