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THE PINEAPPLE.

Destined to Be a Leading Crop of Florida.

The consumption of the pineapple is rapidly increasing in the country as the people become acquainted with its delicious flavor and its power of greatly aiding in the digestion of other foods. Formerly all our pineapples came from the West Indies, but the growth of them has been successfully carried on for many years in California and Florida.

In the Shaker Colony adjoining St. Cloud they are raising as fine pineapples as can be found in the world. The plant requires a porous, well drained soil, but it will thrive in a great variety of soils. Around St. Cloud the best pineapples are grown in a fine, sandy soil which has from 94 to 99 per cent silica. These soils require heavy fertilizing, but the product is exceedingly profitable.

The plant is propagated by setting out the crown at the top of the fruit or suckers from the base or ratoons from the roots. Suckers are most commonly planted, since these will produce a crop in from 14 to 18 months, while the crowns or slips require a year longer to come into bearing. The plants are set in rows about three feet apart and from 18 to 36 inches distant in the row. After being once established a pineapple patch will endure eight or 10 years without resetting. Little cultivation is needed other than work around them with a scuffle hoe. The Shakers and others have found that the best fruit is grown under sheds. These sheds are built of lath spaced two or three inches apart and nailed to a framework six or seven feet high. This protects the plants from the frost and heat and greatly improves the quality of the fruit. It will be seen that the shade from the lath will continually shift over the patch as the sun passes from east to west and this seems to give the necessary protection to the plant.

The botanical name of the pineapple is the *ananas sativus* and it belongs to the breadfruit family. The plant grows from two to four feet high with long, stiff, roughedged, swordshaped leaves. Each plant only produces one very fragrant, palatable fruit which varies in diameter from four inches upward. From six to 10 inches is the usual size, tho specimens have been grown which weighed 15 to 20 pounds.