

The INDIAN RIVER FARMER

Facts for the man interested in the development of the most wonderful State in the Union.

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How Pineapples Are Grown on East Coast of Florida

The varieties mostly grown are Red Spanish and Abbaka, with a few Smooth Cayennes and Porto Ricos and Queens.

The Red Spanish are the most popular variety on the market.

The Abbakas and Smooth Cayennes will grow on soils unsuited for Red Spanish.

The largest acreage of pines will be found at Vero, Oslo, Viking, St. Lucie, Fort Pierce, Eldred, Walton, Eden, Jensen, Ankona, Rio, Stuart, Delray, Boynton, Deerfield, Pompano, Little River and Miami, and at these points may be grown without frost protection, though none of these fields have escaped frost damage at times.

The pineapple plant delights in a well-drained soil and abhors a wet soil, thus the high sand ridge along the Indian River is particularly adapted for growing this fruit.

The best land for pineapples in our section is covered with Hickory scrub. The next best is covered with scrub oak or spruce pine, or both. Uncleared land of this kind sells for about \$100 per acre and very little available.

All of the above varieties may be grown on flatwoods soil, but on these lands, care must be used in selecting a location that will be free from cold or moist conditions.

Rich hammocks may be selected for the fancy Abbaka or Smooth Cayenne varieties.

There are fields near Fort Pierce that have borne 21 crops without replanting, but the average life of a field is about 15 years, when the old plants are removed and new ones planted.

To clear the land, cut off the small growth level with the ground with a brush-axe or machete; then grub the land to a depth of about 10 inches with a grub-hoe, throwing the roots to the top of the ground, where all trash that would interfere with cultivation may be raked up and burned.

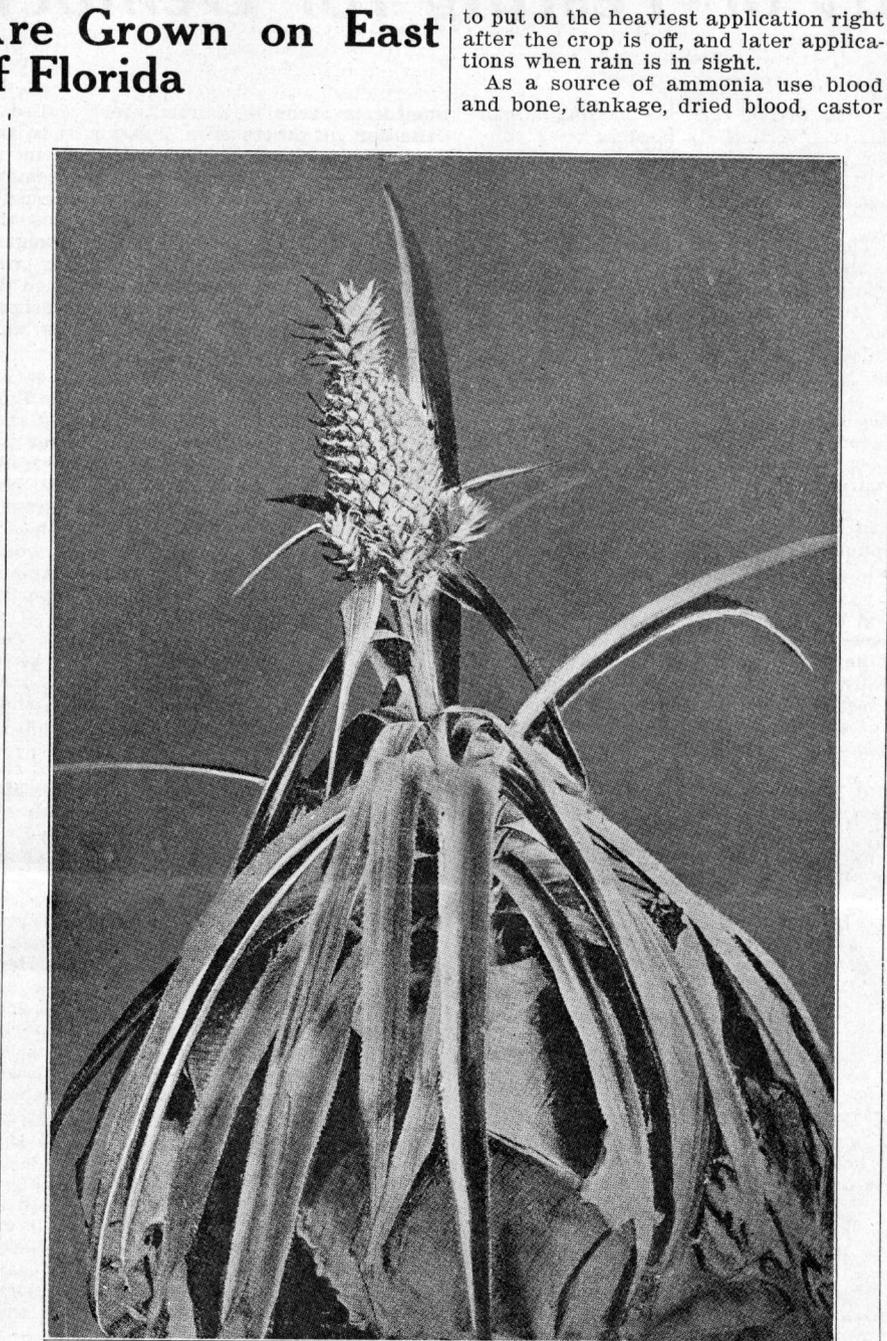
To clear land and put in pineapple shape will cost from \$70 to \$150 per acre, according to the heaviness of the growth on it. Flatwoods pine land, or prairie, may be cleared at much less expense.

