Velvet Elephant Ear

Kalanchoe beharensis



Velvet Elephant Ear
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 5 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: 10

Other Names: Velvet Leaf Kalanchoe, Felt Bush

Description:

This variety is a succulent, tree-like shrub with woody stems, branches, and trunk; large, pointed, concave leaves are gray-green with copper highlights, and covered with felt like hairs; intolerant of frost; great for containers and rock gardens

Ornamental Features

Velvet Elephant Ear has attractive coppery-bronze-variegated grayish green foliage with hints of silver on a plant with an upright spreading habit of growth. The large succulent lobed leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. It features unusual clusters of chartreuse bell-shaped flowers rising above the foliage from mid spring to mid summer. The rough gray bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Landscape Attributes

Velvet Elephant Ear is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other landscape plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance shrub, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Velvet Elephant Ear is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Velvet Elephant Ear will grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 5 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 2 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 20 years.

This shrub performs well in both full sun and full shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings.

Velvet Elephant Ear makes a fine choice for the outdoor landscape, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.