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: 9b

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 indoor containers in bright areas

Features & Attributes

Trailing Elephant Food is primarily valued in the home 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 color with hints of burgundy throughout the year. The brick red stems are very effective and add to the plant's interest.

This is a multi-stemmed houseplant with a spreading, ground-hugging habit of growth. Its extremely fine and delicate texture is quite ornamental and should be used to full effect. This plant can be pruned at any time to keep it looking its best.

Planting & Growing

When grown indoors, Trailing Elephant Food can be expected to grow to be only 4 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 40 years. This houseplant requires direct sun for optimal performance, and should therefore be situated in a room that gets bright sunlight for a good part of the day; it is not a good choice for rooms lit only by artificial light. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and may die if left in standing water for any length of time. This plant should be watered when the surface of the soil gets dry, and will need watering approximately once each week. Be aware that your particular watering schedule may vary depending on its location in the room, the pot size, plant size and other conditions; if in doubt, ask one of our experts in the store for advice. Like most succulents and cacti, it 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 soil. Contact the store for specific recommendations on pre-mixed potting soil for this plant.

There are many factors that will affect the ultimate height, spread and overall performance of a plant when grown indoors; among them, the size of the pot it's growing in, the amount of light it receives, watering frequency, the pruning regimen and repotting schedule. Use the information described here as a guideline only; individual performance can and will vary. Please contact the store to speak with one of our experts if you are interested in further details concerning recommendations on pot size, watering, pruning, repotting, etc.