



ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION LTD

*"The voice of the ornamental fish industry"*

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### Updated planting advice for *Houttuynia cordata*

*Houttuynia cordata* (commonly called the chameleon plant, orange peel plant or heart leaf and in different colour variations and double flowered form) is a low growing herbaceous plant, frequently found in gardens, and popular because of its bright colours. It is sold for planting in ponds as it grows best in moist habitats, and it is also sold by garden centres for use elsewhere in the garden.

This species does not appear to successfully spread by seed in this country, but it can spread underground through its rhizome - the bottom of the plant stem which remains underground and sends out roots. If left unchecked, these can grow quickly and take over new areas. In addition, any fragments of the rhizome left in the soil can re-sprout the stem and continue to grow roots which can lead to excessive spread. Therefore, to stop it spreading to areas where it is not wanted, measures should be taken to prevent this.

To effectively prevent its spread, it is **strongly recommended** that this species is:

- **only grown in containers, such as the planting baskets commonly sold for garden ponds**
- **only grown in lined ponds – not earth based ponds**
- **is not grown near native bodies of water or near garden boundaries.**

This will prevent the plant from spreading roots and growing in new locations and reduce the chances of the plant spreading outside the garden.

OATA recommends plant sellers pass on this information to customers with each purchase. OATA also urges plant growers to update pot labels or bed labels with the message: *Avoid excessive spread. Only grow in containers.*