Codiaeum variegatum var. moluccanum (Decne.) Mull.Arg.

Family: Euphorbiaceae

Common name: Croton, Garden; Garden Croton

Stem
Usually flowers and fruits as a shrub 1-3 m tall, seldom grows larger.

Leaves
Leaf blades about 9-19 x 3-5 cm, crowded in tight spirals along sections of the twigs to form pseudowhorls. Petioles channelled on the upper surface. Lateral veins raised on the upper surface and forming loops inside the blade margin.

Flowers
Flowers, particularly the female flowers, on long slender pedicels. Male and female flowers on separate inflorescences on the one plant. Male flowers: Flowers about 3 mm diam. with large green sepals, smaller white petals and large orange glands alternating with the petals. Anthers +/- horseshoe-shaped with the filaments attached to a central glandular disk. Female flowers: Flowers about 4 mm diam. with six tepals in a single whorl. Petals, if present, quite small. Ovary glabrous, +/- 3-lobed, each with a central rib. Placentation axile but ovules attached near the apex of the ovary.

Fruit
Fruits 3-lobed, about 8-10 mm diam. Stigmatic remains persisting at the apex of the fruit. Aril very thin, scarcely visible. White caruncle present around the hilar. Testa mottled black and brown. Embryo very small, about 2-2.5 mm long, much longer than wide.

Seedlings
Cotyledons ovate or orbicular, about 15-23 x 10-18 mm. First pair of leaves with auriculate bases. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade +/- elliptic or oblanceolate, lateral veins forming indistinct loops inside the blade margin, petiole channelled on the upper surface. Stem clothed in sparsely scattered pale hairs. Seed germination time 13 to 379 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Occurs in CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 800 m. Grows as an understory plant in well developed lowland and upland rain forest but tends to be more common at the drier end of the rain forest types and is most abundant on soils derived from recent basalt flows. Also occurs in Malesia and the Pacific islands.

Natural History & Notes
This species may be poisonous if consumed in large quantities.

Synonyms

RFK Code
3070