

Alocasia spp. Elephant's Ear¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

The *Alocasia* genus contains a variety of showy, large-leaved, tropical plants, some with colorful leaves (Figure 1). There is a wide variety of leaf sizes, color and variegation among species. Elephant's Ear gives a bold tropical effect to the landscape with its unusually large, shield-like, fleshy green leaves. They perform well as accent plants but some selections grow very large. For this reason, only one or two of these large-leaved types are needed in most residential landscapes. Of course more can be used if the smaller selections are planted. The smaller-leaf types can be planted in mass as a ground cover for a rich, tropical effect, or they can be used to edge or border a walk or patio. Most are well adapted for container gardening.

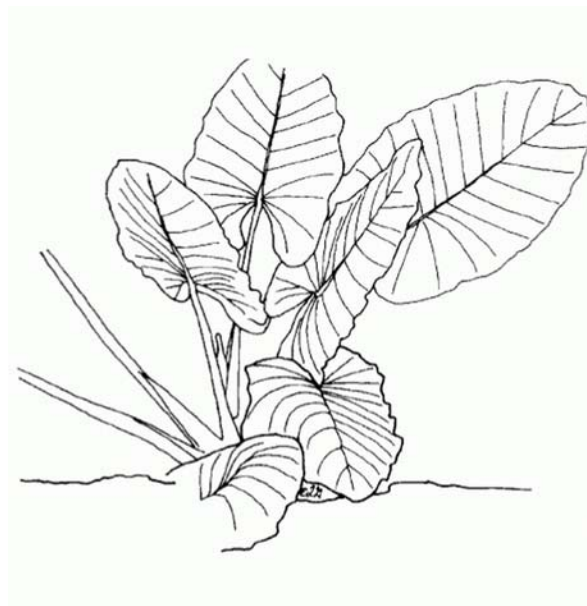


Figure 1. Elephant's Ear.

General Information

Scientific name: *Alocasia spp.*

Pronunciation: al-lo-KAY-zee-uh species

Common name(s): Elephant's Ear

Family: *Araceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; container or above-ground planter; ground cover; naturalizing; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Leaf margin: lobed; undulate

Leaf shape: saggitate (arrow)

Leaf venation: brachidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches; 12 to 18 inches; 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Description

Growth rate: fast

Height: 2 to 10 feet

Spread: 1 to 10 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: open

Texture: coarse

Flower

Flower color: green

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; spring flowering

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; acidic; clay; sand; loam

Drought tolerance:

Soil salt tolerance: poor

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Performing best in rich, moisture-retentive soil in full sun or shade, Elephant's Ear will require little attention once established. Many selections grow well in soggy soil and some will invade these areas forming dense thickets. The tender leaves are subject to wind-damage but do not have any major pest problems. Freezing temperatures kill the foliage, but in USDA hardiness zone 8b and south the plant grows from the base when warm weather resumes.

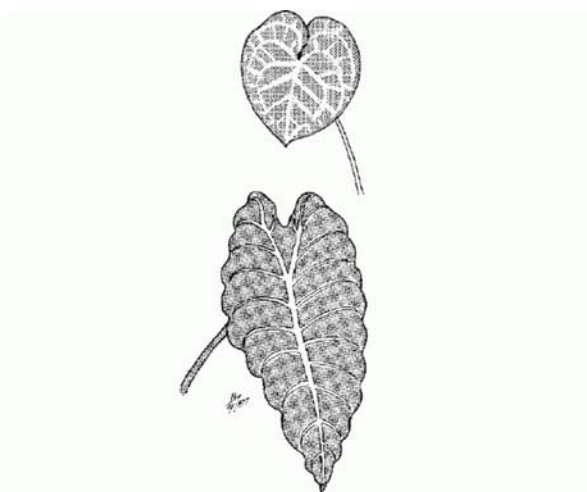


Figure 3. Foliage of Elephant's Ear.

Pests and Diseases

There are no major pest problems.