

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

Habitat

Alocasia macrorrhizos

- Found along roadsides and margins of wet fields from 0–500 m above sea level

Alocasia odora

- Found in primary and secondary tropical rainforests, bamboo thickets, along riverbanks, swamps from 0–1700 m above sea level

Form & habit

- 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

- 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

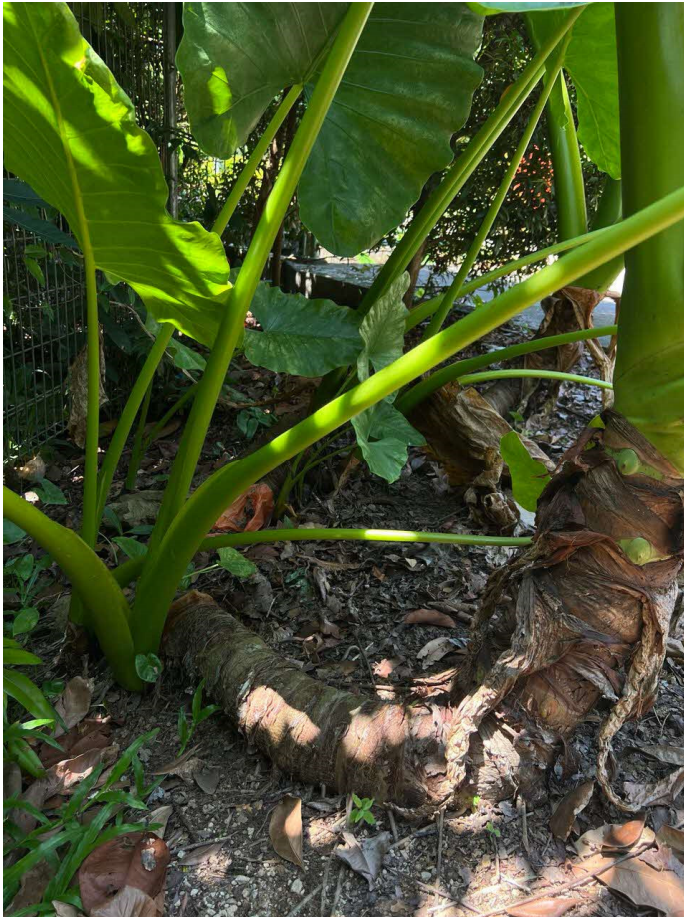


Character Comparison

Stem

Alocasia macrorrhizos

- Rhizomatous corm erect, elongating up to 1.5 m long and lying along the ground with the leafy shoot curving upwards



Alocasia odora

- Rhizomatous corm erect or lying along the ground with the leafy shoot curving upwards



Character Comparison

Foliage

Alocasia macrorrhizos

- 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 1 m wide; leaf stalk up to 1.5 m long)
- Leaf is variable, usually heart-shaped (cordate) to arrowhead-shaped (sagittate)

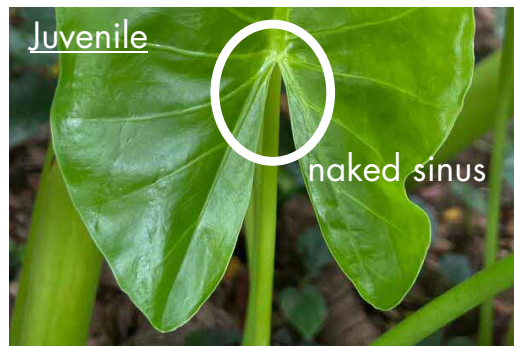
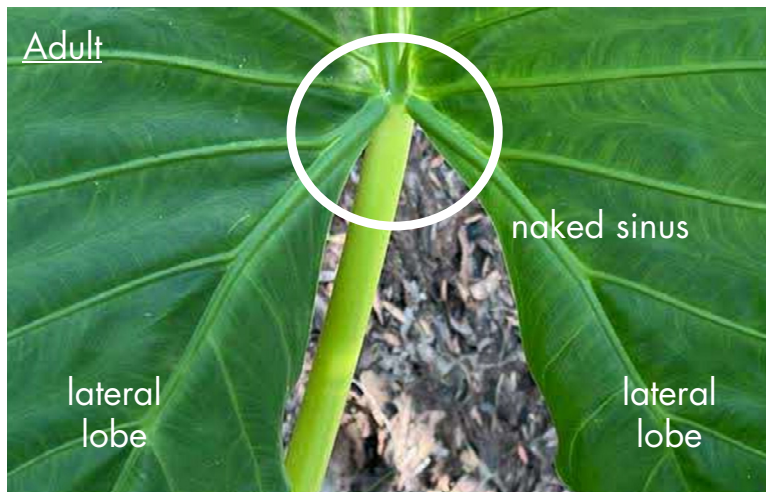


Character Comparison

Foliage (Cont.)

