Lakeshore Garden Centres

Trailing Elephant Food

4102 - 11th St. West
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Trailing Elephant Food

Portulacaria afra 'Prostrate Form'



Trailing Elephant Food
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 inches

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Groundcover Jade Plant, Elephant Bush, Prostrata

Description:

A prostrate, trailing variety with interesting red stems covered in small, rounded, succulent green leaves; an excellent groundcover or spiller; very drought tolerant and great for rock gardens or containers

Ornamental Features

Trailing Elephant Food is primarily valued in the garden for its broadly spreading habit of growth. It features dainty lavender flowers at the ends of the branches in early summer. Its attractive small succulent round leaves remain green in colour with hints of burgundy throughout the season. The brick red stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Trailing Elephant Food is a multi-stemmed annual with a ground-hugging habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and can be pruned at anytime. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Insects

Trailing Elephant Food is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

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Planting & Growing

Trailing Elephant Food will grow to be only 4 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. Its foliage tends to remain low and dense right to the ground. Although it's not a true annual, this slow-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 should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. Like most succulents and cacti, this plant prefers to grow in poor soils and should therefore never be fertilized. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in poor soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by cuttings; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Trailing Elephant Food is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.