



ORDER YOUR ALMANAC TODAY!

HOME > GARDENING > GROWING GUIDES

How to Care for Croton



Photo Credit: pisitpong2017/Shutterstock

Bo

tan

ica

I

Na

me

:

Codiad

eum

variega-

tum

Pla

nt

Ty

pe:

Housepl

ant

Su

n

Ex

po-

sure

Full

Sun,

Part

Sun

FREE GUIDE!



Soil [Neutral](#)
I
pH
:

Bloom [Varies](#)
om
Ti
me
:

Flower [White](#)
we
r
Col
or:

Hardiness [9](#), [10](#),
rdi- [11](#)
ne
ss
Zo
ne:

Growing Croton Plants: Watering, Lighting, Repotting, and Pests

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)
Last Updated: September 25, 2024



[SIGN UP](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

**The Almanac Garden Planner -
Use It Free for 7 Days!**

Plan your 2025 garden with our
award-winning Garden Planner.

[TRY NOW](#)

The croton is a striking, easy-to-grow houseplant known for its variegated foliage of green, scarlet, orange, and yellow splotches. Here's how to care for a croton in your home or garden.

ADVERTISEMENT

About Croton

The croton, also called “garden croton,” is a stunning houseplant known for its vibrant foliage that brings a touch of the tropics indoors. Native to Southeast Asia and the Oceania, these evergreen shrubs boast leaves splashed with dramatic greens, yellows, oranges, and even reds. They come in a wide variety, with unique leaf shapes and color combinations. In the wild, they grow as large shrubs, reaching

Beyond their captivating looks, crotons are generally easy to care for, making them ideal for both seasoned plant parents and enthusiastic beginners ([see more great houseplants for beginners!](#)). The key lies in mimicking their native tropical environment. They thrive in bright, indirect sunlight, mimicking the dappled light filtering through a rainforest canopy.

Watering needs to be consistent, keeping the soil moist but not soggy. Think of it as a light rain shower that drenches the earth without flooding it. Regular misting can be a welcome addition, especially in drier climates, as crotons appreciate a moderate level of humidity.

So, if you're looking for a houseplant that adds a pop of color and a touch of the tropics, look no further than the croton. With its stunning foliage and relatively easy care requirements, this vibrant plant is sure to become a focal point in your home. With proper care, your croton can live for many years, bringing its unique beauty to your home!

ADVERTISEMENT

Note: All parts of this plant are poisonous—especially the seeds—so it is not recommended for use in homes with curious pets or children. When damaged, croton produces a milky sap that can irritate the skin, too.

Read Next

- [How to Care for Peace Lilies](#)
- [Houseplant Care Guide](#)
- [How to Grow Coleus: The Complete Guide](#)

PLANTING

Planting Croton

- When choosing a container for your

cause it to become top-heavy. Pick a container that won't easily tip over when the croton gets larger. Or, plan to pot up to larger pots over time.

- Use a well-draining potting mix. Croton likes to be kept moist but not wet.
- In areas with warm, humid summers, croton can be grown outdoors as a unique and colorful landscape plant. They work well in tropical-themed containers or alongside annuals in the ground. When nighttime temperatures drop to around 50°F (10°C), croton will need to be taken indoors.

GROWING

How to Care for Croton

- Place croton in a sunny location such as an eastern, southern, or western window. If croton is getting too little light, its newer leaves will be less colorful.
- Keep the soil evenly moist, but let it dry out between waterings.

week or keep a tray of wet gravel near the plant.

- Croton leaves are dust magnets. Gently wipe the leaves with a moist cloth twice a month to keep them clean and dust-free.
- Fertilize the plant in spring and summer while the plant is actively growing. In fall and winter, fertilize more sparingly or refrain from fertilizing altogether.
- New croton plants can be started with 4- to 6-inch stem cuttings. Remove the bottom leaves and place the cutting in a glass of water. After roots have formed, plant them in a small pot.
- Repot the plant in the spring if it has grown too large for its current pot.



Croton 'Petra' (foreground). Photo by Karl Thomas Moore/Wikimedia Commons.

- **‘Petra’** is a popular cultivar. It has green leaves with red, orange, and yellow veins.
- **‘Gold Star’** has green leaves that are splashed with bright gold “stars.”
- **‘Eleanor Roosevelt’** has skinny leaves that range in color from burgundy to lime green. The leaves are mottled with bright yellow as if they were spray painted.
- **‘Oakleaf’** has oak leaf-shaped dark green or bronze leaves with veins in yellow, orange, and red.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



Croton plants are usually pest and disease-free, though they are susceptible to common houseplant pests such as **mealybugs**, [spider mites](#), and **scale insects**.

WIT AND WISDOM

- Croton are members of the *Euphorbiaceae* family of plants, which makes them relatives of the [poinsettia](#) and the cast iron plant.

HOUSEPLANT GUIDES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

MORE LIKE THIS



**How to Care
for Peace
Lilies**



**Houseplant
Care Guide**



**How to Grow
Coleus: The
Complete
Guide**



**How to Care
for Pothos
Plants**



**The 10 Best
Houseplants
for Purifying
Indoor Air**



**Caring for
Cyclamens**



GROW YOUR BEST GARDEN YET

Join The Old Farmer's Almanac
Gardening Club Today!

LEARN MORE

ADVERTISEMENT

COMMENTS

[ADD A COMMENT](#)

Tom (not verified) 5 months ago

We moved our croton to our bedroom that gets more light and humidity, but are now experiencing a garlic smell. We haven't cooked or eaten garlic and seems to be getting stronger. The smell isn't on or around the plant, it just floats around the room, not strong just there. Is it the croton? Next step is to remove it from our bedroom, but it is doing well there.

