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Elephant's Ear

Caladium colocasia



Elephant's Ear
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 7 feet

Spacing: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Taro, syn. Alocasia, syn. Xanthosoma

Description:

Amazing super large leaves grow from the center of this giant taro and can reach 12 feet in tropical climes; elegant as a large accent or screening; can tolerate some cold and grows well in containers

Ornamental Features

Elephant's Ear features solitary conical creamy white hooded flowers with white centers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its attractive large glossy heart-shaped leaves remain dark green in color throughout the year.

Landscape Attributes

Elephant's Ear is an open herbaceous annual with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition.

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

Elephant's Ear is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

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Planting & Growing

Elephant's Ear will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 7 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 4 feet apart. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Elephant's Ear is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.