



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Peperomia obtusifolia*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Peperomia has round, smooth, dark green leaves and short, somewhat brittle stems, seldom growing taller than 12 inches (Fig. 1). Quickly growing into spreading clumps, Peperomia is ideal for tropical groundcover use, as well as container culture or raised planters. It also makes a durable houseplant and will cascade over the side of a hanging basket.

### General Information

**Scientific name:** *Peperomia obtusifolia*

**Pronunciation:** pep-per-ROE-mee-uh ob-too-siff-FOLE-lee-uh

**Common name(s):** Peperomia, Baby Rubber Plant

**Family:** *Piperaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; mass planting; naturalizing; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

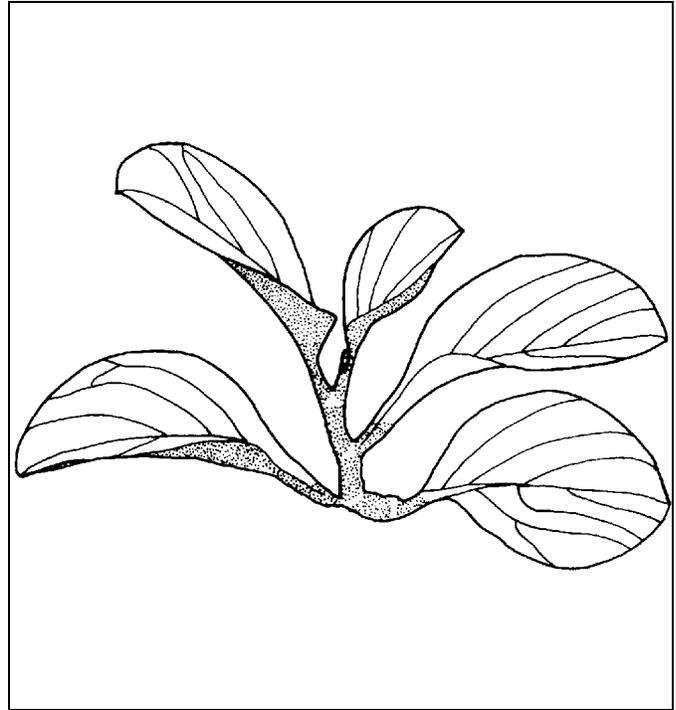


Figure 1. Peperomia.

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

### Description

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** spreading

**Plant density:** open

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf shape:** obovate  
**Leaf venation:** bowed  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** variegated  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** white  
**Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** brown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable  
**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade  
**Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerances:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Growing in partial to deep shade, Peperomia will thrive in moist, rich, organic soils or less fertile sandy soils. Although preferring high humidity, it must have well-drained conditions to avoid stem and root rot. Plant on 12 to 18-inch centers for quick establishment as a ground cover. It is best to err on the dry side when growing Peperomia.

A few available cultivars include: 'Alba', young growth entirely white-yellow, marked with bright red; 'Albo-marginata', grey-green leaves with silvery border; 'Albo-marginata Minima', dwarf form of the preceding; 'Minima', compact plant, leaves one to two inches long; and 'Variegata', grey-green blotched green leaves with a broad, creamy-white margin.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily or by division.

Peperomia's main pest problem is mites.

### Pests and Diseases

Peperomia is susceptible to stem and root rots and leaf spot diseases.