Giant Elephant Ear

Colocasia gigantea



Giant Elephant Ear
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 9 feet

Spread: 12 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 7

Other Names: Cocoyam, Dasheen, Taro

Description:

Huge, super-sized leaves with luminous apple-green veins and stems; a tremendous garden or pondside accent; in colder climates it can be removed after first frost and stored in a cool dry place until spring



Giant Elephant Ear foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Giant Elephant Ear is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive enormous heart-shaped leaves remain dark green in color with pointy light green spines throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Giant Elephant Ear is an open herbaceous perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its wonderfully bold, coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced garden composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Giant Elephant Ear is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Giant Elephant Ear will grow to be about 9 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 12 feet. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Giant Elephant Ear is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.