



HAWAII COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

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TO GROW YOUR OWN PINEAPPLES

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'Smooth Cayenne' is the most common commercially produced pineapple in Hawaii. The leaves are without spines; the fruit weighs 5 to 6 pounds and is yellow fleshed and cylindrical with high sugar and high acid content. While it has been adapted primarily for commercial processing, it may be grown in the home garden.

New plants are established by planting the crown cut from the top of the fruit, slips from the axils of the fruiting stem, or suckers that develop in the axils of the leaves on the main stem. Break the crown, slip, or sucker from the mother plant; let it dry for a week; then plant it firmly in the soil.

Well-drained sandy loam with a pH of 5 to 6 is ideal. If the soil in your garden dries up badly, bakes, or is heavy and packs solidly, add a 2-inch layer of organic mulch to the surface of the area you plan to plant and mix it thoroughly by cultivating to a depth of 12 to 15 inches. The soil may be covered with black plastic as is done commercially to smother the weeds, retain the moisture, and raise the soil temperature. Cut holes in the plastic 12 to 18 inches apart on the diagonal and insert the young plants through the holes into the soil, making sure that the soil is firmly packed to hold the cuttings in an upright position.

If the plastic mulch is not used, plant the cuttings directly into the open soil; supply an organic mulch 3 inches deep; and water the planting lightly.

To fertilize the plants, apply foliar fertilizer containing iron (1 ounce of 10-10-10 fertilizer per plant) every 1 to 2 months, or scatter 1 ounce of 10-10-10 on the surface of the soil every 1 or 2 months.

Plants grown from suckers should produce fruit in 17 to 18 months; those from slips should produce

fruit in 21 to 22 months; and those grown from crowns may take as long as 23 to 26 months after planting.

Flower production is erratic but can be induced by treatment with chemicals. Vigorously growing, healthy plants sprayed with 1 gram of the sodium salt of naphthalene acetic acid (S.N.A. or N.A.A.) in 15 gallons of water, making 2 applications 9 days apart in December, should help to produce more uniform fruiting. An alternative method of causing flowers to form is to drop 2 or 3 pieces of calcium carbide into the terminal bud followed by the application of sufficient water by spray or hose to fill the hearts of the plant.

While there are several pests of the pineapple, mealybugs, nematodes, and symphylids are likely to be the most serious.

To prevent the introduction of mealybugs, dip all new planting materials into a mixture of 2 teaspoons of malathion or 1 teaspoon of diazinon per gallon of water. If the mealybugs appear after the plants are established, spray them with one of the same mixtures. Do not spray within 1 week of harvesting the fruit.

Nematodes weaken and destroy the roots of plants. Two preventive measures will help avoid nematode injury: fumigate the soil and obtain planting material from nematode-free fields. Fumigate with methyl bromide (a permit by the Department of Agriculture is required to apply the fumigant). The soil surface must be sealed with a sheet of black plastic before applying the fumigant. A nematicide*, such as Nemagon, applied to the soil 2 weeks before planting can be used instead of methyl bromide.

Symphylids attack the roots. They can be controlled by placing lindane in the soil at the rate recommended by the manufacturer.