

Comparison of Similar Looking Plants

Alocasia macrorrhizos & *Alocasia odora*



Scientific name: *Alocasia macrorrhizos* (L.) G.Don

Common name: Giant Taro

Family name: Araceae

Origin: Naturalised in the Malesia region and Oceania

Local Occurrence: Open clearings or edges of secondary forests; often cultivated as houseplants or in landscaping as different variants



Scientific name: *Alocasia odora* (G.Lodd.) Spach



Common name: Asian Taro

Family name: Araceae

Origin: India through to southwestern China, southwestern Cambodia and east Japan

Local Occurrence: Common in disturbed areas along roadsides, drain canals, and forest edges

Character Comparison

	<i>Alocasia macrorrhizos</i>	<i>Alocasia odora</i>
Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found along roadsides and margins of wet fields from 0–500 m above sea level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found in primary and secondary tropical rainforests, bamboo thickets, along riverbanks, swamps from 0–1700 m above sea level
Form & habit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect, evergreen herb, up to 4 m tall Leaves arranged in a rosette, clustered at the tips of stems Usually solitary with 0–1 offshoots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect, evergreen herb, up to 2.5 m tall Leaves arranged in a rosette, clustered at the tips of stems Often in clusters with several offshoots 

Character Comparison

	<i>Alocasia macrorrhizos</i>	<i>Alocasia odora</i>
Stem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rhizomatous corm erect, elongating up to 1.5 m long and lying along the ground with the leafy shoot curving upwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rhizomatous corm erect or lying along the ground with the leafy shoot curving upwards 

Character Comparison

Alocasia macrorrhizos

Foliage

- Leaves are smaller (leaf blade up to 1.2 m long and 0.5 m wide; leaf stalk up to 1.3 m long)
- Leaf is variable, usually rounded arrowhead-shaped (sagittate), bluntly triangular in shape



Alocasia odora

- Leaves are larger (leaf blade up to 1.3 m long and 1m wide; leaf stalk up to 1.5 m long)
- Leaf is variable, usually heart-shaped (cordate) to arrowhead-shaped (sagittate)

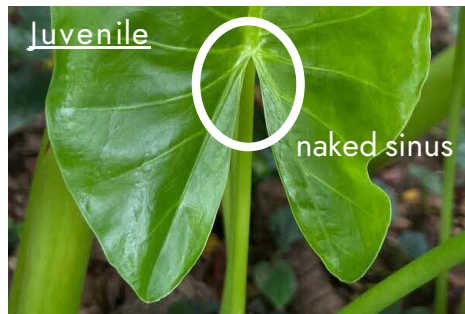
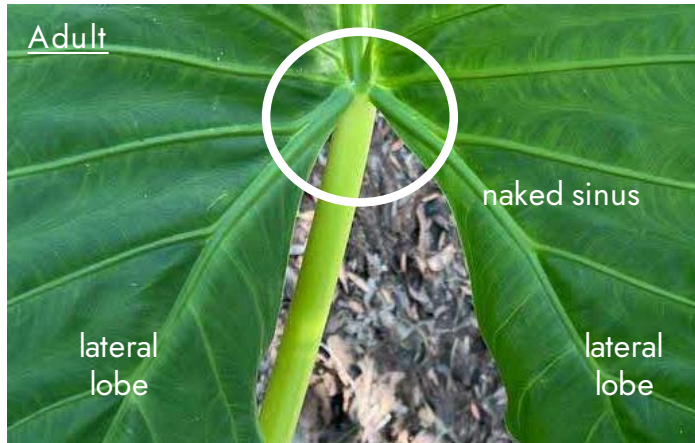


Character Comparison

Alocasia macrorrhizos

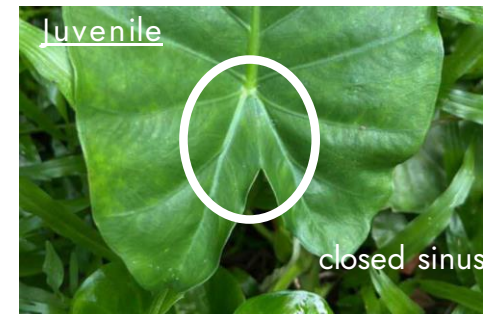
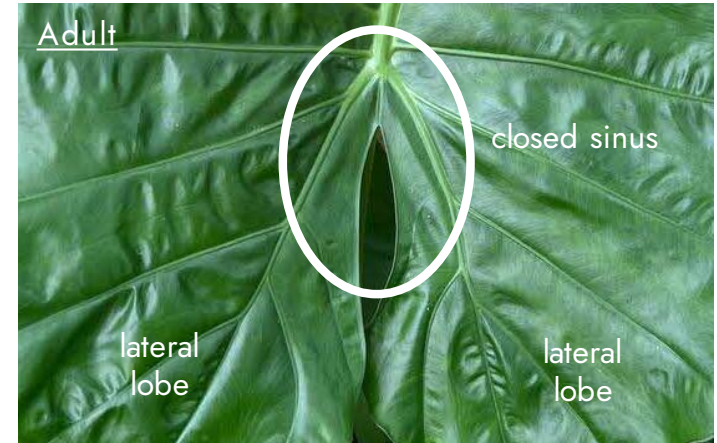
Foliage
(Cont.)

