

Elephant's Ear Plant

(Colocasia)

The Elephant's Ear Plant has big floppy leaves that look exactly like an elephant's ears! Its giant leaves are dark green, and the stems are green, red, purple, or violet. The Elephant's Ear Plant is grown from a tuber (a root that looks like a potato) which you plant in the spring. It prefers to live in moist areas with some shade, but it can also grow well in containers. Like an elephant, the Elephant's Ear Plant likes water, and you can give it a bath by misting its big leaves. When the cold weather makes the Elephant's Ear Plant leaves turn brown in the Fall season, dig up its tuber and store in a dry, cool place until you can plant it again in the warm, Spring season.

Hens and Chickens

(Sempervivum tectorum)

The Hens and Chickens plant is a succulent plant (similar to a cactus) which likes plenty of sun and grows best in well-drained, rocky soil. It has clusters of leaves that grow along the ground, and each grouping might cover an area about a foot wide. It is named Hens and Chickens because it has lots of mother hen plants with smaller chickens attached. If you pull off and plant one of the little chickens, it will soon grow into a hen! If you grow this plant in a pot or container filled with rocky soil, the Hens and Chickens won't get loose and run around the yard like how real chickens sometimes do.

Bear's Breech

(Acanthus)

The Bear's Breech plant gets its name from its broad, prickly mounds of leaves which look like a bear's backside. In the 16th century, however, the Bear's Breech plant was called "Bear's Claw" because each of its curved flowers looks like a bear's claw. It came to be known as Bear's Breech because the flowers aren't on the plant all the time, and people who saw the plant's leaves probably exclaimed, "I don't see any claws! Its leaves look more like a bear's breech!" Bear's Breech has tall spikes of violet and white flowers that can only be seen in the summer. If it's summer, you can go looking for those claw-like flowers!

Unicorn Grass

(Juncaceae)

Unicorn grass, also known as Rush, gets its name from its spiral, horn-like shape. Its green-gray stems look like a unicorn's horn! California Gray Rush is native to California and Oregon and can grow up to 2 ft high. This variety tolerates more heat and drought than its cousin varieties (Soft Rush and Australian Silver Rush), but thrives best in moist soil or even shallow water. Touch the spiral grass stalks and see how they feel between your fingers. Can you imagine touching a unicorn's horn?

Sticky Monkey

(Mimulus)

Also known as Monkey Flower, Sticky Monkey has funnel-shaped, two-lipped flowers that look like the face of a grinning monkey. The plant itself can grow up to 4 and a half feet tall and its orange flowers last through spring and summer. If you look closely, the bark of the plant has a woody feel, and its dark green leaves are sticky! Do the leaves feel sticky to you? Can you see the monkey grinning at you when you look at the orange flowers?

Chameleon Plant

(*Houttuynia cordata*)

Like a chameleon, the Chameleon Plant has leaves that exhibit all different colors. Chameleons can change the color of their skin so they can blend in with their environment and hide from predators. This is called camouflage! The leaves of the Chameleon Plant are often used in salads and garnishes, especially in countries in Asia such as Vietnam, Korea, China, and Nepal. The English commonly call the Chameleon Plant fishwort, mugwort, and heartleaf because of its strong odor and heart shaped, yellow, red, and green leaves. It seems that it wasn't too popular in England!

Snapdragon

(*Antirrhinum majus*)

Snapdragons have tall stems with small flowers branching off. The flowers can be many different colors - pink, red, purple, orange, white, blue or multicolored. When pinched, the flowers open up, dividing into upper and lower "jaws". Snapdragons are beautiful flowers that can be put in bouquets or in borders, and some varieties can even be grown in pots. When the flowers of the snapdragon are pinched open, they form two jaws - just like the mouth of a dragon opening. When two snapdragon stems are picked, you can have a dragon puppet show. There are even some wild varieties of snapdragons that can be found in California. Since these flowers can fight and roar, they are kept away from the other plants in our zoo bed☺

Lamb's Ears

(*Stachys byzantina*)

Lamb's Ears resembles its name - it has soft, fuzzy grayish leaves. It grows close to the ground and spreads. Lamb's ears also produces small purple flowers that gardeners frequently cut off. Lamb's Ears makes a good ground cover or an edge for paths and beds. Soft and fuzzy just like their namesake, lamb's ears are a plant that must be touched and rubbed. Since they spread, its said that the plant makes a whole flock of lambs. Lamb's ears is kept in our zoo bed to keep the lambs from wandering off into other parts of the garden.

