

Blue Taro, Purple Stemmed Elephant Ear (*Xanthosoma violaceum*) Planting and Growing Instructions

This is one of my favorite elephant ears because it doesn't need the full sun in order to get the dark color on the stems - it's perfectly happy in the shade and still gets the velvet black stems and dark blue-green leaves. Definitely likes moisture and the more moisture it gets the larger it will get (up to about 5' tall), but will also grow in average soil. These also make great containers plants!

Some leaves may be left on your plant, however most will be removed for shipping as this puts less stress on the plant since it isn't trying to support all those leaves during shipping and transplant.

Your elephant ear plant has been through a lot of stress the last couple of days. To help it recover, I suggest planting it in a pot that can be kept in a warm and shady location for a few days. The thing your plant really wants is a NICE DRINK OF WATER to help it get over the transplanting and long, dry trip. I would plant in a rich, water-retaining potting mix and set the whole pot in a pan of water for a few hours in a **WARM PLACE (75°+)** and in **FULL shade**. Don't plant too deep, you should be able to see the original soil line by the color of the stalks – darker above the soil line and lighter below. Planting too deep can suffocate the plant, better a little too shallow, if you're not sure. Be sure to cover the roots completely.

After the initial soaking, keep the soil damp, but not soggy, for the next week or so and keep in a **WARM PLACE (75°F) IN FULL SHADE**, allowing the plant to recover from the trip. New leaves should begin to emerge from the base within 7-10 days but these new leaves are very tender and may get burnt in full sun (especially since there are no larger leaves to help shade them when they first emerge). As the leaves begin to emerge, you can gradually adjust them to the sun over a few days if you intend their final destination to be in the sun. After the adjustment period, then the plants can be planted out in their final destination in your garden or yard when temperatures permit. These elephant ears can be grown on in the shade, as well, and they will still get the dark color on the stems and blue-green leaves.

When the temperatures warm sufficiently (they prefer HEAT – but definitely don't set out until all chance of frost is past – it would be preferable to wait until you have **LOWS no lower than 65°F**) and **your plant has recovered from the transplanting/shipping and has been acclimatized to the sun**, you can plant your elephant ear in the ground if you desire. Water liberally – these plants love water, but they don't need to be in a bog or pond to survive. I grow mine in average, sandy soil with just average water. If grown in the sun, they will require more water/damper soil. Of course, you can keep it as a container plant all year long.

These plants are reported hardy in zones 9 and warmer; plants may be lifted in the winter in colder zones and kept in containers in a greenhouse or other area that stays above freezing. If you are keeping your plant in a cool area (rather than a warm greenhouse) for the winter, water sparingly during this time and allow it to go dormant. Of course, they make wonderful container plants all year in any zone! The larger the container and more moisture they receive will determine their size - up to 5' high with 2' leaves.