- Open/naked sinus¹ with no leaf blade connected to the lateral lobes
- Adult with naked sinus; juvenile either with naked sinus or weakly peltate



Alocasia odora

- Closed sinus¹ with connected leaf blade between the lateral lobes
- Adult and juvenile are both peltate with closed sinus



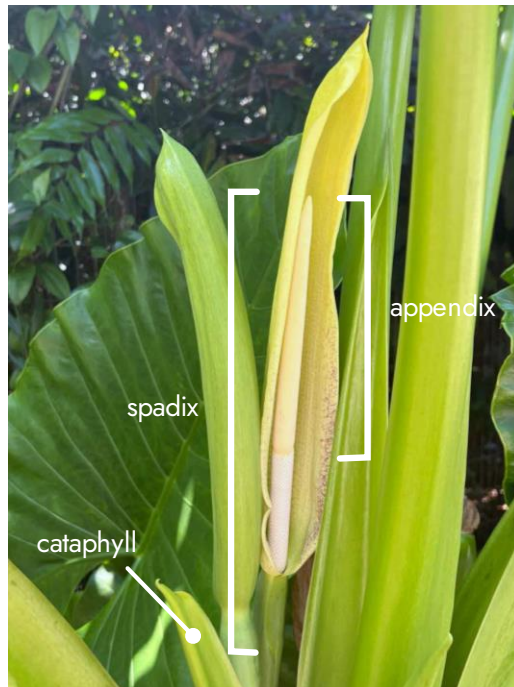
¹ Sinus: indentation where the leaf stalk connects to the lateral lobes in aroids

Character Comparison

Flowers

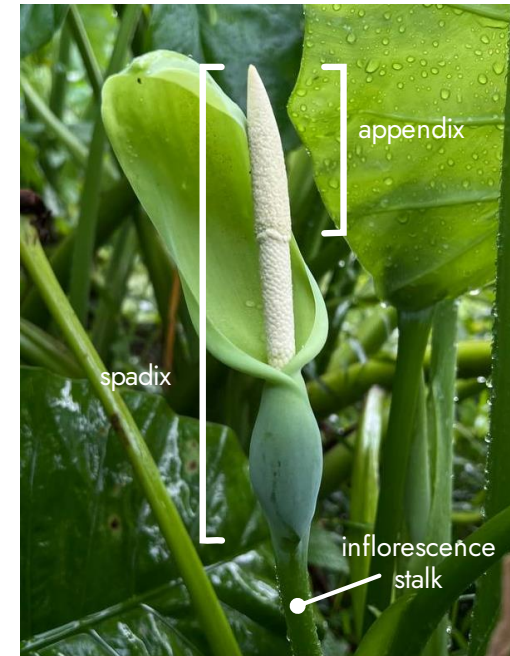
Alocasia macrorrhizos

- Inflorescences paired within the leaf bases
- Inflorescence stalk barely exceeding cataphylls² when stamens mature
- Appendix equal or exceeding half the length of entire spadix





Alocasia odora

- Inflorescences 2–3 within the leaf bases
- Inflorescence stalk about 35 cm long, exceeding the cataphylls² when stamens mature
- Appendix about 1/3 length of the entire spadix



² Cataphyll: bract-like modified leaf that protects developing leaf/inflorescence

Character Comparison

	<i>Alocasia macrorrhizos</i>	<i>Alocasia odora</i>
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruiting spathe about 8 cm long• Red oblong–ellipsoid berry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruiting spathe about 6 cm long• Red globose berry 

Reference

1. Boyce, P.C. (2008). A review of *Alocasia* (Araceae: Colocasidae) for Thailand including a novel species and new species records from South-West Thailand. *Thai For. Bull. (Bot.)* 36:1-17.
2. Sutarno, H. (2003). *Alocasia macrorrhizos* (L.) G. Don. In: Lemmens, R.H.M.J. and Bunyaphatsara, N. (Editors): *Plant Resources of South-East Asia 12: (3) Medicinal and poisonous plants 3*. PROSEA Foundation, Bogor, Indonesia. 60-61.

Please visit our website nparks.gov.sg/florafaunaweb for more information.