



Elephant's Ear *Colocasia esculenta*

03-26



<u>Hardiness</u>	<u>Exposure</u>	<u>Soil</u>	<u>Water</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Height</u>
Zones 12, 16-24, H1, H2, or dig and store	Best in warm filtered shade	Enriched soil with organic matter before planting	Ample watering	Flowers resemble greenish callas, appearing only in the warmest climates	Fast growing to 6 feet tall

Colocasia esculenta, or Taro, is widely grown in the tropics for food and as an ornamental planting. The edible tubers are used in Poi and the young shoots are blanched and used as a winter vegetable. The plant will reach 3-7 feet (1-2 m) tall with leaf blades reaching up to 2 feet (60 cm) long. Whether grown for food or for ornamental purposes, it is a showy plant for use around water features.

The flower is a spathe that grow to 15 inches (35 cm) long. They are not particularly showy.

Colocasia esculenta need full sun to partial shade, with a rich, well-drained soil and abundant water. In the greenhouse, we use a soil mix with equal parts of peat moss, loam and sand, or perlite. The tubers are planted 3-5 inches (7 to 13 cm) deep and should be at least 4 feet (1.2 m) apart. The plants should be kept moist at all times and fertilized weekly during the growing season. When grown near aquatic settings, they can be planted in several inches of water and will spread quite quickly. Plants grown in containers need to be re-potted on a yearly basis or at the end of the growing season. The tuber should be lifted and stored for the winter.

Colocasia esculenta are propagated by division. Some grocery stores sell the tubers for Taro.