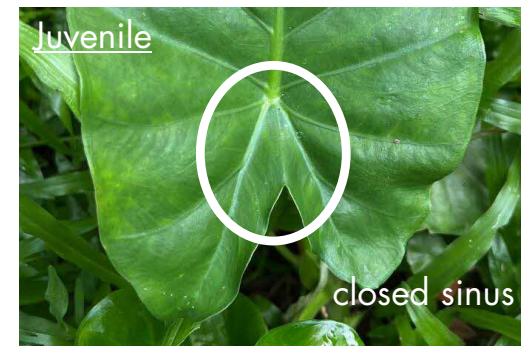
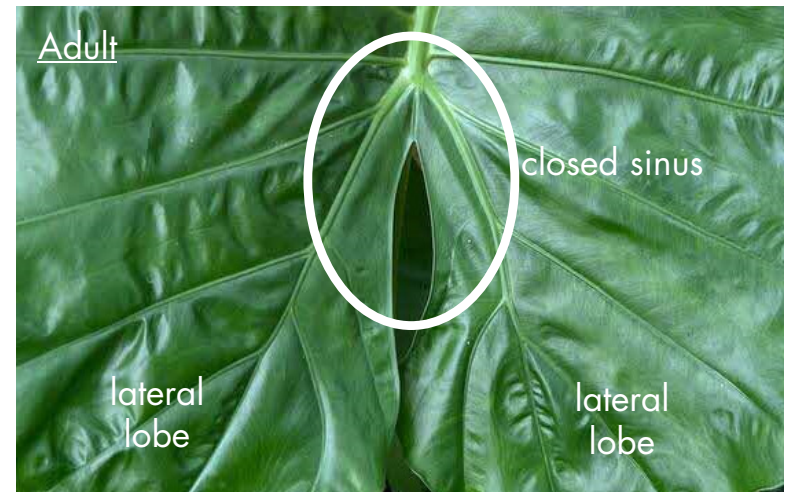
Alocasia macrorrhizos

- 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

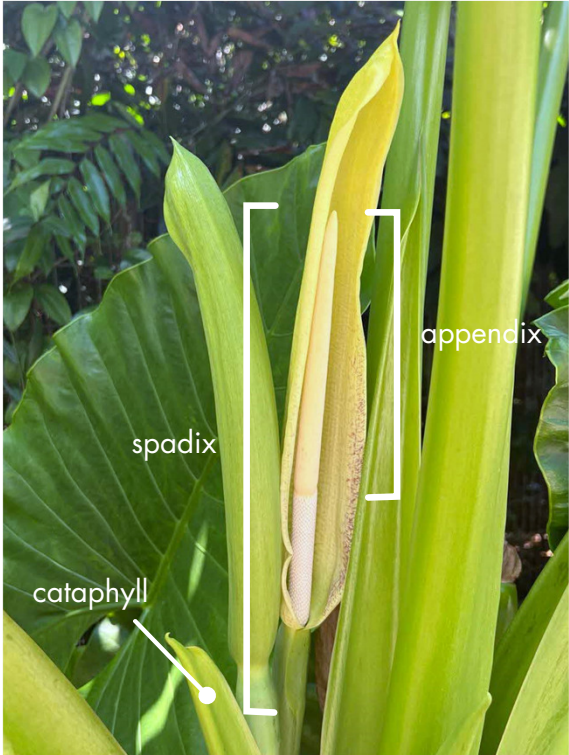
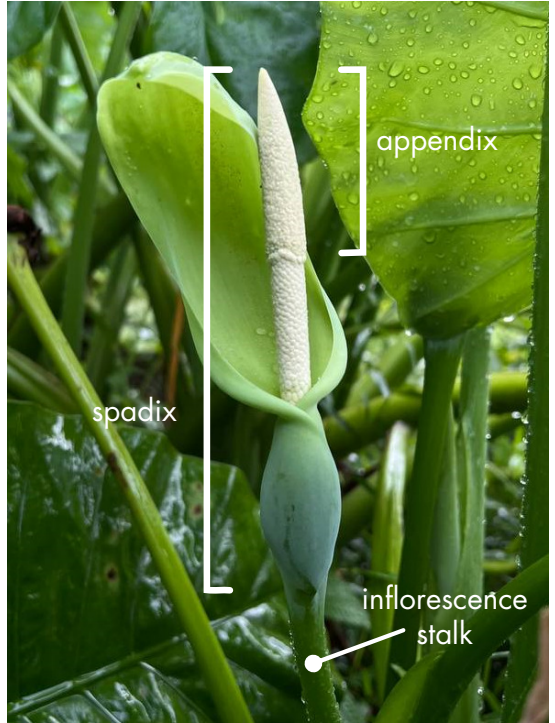
- Closed sinus¹ with connected leaf blade between the lateral lobes
- Adult and juvenile are both peltate with closed sinus



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



Character Comparison

Flowers

<i>Alocasia macrorrhizos</i>	<i>Alocasia odora</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflorescences paired within the leaf bases • Inflorescence stalk barely exceeding cataphylls² when stamens mature • Appendix equal or exceeding half the length of entire spadix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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  <p>© Soh Weijing</p>	<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: Colocasieae) 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 Bunyaphrathatsara, N. (Editors): *Plant Resources of South-East Asia 12: (3) Medicinal and poisonous plants 3*. PROSEA Foundation, Bogor, Indonesia. 60-61.

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