



- Plant Name= Portulacaria Agra

- Care instructions:

Light:

Portulacaria afra prefers bright, indirect light or full sun. When grown indoors, place it near a sunny window with plenty of light.

Water:

Water sparingly. Allow the soil to dry out completely between waterings. Overwatering can cause root rot. In winter, reduce watering further.

Soil:

Use a well-draining succulent or cactus mix. You can improve drainage by adding sand or perlite to the soil.

Temperature:

This plant thrives in warm temperatures between 20 to 30 degrees Celsius. Protect it from frost and cold drafts. Minimum temperature tolerance is around 10 degrees Celsius.

Humidity:

Portulacaria afra prefers low humidity. It does not require misting.

Fertilizer:

Fertilize lightly during the growing season (spring and summer) using a diluted cactus or succulent fertilizer once every 4 to 6 weeks.

Propagation:

The plant is easily propagated from stem cuttings. Allow cuttings to callous over for 1 to 2 days before planting them in dry, well-draining soil.

Pruning:

Regular pruning can help maintain its shape. It is also a popular choice for bonsai due to its adaptability and aesthetic appeal.

- Ecological benefits:

Carbon Sequestration:

Portulacaria afra is exceptionally efficient in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Under optimal conditions, it can sequester more carbon per hectare than a tropical rainforest.

Drought Resistance:

Its ability to survive with minimal water makes it ideal for xeriscaping and helps in conserving water in dry landscapes.

Erosion Control:

The plant's root system helps stabilize the soil, making it effective in preventing erosion in arid and semi-arid regions.

- Interesting facts:

Despite its nickname “Elephant Bush,” it is not related to the true jade plant (*Crassula ovata*), although they look similar.

Elephants and other wild animals feed on this plant in its native habitat, hence the common name.

The leaves are edible and have a slightly tangy, lemony flavor. In South Africa, they are sometimes added to salads.

The plant uses Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM) photosynthesis, which allows it to open its stomata at night to reduce water loss—an adaptation to dry environments.

It is popular among bonsai enthusiasts for its woody stems, small leaves, and ease of training into various shapes