Chinese Croton

Excoecaria cochinchinensis



Chinese Croton foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Other Names: Blindness Tree

Description:

A subtropical evergreen shrub with a woody stem, presenting attractive, shiny dark green leaves with deep maroon undersides and a papery texture; a showy accent for the garden or patio containers that adds interest and color; easy to care for

Ornamental Features

Chinese Croton's attractive glossy narrow leaves emerge coppery-bronze in spring, turning dark green in color with curious burgundy undersides the rest of the year on a plant with a round habit of growth.

Landscape Attributes

Chinese Croton is a multi-stemmed annual with a more or less rounded form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and can be pruned at anytime. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Chinese Croton is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting
- Hanging Baskets

Planting & Growing

Chinese Croton will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 6 feet. Although it's not a true annual, this plant can be expected to behave as an annual in our climate if left outdoors over the winter, usually needing replacement the following year. As such, gardeners should take into consideration that it will perform differently than it would in its native habitat.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America, and parts of it are known to be toxic to humans and animals, so care should be exercised in planting it around children and pets.

Chinese Croton is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor containers and hanging baskets. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.