



Emerald Goddess Gardens emeraldgoddessgardens.com

- Botanical Name: *Graptophyllum pictum* 'Chocolate'
- Common Name: Milk Chocolate Jamaican Croton
- Plant Family: Acanthaceae
- Mature Size: 1 ½ to 6 ft. depending on climate
- Growth Habit: Shrub
- Bloom Color: Rose Pink
- Bloom Form: Tubular
- Bloom Time: Warm Season
- Water Needs: Moderate
- Light Needs: Light Shade
- Recommended Zones: 9, 10, 11
- Key Features: Visual interest, colorful foliage, pretty flower
- Suggested Uses: shade garden accent, background bedding, mixed perennials, potted porch/patio/indoor
- Growers Notes : Milk Chocolate Jamaican Croton requires minimal basic care



***Graptophyllum pictum* or Milk Chocolate Jamaican Croton** is a colorful, interesting, fast growing soft stemmed, tropical perennial. There are a number of different cultivars, but the classic plant has gorgeous olive and bronze colored foliage that adapts to varied conditions. The name 'milk chocolate' comes from another cultivar in this family called 'Chocolate Caricature' that sometimes loses its pink variegation to produce solely bronze leaves.

In the tropical landscape, the **Milk Chocolate Jamaican Croton Plant** makes a wonderful addition or background in mixed beds, as it will reach a mature height of around 6 feet fairly quickly, and requires little more than the most basic care. In colder zones it can be grown as an annual, a seasonal potted plant, or permanent houseplant.

The best placement for the Caricature is in very light shade. However it can be grown in full sun, but has high water requirements in that setting.

Direct planting of 4 inch starters is not recommended. For success with your new **Milk Chocolate Jamaican Croton**, follow these helpful tips:

- Plant in well draining soil.
- Locate in full sun
- Provide supplemental irrigation until well established.
- Prune lightly after flowering to encourage branching and shape.
- Feed a good quality bloom boosting fertilizer with the initial planting and yearly thereafter.
- Protect from frost and freeze until very well established.

For quick answers to your growing or planting questions, just email us at service@emeraldgoddessgardens.com

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Care of Your New Croton Plant

Here are a few basic guidelines for handling and caring for your new tropical croton plant:

Direct planting of 4 inch starter size Crotons directly into the landscape is not recommended. So, for the best results with your new hibiscus plant we suggest that it be repotted into a larger pot and allowed to grow larger until the new pot is filled with roots before setting out.

- Immediately unpack, remove the wrappings and shipping gel and discard the gel.
- Re-pot the new plant into a 6 inch to 10 inch diameter pot that can drain easily and thoroughly.
- Use a good quality commercial potting media. Crotons prefer a slightly acid soil.
- Apply a high quality, slow release plant food according to the label directions. Do not use hot, all chemical fertilizes like 6-6-6 or 10-10-10.
- Locate so that the plant in light shade. Depth and intensity of color is dependent on available light. Crotons need cool light. Avoid direct, hot sun.
- Maintain consistent and uniform moisture in the soil. Take care not to over water.
- Packing crystals may be reused to conserve water, but do so with caution as they hold 6000 times their weight in water.
- If reusing the crystals, mix and incorporate them thoroughly throughout the potting media.
- Be sure the pot can drain and that the bottom of the pot does not sit submerged in water for more than a day.
- Supplement feed with a water soluble plant food every 2-3 weeks according to the label directions.
- Prune or pinch lightly and often when the plant is young and actively growing to strengthen the central stalk and encourage branching and build uniform shape.
- Monitor for signs of disease or insects and treat accordingly.
- Protect from frost and freeze.

Crotons and many other tropical and subtropical plants can be grown as potted plant indefinitely and can be successfully wintered over indoors in colder climates, so long as they are moved indoors well ahead of temps into the 30's, are maintained in warm environment (minimum 40°F) with adequate, full spectrum light, and consistent soil moisture is maintained.

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This plant is intended for use as an ornamental, decorative item only. Emerald Goddess Gardens does not recommend, endorse nor offer the product for any other use.