

# 2010 Promising Plant

## *Persicaria odorata*

### Promising Qualities

- ◆ Used for ponds and water gardens
- ◆ Culinary

*Persicaria odorata* is native to southeastern Asia and is better known as Vietnamese coriander. Asians often refer to this herb as rau răm. Vietnamese coriander has no GRAS (generally recognized as safe) status, but it is often used to flavor soups, duck eggs, poultry, fish and other meat dishes. It is commonly used in the local cuisine of Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore. This herb can be used as a substitute for mint or regular cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*) The taste of rau răm is described as being pungent and spicy, and it smells similar to coriander with hints of a lemon scent. The plant is characterized by its red stems and dark green leaves which have brown markings on them. It is known to be a rapid grower so it may be best to place it in a container. *P. odoratum* is a wonderful choice for water gardens and ponds because it grows well in very moist soils; often preferring standing water when it is available(1).

### Where can I find this plant?

- ◆ Mulberry Creek Herb Farm  
[www.mulberrycreek.com/](http://www.mulberrycreek.com/)
- ◆ Well-Sweep Herb Farm  
[www.wellsweep.com/](http://www.wellsweep.com/)
- ◆ Richter's Herbs  
[www.richters.com](http://www.richters.com)
- ◆ Goodwin Creek Gardens  
[www.goodwincreekgardens.com](http://www.goodwincreekgardens.com)
- ◆ Companion Plants  
<http://companionplants.com>

The Herb Society of America  
9019 Kirtland Chardon Road  
Kirtland, OH 44094  
440.256.0514  
[www.herbsociety.org](http://www.herbsociety.org)



#### FAMILY

Polygonaceae

#### GENUS

*Persicaria*

#### SPECIFIC EPITHET

*odorata*

#### SYNONYM

*Polygonum odoratum*

#### COMMON NAMES

Vietnamese coriander,  
Kesum, Rau răm, hot mint

#### FLOWER COLOR

pink

#### PLANT TYPE

perennial

#### PROPAGATION

cuttings

#### USE

landscape/pond border

#### HEIGHT/WIDTH

up to 8-12" high

#### LIGHT

part sun

#### SOIL

rich garden loam

#### WATER

moist to wet

#### ZONE

8

#### HABIT

low growing, spreading

Images: Top left - found at Gernot Katzer's spice pages/ [www.uni-graz.at](http://www.uni-graz.at)  
Bottom right - found at Shootgardening/ [www.shootgardening.co.uk](http://www.shootgardening.co.uk)

1. Tucker, Arthur O. and Thomas DeBaggio. 2009. *The encyclopedia of herbs*. Timber Press: Portland, OR.