

Botanical Name: Colocasia esculenta

Common Name: Elephant Ears, Taro Family: Araceae

Type of Plant: monocot: perennial Character: Evergreen

Habit of Growth:

Overall Shape Clump-forming with tuberous roots (edible) and large arrow- or heart-shaped leaves with prominent veins, usually green but several forms have nearly black leaves, some with green veining. Leaf surface has softly textured 'velour' feel (looks similar to related Alocasia)

Height: 3-6' Spread: 3-6' Growth Rate: Rapid

Environment:

Exposure Part shade, protect from hottest afternoon sun

Soil Rich soil, high in organic matter; there are both dry and wetland types

Hardiness 12, 16-24, H1, H2, Indoors anywhere

Morphology:

Leaves Large, textured, 2-3' long at the end of soft thick stalks. Leaf stems attached so leaves face outward and down (unlike Alocasia which face upward)

Flowers Greenish Calla-like spathe encloses the spadix in warmest areas

Fruit Small round or oval seeds form along the spadix

Propagation: Division or seed

Usage: Containers, mass plantings, near swimming pools; for its dramatic foliage form and striking color. Classic Tropical landscape plant, Oriental gardens, Contemporary garden styles.

Wetland varieties are excellent pond-side and bog plants. All can become invasive

Landscape Care:

Watering Regular; many varieties accept standing water as in a bog

Fertilizing Regular balanced year-round

Pruning Remove old leaves

Pests/Diseases May harbor snails and slugs

Special/Other Roots and leaves are edible, but MUST BE COOKED

Origin: Maylasia, Australia