Lakeshore Garden Centres

Green Elephant Food

4102 - 11th St. West
P.O. Box 2A RR3
Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3J6
phone: 306-382-2077
info@lakeshoregardencentre.com
www.lakeshoregardencentre.com

Green Elephant Food

Portulacaria afra 'Green'



Green Elephant Food
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Mini Jade Plant, Elephant Bush, Porkbush

Description:

A compact upright plant with interesting red stems covered in small, succulent, light green leaves; grows larger in frost free areas; popular use in bonsai; very drought tolerant and great for rock gardens or containers



Green Elephant Food foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Green Elephant Food is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its ornamental globe-shaped form. It features dainty violet flowers at the ends of the branches in early summer. Its attractive tiny succulent round leaves remain light green in colour with hints of chartreuse throughout the year. The crimson stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Green Elephant Food is a multi-stemmed annual with a more or less rounded form. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and can be pruned at anytime. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Green Elephant Food is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

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Planting & Growing

Green Elephant Food will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing 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 should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. Like most succulents and cacti, this plant prefers to grow in poor soils and should therefore never be fertilized. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Green Elephant Food is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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.