

Ananas comosus Pineapple¹

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Introduction

The 24 to 30-inch-long, stiff, bright green leaves have spiny tips and margins. Leaves arise from a tight rosette. Pineapples are often planted for their tropical appearance and as a horticultural novelty. The fruit appears on top of a central stalk after a year or more.



Figure 1. Full form—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
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Figure 2. Leaf—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
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Figure 3. Flower—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
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Figure 4. Fruit—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.

General Information

Scientific name: *Ananas comosus*

Pronunciation: uh-NAN-us ko-MO-sus

Common name(s): pineapple

Family: Bromeliaceae

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Figure 5)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Uses: specimen; fruit; ground cover; border; accent; culinary

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 1 to 3 feet

Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: spiny

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 6 to 12 inches

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: yellow; brown

Fruit characteristic: suited for human consumption; persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: usually with one stem/trunk

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: slightly alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerance: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

Although the plant will tolerate full sun to fairly dark conditions inside, pineapple is most attractive as an ornamental if given some protection from full sun. Well-drained soil is most suitable for best growth. The plant can be used as a specimen, or grouped as a groundcover in a mass planting. Plant on four-foot centers to allow plants room to spread their foliage. Do not plant in areas where children play because the spines can injure them if they contact the leaves.

The cultivar ‘Variegatus’ is grown for its striking variegated foliage and is quite popular.

Propagation is by dividing the suckers from the base of the parent plant and also by rooting the leafy top of a mature fruit.

Design Considerations

The bold form and coarse texture of the pineapple make it perfect for containers and highly visible spaces in the landscape. Use with plants that are softer with small foliage and low growing mounding or spreading forms. Medium and light green foliage in the companion plants will highlight the bright green leaves of the pineapple. Pair with plants with more texture in the foliage to contrast with the smooth stiff leaves. Use plants with small to medium flowers with cool bright colors such as purples and blues, to contrast with the golden color of the pineapple fruit. Use large masses of companion plants around the base or in front of the pineapples when they are planted in a mass.

Pests and Diseases

Mites, scales, and mealy-bugs can be serious pest problems.

No diseases are of major concern.