ADVERTISEMENT

Joe Bills 4 months 3 weeks ago

While it is great news that your croton is doing well, the corresponding less-great news is that the odor you are detecting is almost certainly the croton. I've not heard it described as garlicky before, but crotons often have a scent that has been described as "old oranges." I am not aware of any tricks to lessen the smell, so if it continues to be bothersome, it might be time for the croton to find a new home. Our friends at the University of Florida extension service have plenty of good advice when it comes to growing crotons:

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/media/sfylifasufledu/manatee/docs/pdfs/master-gardners/newsletters/February-2017.pdf>

REPLY

Harley (not verified) 5 months 2 weeks ago

REPLY**Joe Bills** 5 months 2 weeks ago

Because crotons are tropical plants, they do not handle frost or cold weather well. For that reason, planting in fall is a riskier proposition than planting earlier in the season. This is not to say that, under the right circumstances, that it won't work. But I'd certainly have an eye on both the long- and short-term forecasts before committing. Our friends at the University of Florida extension service also have some other tips for growing crotons in central Florida.

<https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/crotons/#:~:text=To%20propagate%20a%20croton%20plant,will%20develop%20color%20with%20maturity>

Jan (not verified) 7 months 1 week ago

Will deer eat Crotons?

REPLY

The Editors 7 months 1 week ago

Hi Jan,

Croton is mostly deer-resistant, but with that being said, like most plants there is a chance if a hungry enough deer comes by your property it might take a few nibbles.

While mostly grown as a houseplant, if croton is something you intend to planting outdoors, it is only hardy in Zones 11–12. It also does well in locations with warm, humid summers, but will need to be brought indoors when nighttime temperatures drop to around 50°F.

Here is a list we have compiled of

Hope this helps!

REPLY

Rich (not verified) 8 months ago

I have 2 Crotons in front of my house about 3' tall, lush, and dense. Plenty of sun and water. This summer they have developed a white powder-like substance on the leaves (both sides) and branches. What is it and how to control it? The plants don't appear to be suffering.

REPLY

Joe Bills 7 months 4 weeks ago

If your croton are growing outdoors, I assume you live in a pretty warm climate. The most likely culprit when it comes to white powder on the leaves is powdery mildew, and the good news is that it can easily be treated:

<https://www.almanac.com/pest/powdery-mildew>

to call your local extension service for more thorough diagnosis.

<https://www.almanac.com/cooperative-extension-services>

REPLY

David "Enthusi... (not verified) 9 months ago

My croton sits between a purple waffle and trailing watermelon begonia/vine. The croton is ok, but it's not killing it like the other two. New leaves at top are albino and drop off. I think I should let in more light vertically and maybe water this one a tad less and more often. Please advise if I have read the material correctly. Thank you.

REPLY

CANDISE DENAE WATES (not verified) 1

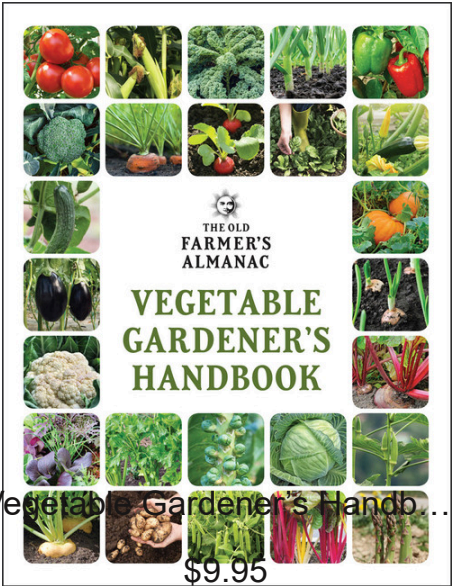
year 5 months ago

it. it is in a wicker basket. do I need to repot it
and put a different type of soil in it? I have had
it since September 24 from the flower shop to-
day is November 13th.

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

THE OLD FARMER'S STORE

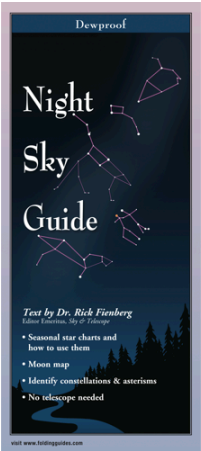


THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC
VEGETABLE GARDENER'S HANDBOOK

Vegetable Gardener's Handb...

\$9.95

BUY NOW



Dewproof
Night Sky Guide

Text by Dr. Rick Fienberg
Editor Emeritus, Sky & Telescope

- Stargazer's star charts and how to use them
- Moon map
- Identify constellations & asterisms
- No telescope needed

visit www.foldingsky.com

Night Sky, Folding Guide

\$9.95

BUY NOW



Ole Time Woodsman Fly Dope

\$21.95

BUY NOW



9 Herb Window Garden Kit

\$39.95

BUY NOW

ADVERTISEMENT

Our Brands

- [The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids](#)
- [Yankee Magazine](#)
- [Family Tree Magazine](#)
- [NH Business Review](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)

Resources

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Free Daily Newsletter](#)
- [Webcam](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Media Relations](#)

Connect with Us



[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Cookie List](#)

[Do Not Sell or Share](#)

[My Personal](#)

[Information](#)

©2025 [Yankee Publishing Inc.](#), An Employee-Owned Company

1121 Main Street | P.O. Box 520 | Dublin, NH 03444