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Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ PROGRAM

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Ananas comosus: Pineapple[1]

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This document is part of a series originally written by Edward F. Gilman.

Introduction

Pineapple is a member of the Bromeliad (*Bromeliaceae*) family and is native to the tropics of South America. Pineapple is an herbaceous perennial with a round growth habit. Plants reach a height of 3 feet and spread of 5 feet (Figure 1). The 18- to 36-inch-long evergreen stiff bright green leaves often have spiny tips and margins (Figure 2). Leaves arise from a tight rosette. Flowers are produced on a showy spike, which develops into the fruit. The flower spike contains around a couple hundred tubular purple flowers, which are tucked within bright red sepals (Figure 3). Pineapples are often planted for their tropical appearance and as a horticultural novelty. Pineapple is also a crucial component to the tropical fruit industry, being in the highest demand, following banana and citrus crops. The fruit appears on top of a central stalk after a year or more (Figure 4). In addition to being an edible component of the garden, this plant is also well suited as a specimen or accent, groundcover, or border in the landscape. This plant is extremely tropical and should be protected in areas with frost. Several cultivars with various leaf coloration, growth size, disease resistance, and fruit production are available in the trade.



Figure 1. Full form—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
Credit: © brynnw16, some rights reserved (CC-BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 2. Leaf—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
Credit: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 3. Flower—*Ananas comosus*: ornamental pineapple form.
Credit: © James Lefebvre, some rights reserved (CC-BY-NC) via iNaturalist



Figure 4. Fruit—*Ananas comosus*: pineapple.
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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: 10A through 11B (Figures 5 and 6)

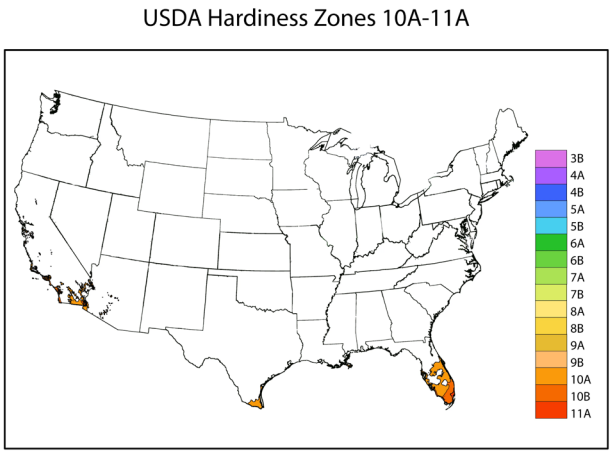


Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting zone—USDA Hardiness Zones 10A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

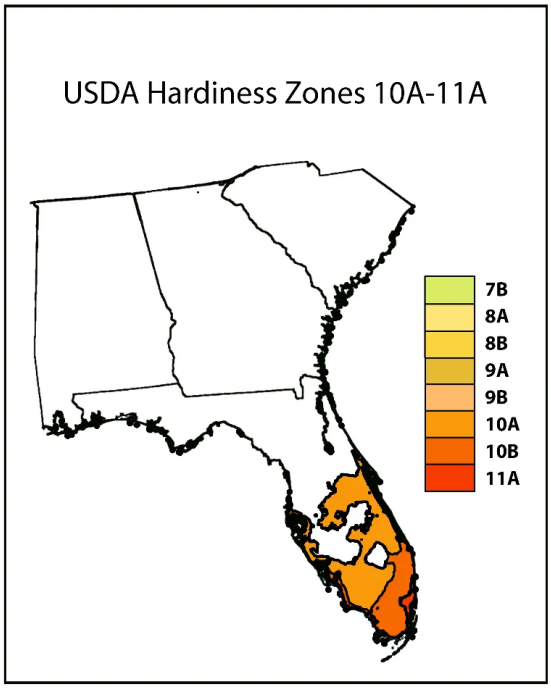


Figure 6. Shaded area represents potential planting zone in the SE Region—USDA Hardiness Zones 10A–11A; 11B within planting zone but not pictured on map.
Credit: This map is based on the 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. Visit https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/ for specific zone information.

Planting month for zones 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; houseplant

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

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; certain cultivars have smooth leaf margins

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green; yellow; red; variegated; dependent upon cultivar selection

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red sepals; purple flowers

Flower characteristic: summer-flowering; showy

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 partial shade

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

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

Toxicity: plant exhibits low toxic severity to some individuals; certain people may experience contact dermatitis from sap, fruit, leaves; principal component includes bromelin, ethyl acrylate, calcium oxalate crystals

Use and Management

Although pineapple plants will tolerate full sun to shaded indoor conditions, it is most ornamentally attractive when planted in partial shade. This plant may be grown in a wide range of soil types; however, the planting site should be well drained. The plant can be used as a specimen or grouped as a groundcover in a mass planting when planted on 4-foot centers. Select a low-traffic area for planting, as the spiny leaves may be hazardous in high-traffic areas of a landscape. Spineless cultivars are also available in the trade.

Pineapples, like most Bromeliads, are monocarpic. Once the plant produces the fruit, the main plant will produce pups, then slowly decline and senesce. Propagation is by dividing the suckers from the base of the parent plant or by rooting the leafy top of a mature fruit.

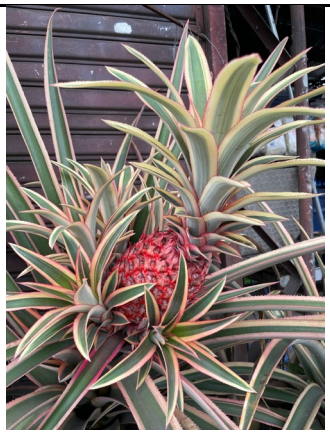
Design Considerations

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

Pest issues include mites, scale insects, and mealy bugs. No diseases of major concern. Ensure proper cultural conditions to promote plant health.

Table 1. Pineapple cultivars available in the trade, and their traits.

Cultivar	Image	Traits
'Variegatus'		Bright green and yellow variegated foliage. Fruit produced differs in taste from the commonly sold pineapple.
'Smooth Cayenne'		This cultivar does not have spines on the foliage, making it a less hazardous option in the landscape. This cultivar produces an excellent flavored fruit.
'Florida Special'		This cultivar is well-suited to Florida's climate and produces excellent fruit. Also exhibits good cold-tolerance to mid-30 degrees.
Ananas comosus var. *microstachys*		Dwarf pineapple is grown as a horticultural novelty, as the fruit is very small. The foliage has a reddish cast.

Credits: 'Variegatus': Credit: © Ciara Uy-Salazar, some rights reserved (CC-BY-NC) via iNaturalist; 'Smooth Cayenne': Credit: Azisaziff via Adobe Stock; 'Florida Special': Credit: Julied via Adobe Stock; *Ananas comosus* var. *Microstachys*: Credit: dwkfoster via Adobe Stock

[1] This document is FPS039, one of a series of the Department of Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date September 1999. Revised August 2018 and December 2025. Visit the Ask IFAS website at https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/ for the currently supported version of this publication. *To learn more about creating and maintaining attractive landscapes that protect Florida's water and natural resources, visit ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/*.

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