**Alocasia spp.**

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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

**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.