Peperomia obtusifolia  
Peperomia, Baby Rubber Plant

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Introduction
Peperomia has round, smooth, dark green leaves and short, somewhat brittle stems, seldom growing taller than 12 inches (Fig. 1). Quickly growing into spreading clumps, peperomia is ideal for tropical groundcover use, as well as container culture or raised planters. It also makes a durable houseplant and will cascade over the side of a hanging basket.

General Information
Scientific name: Peperomia obtusifolia  
Pronunciation: pep-per-ROE-mee-uh  
ob-too-siff-FOLE-leeuuh  
Common name(s): peperomia, baby rubber plant  
Family: Piperaceae  
Plant type: perennial; herbaceous  
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)  
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round  
Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; mass planting;  
naturalizing; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down  
a wall

Availability: generally available in many areas within its  
hardiness range

Description
Height: .5 to 1 feet  
Spread: 1 to 2 feet  
Plant habit: spreading  
Plant density: open  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: coarse

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate  
Leaf type: simple

Figure 1. Peperomia

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: obovate
Leaf venation: bowed
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: flowers periodically throughout the year

Fruit
Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture
Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other
Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management
Growing in partial to deep shade, peperomia will thrive in moist, rich, organic soils or less fertile sandy soils. Although preferring high humidity, it must have well-drained conditions to avoid stem and root rot. Plant on 12- to 18-inch centers for quick establishment as a ground cover. It is best to err on the dry side when growing peperomia.

A few available cultivars include 'Alba', young growth entirely white-yellow, marked with bright red; 'Albomarginata', grey-green leaves with silvery border; 'Albomarginata Minima', dwarf form of the preceding; 'Minima', compact plant, leaves one to two inches long; and 'Variegata', grey-green blotched green leaves with a broad, creamy-white margin.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily or by division.

Pests and Diseases
Peperomia’s main pest problem is mites.

Peperomia is susceptible to stem and root rots and leaf spot diseases.