Catnip

(*Nepeta cataria*)

Catnip is a member of the mint family. It has soft, heart-shaped gray/green leaves and white or pink flowers during its time of bloom. Catnip is generally grown for its stimulant effect on cats. Some cats are not affected, but others are driven into a frenzy by it. Catnip can also be put into a cat's food or toys, and some people use catnip to flavor teas. Catnip can be grown outdoors in containers and also can be grown indoors in pots.

Bat-faced Cuphea

(*Cuphea llavea*)

Bat-faced Cuphea has red and purple flowers about 1.5 in. long that resemble a bat's face. It is a short, shrubby plant. The flowers of Bat-faced Cuphea look just like a bat's face. The flowers are very colorful and attract hummingbirds, but because they look just like the flying mammal, bat-face is kept in the zoo bed. Bat-faced Cuphea is known to grow along stream banks in Mexico. Although it is not meant to be a desert plant, it is often grown in the desert.

Lion's tail

(*Leonotis leonurus*)

Lion's tail has hairy square stems and narrow toothed leaves. Its flowers are dark orange furry tubes about 2 in. long. Lion's tail is an ornamental plant kept in our zoo bed because the flowers

resemble the name of the plant - they are dark orange and fuzzy, just like a lion's tail. This is a great plant to touch and feel. Lion's tail is also a member of the mint family.

Chameleon Plant

(*Houttuynia cordata*)

The Chameleon Plant has heart-shaped green leaves about 3 in. long. The leaves often have spots of cream, pink, yellow, or red, giving the plant its name. Small white flowers also bloom on the chameleon plant. Chameleon Plant is an interesting plant to look at because of its many colors. Although it does not change from one color to another, because its leaves are many colors at once it is named after the color-changing chameleon. Chameleon Plant can be a ground cover or can be grown in containers. When its leaves are crushed it gives off a funny citrus smell. Once you plant this plant it will grow all over kind of like mint.

Kangaroo Paw

(*Anigozanthos flavidus*)

Kangaroo Paw has fuzzy tubular flowers that can be many colors, from yellow to purple. The flowers are curved at the tip and split into six segments, resembling a kangaroo paw. Kangaroo Paw is an ornamental plant whose flowers look like their namesake, kangaroo paws. The flowers are fuzzy and fun to feel. Kangaroo Paws also attract hummingbirds and make good cut flowers. Kangaroo paw is native to Australia.

Bird-of-Paradise

(*Strelitzia reginae*)

The leaves are long, thick, waxy with a glossy green color. The flowers have brightly colored, pointed petals and a blue tongue. At the end of each long stiff stem there is a bract which contains several flowers. The flower of a Bird of Paradise resembles the head of a tropical bird with its bright colors and unique shape. The blooms are long lasting on plant and as cut flowers. Grows well in containers and benefits from heavy feeding.

Tiger Lily

(*Lilium lancifolium*)

The flowers are black-spotted and orange. Newer tiger lily variations are available in white, cream, yellow, pink, and red all with black spots. Tiger lily has been used to relieve congestion, nausea and vomiting of pregnancy. The spots on the flower resemble those of a tiger giving the flower an appropriate name. Tiger lily's are easy to grow.

Butterfly Bush

(*Buddleia davidic*)

Leaves are long about 4- 12 inches. They are a dark green color with felted white below. Blooms form at the end of the braches. The tiny flowers are very fragrant. The flowers on the butterfly bush are so fragrant and rich in nectar that they attract butterflies. There are many varieties of butterfly bush. Some are smaller and some have flowers of deep blue and reddish purple. Butterfly bush is also said to attract hummingbirds and bees.

Bee Balm

(*Monarda didyma*)

Leaves are a dark green, 4-6 inches in length. Leaves have an odor of basil and mint. Flowers are tubular in shape and grow in clusters. Attracts bees and hummingbirds to the garden. Blooms last for two months. Dried leaves may be used for teas or aromatherapies to treat headaches and fevers.

Turtlehead

(*Chelone lyonii*)

Flowers are one inch long and white with a pink tint of color. The plant is very leafy with shiny green leaves. Attracts bees, hummingbirds and butterflies. Flowers resemble the shape of a turtle's head. Needs rich, moist soil.

Snake's Head

(*Fritillaria meleagris*)

Bloom pattern is checkered in color and veined with reddish brown and purple. The checkered pattern on the flower resembles snakeskin.

Ostrich Fern

(*Matteuccia struthiopteris*)

Dark green, large foliage. Ostrich fern is a hardy plant. Plant is edible and can be served as a cooked vegetable. Hardy in cold weather. Needs moist soil and moderate weather.