Ananas comosus

Edward F. Gilman

Introduction

The 24 to 30-inch-long, stiff, bright green leaves have spiny tips and margins (Fig. 1). 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.

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 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: specimen; fruit; ground cover; border; accent; culinary
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
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Figure 1. Pineapple.
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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 tolerances: unknown  
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem  
Winter interest: no special winter interest  
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding  
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive  
Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics
Use and Management

Although the plants 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. They 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.

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

Pests and Diseases

No diseases are of major concern.