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Black Stem Elephant Ear

Colocasia fontanesii



Black Stem Elephant Ear
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ◐ ●

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Cocoyam, Dasheen, Taro

Description:

An impressive tall variety with dark black-purple stems, topped with huge leaves that emerge dark plum purple and then mature to dark olive green with purple spines; a stunning garden or pondside accent plant for a tropical look

Ornamental Features

Black Stem Elephant Ear is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. Its attractive large heart-shaped leaves remain olive green in color with pointy purple spines throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Black Stem Elephant Ear is an open herbaceous annual 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.

Black Stem Elephant Ear is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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



Black Stem Elephant Ear foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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303.690.4722
www.tagawagardens.com

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Planting & Growing

Black Stem Elephant Ear will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this fast-growing plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in partial shade to 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.

Black Stem 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.

