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Codiaeum variegatum

[Synonyms : *Codiaeum variegatum* var. *pictum*, *Croton pictus*, *Croton variegatum*]

CODIAEUM is an evergreen shrub. Probably native to Malaysia and Pacific Islands, it has whitish catkins.

It is also known as *Croto* (Canary Island), Croton, Garden croton, Joseph's coat, *Kohson* (Thai), *Puding* (Javanese and Malay), and Variegated laurel.

In cultivation the glossy, green leaves are variably coloured, reddish-brown, scarlet, yellow, green or mixtures.

Warning – the milky sap in the leaves is poisonous.

Variegatum means 'variegated or irregularly coloured' with reference to the leaves.

The coloured leaves have long been cultivated locally around homes for their ornamental qualities, and have been used for decoration during festivities. In more recent times the plants have been grown as screening.

Codiaeum is believed to have been introduced to Europe in the late 19th Century.

Medicinally, local Asian treatments have used the leaves for treating coughs, and the pounded roots have been applied externally on venereal sores.