

Excoecaria cochinchinensis

Common name: Laila Majnu plant, Chinese Croton, Jungle Fire plant

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Habit: Shrub

Location: Botanical Garden

Distribution: Chinese Croton is native to SE China to Peninsula Malaysia, Taiwan. It is widely cultivated as a garden plant for its beautiful leaves.

Description:

Chinese Croton is a subtropical evergreen open shrub that grows 3-5 feet tall with lance-shaped leaves that are 3-5 inches long and are shiny olive green above and glossy blood red below. The flowers are small and greenish so not showy. The male inflorescences measure 1-2 cm long; female ones 3 to 5 flowered, slightly shorter than the male. Male flower-stalks measure 1.5 mm long, sepals 3, lance-shaped 1.2 mm long, minutely toothed at the tip; stamens protruding the sepal-cup. The female flowers have strong flower-stalk 1.5-2 mm long, bracts and bractlets as in male; sepals 3, slightly fused at the base, ovate, 1.8 mm long 1.2 mm wide. Sap in the eyes is reported to causes blindness.

Uses:

Excoecaria cochinchinensis is cultivated as an ornamental tropical plant, greenhouse plant, or houseplant. A popular colorful cultivar is "Firestorm." As with many of the Euphorbiaceae, the sap is toxic and can cause skin eczema in some people. It is also toxic if eaten, though in small quantities, it has been used in herbal medicine to treat gastric ulcers. Though the plant is considered poisonous, it has beneficial uses as an antiparasitic, antipruritic, and hemostatic treatment.

