



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Alocasia spp.*<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

The *Alocasia* genus contains a variety of showy, large-leaved, tropical plants, some with colorful leaves (Fig. 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.

### 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

**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

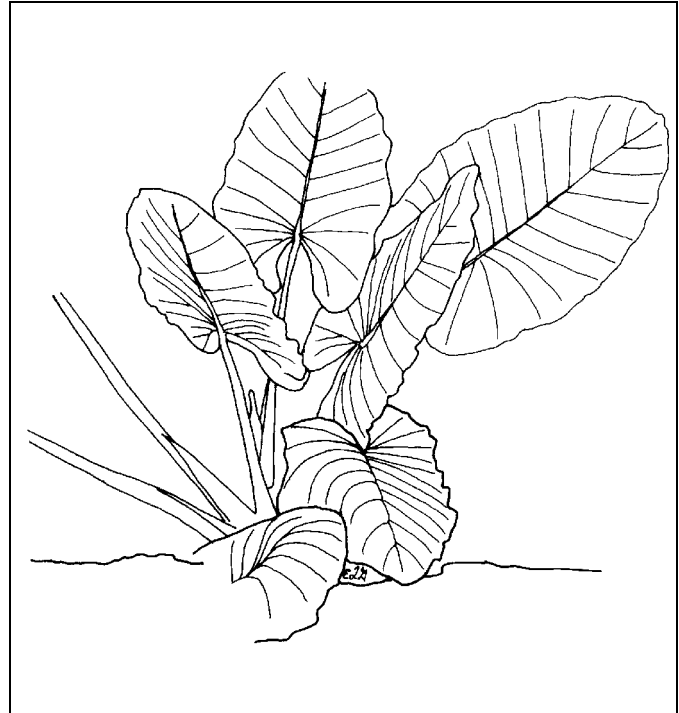


Figure 1. Elephant's Ear.

### Description

**Height:** 2 to 10 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 10 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** open

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

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

**Leaf type:** simple

**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

**Flower**

**Flower color:** green

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering; spring flowering

**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 tolerances:** 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

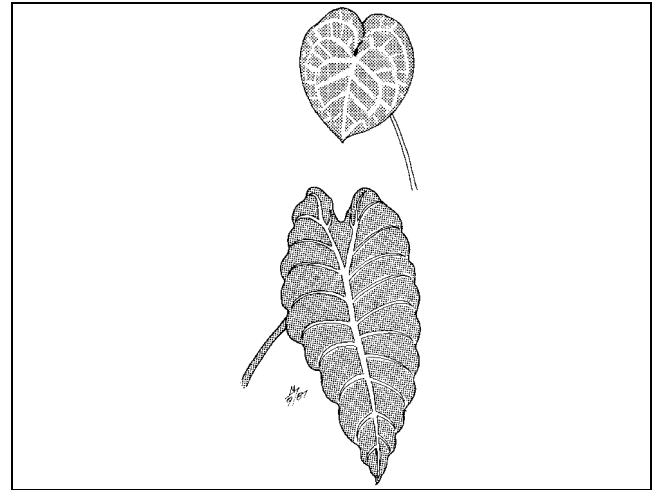
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## 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.

### Pests and Diseases

There are no major pest problems.



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Elephant's Ear