Ananas comosus ‘Variegatus’ Variegated Pineapple

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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 ‘Variegatus’: variegated pineapple.
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: Ananas comosus ‘Variegatus’
Pronunciation: uh-NAN-us ko-MO-sus
Common name(s): variegated pineapple
Family: Bromeliaceae
Plant type: perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Figure 3)
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year-round
Origin: not native to North America
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Uses: ground cover; accent; specimen; border
Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Figure 2. Fruit—Ananas comosus ‘Variegatus’: variegated pineapple.
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**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:** variegated  
**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:** green; yellow  
**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:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay  
**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 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 ground cover in a mass planting.

Plant on 4-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 variegated 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. Dark green foliage in the companion plants will highlight the light white and green striped leaves of the variegated 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.