After raking, mark off the land with a marker that marks four or five rows at a time, 21x21 inches, which will take about 12,000 plants to an acre, leaving two rows out between beds of 15 rows, for an alley to facilitate picking during harvest time.

The price of slips in July or August which mature during and after harvest, is about \$6 per thousand delivered to the station in sacks. The slips should be at least 8 inches in length, with a good, stocky butt. Trim the slips by cutting off half an inch from the hard butt, and tear off three rows of the basil leaves. Drop a plant at the intersection of each row, and plant two rows at a time, using a garden trowel to lift up the sand while the slip is inserted about two inches and left upright.

Drop in the heart of the plant about a heaping tablespoonful of fertilizer that will not burn, to prevent sand from entering the heart during a beat-

ing rain. After four to six weeks, when the young plants have rooted, hoe with a scuffle hoe to break any crust that has formed and to kill weeds. Frequent hoeing is of benefit, but be careful to use only a scuffle hoe, as the pineapple plant is shallow rooted.



Fertilize before cool weather starts in September or October, and hoe it in well, with about 1,000 pounds to the acre.

Fertilize again, when the plants are about a year old, with at least 1,000 pounds to the acre, and again with 2,000 pounds before cool weather. Figure on giving about two tons to the acre of a mixture analyzing 5 per cent ammonia, 6 per cent H₂O and 2 per cent phosphoric acid per acre per year, applying in two applications, or as some growers advocate, smaller applications frequently.

In applying fertilizer it is a good plan

to put on the heaviest application right after the crop is off, and later applications when rain is in sight.

As a source of ammonia use blood and bone, tankage, dried blood, castor

pomace, cottonseed meal or tobacco dust. Avoid sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of soda or use with the greatest care.

As a source of potash use sulphate of potash, preferably the low grade, as it contains magnesia that is thought to help make the plants hardy and frost resistant. The high grade potash, however, gives splendid results.

Avoid muriate of potash and kainit. Hardwood ashes give good results, but must not be added to any mixture containing ammoniates, as it sets free the ammonia to escape as gas.

For phosphoric acid use steamed bone or raw bone ground and avoid acid phosphate or bone black.

In my experience I find that 2 per cent of phosphoric acid is plenty, and that I get in my castor pomace, blood and bone or tankage.

The standard pineapple fertilizers

sold by the reliable fertilizer dealers may be relied upon as being well mixed and true to analysis, and as cheap as one can mix them at home.

Many growers use a mixture high in ammonia right after the crop is off to make plant growth, and high in potash in the fall to balance up to make the plants hardy and fruit to carry well.

Some years ago I reasoned that the plants would do better with a balanced ration at all times and results with me have proven satisfactory in using a 5 per cent ammonia, 6 per cent potash, 2 per cent phosphoric acid formula from the budding of the young plants to old age, and the fact that I have some fields that have borne consecutive crops for 21 years tends to prove that I am right.

The fruit is harvested in the latter part of May, June and July, the Abbaka and Smooth Cayenne varieties coming last as a late variety.

The Smooth Cayenne, Porto Rico and Queen have almost disappeared from the Indian River Section, as the fields are shorter lived than the Red Spanish.

Some fruit is harvested during every month, with a light crop in the fall during October and November.

The fruit is sold mostly through brokers and commission men, but some is sold at the track from day to day at varying prices, and some is sold as a crop by sizes as well as a flat price for the whole season's output for the field run. At the present time there is no selling organization among the growers on the East Coast, but there is a strong possibility of organizing in future as a branch of the Florida Citrus Exchange. Speed the day!

Three hundred to 350 crates of 80 pounds weight, containing 16, 18, 20, 24 Abbakas or 18, 24, 30, 36, 42 and 48 Red Spanish apples to the acre is considered a good output for the first two years. After that an average of 250 crates per acre per year for a period of the next 12 or 14 years is considered good crops.

It costs about 85 cents per crate to grow the fruit, pack it and get it on the cars ready to move.

In 1913 crops netted about \$1.60 average, leaving a net profit of about 75 cents per crate. Of course it may be guessed that some growers made more and some less.

This year the crop will be small, owing to frost damage in all sections, together with the effect of a long drought, and net returns for desirable fruit will be much larger than last year.

Large quantities of cull pines, bald-heads, ill-shaped and over-ripes are thrown away every season, and it may seem that a cannery would pay. No doubt that if a grower had the facilities and time during a busy harvest season he could can or preserve some of this fruit to profitable advantage.

In conclusion, I want to say that I am ready and willing at all times to give any information that I may possess regarding pineapples in my section, and if in this paper I have failed to cover any point fully I expect that you will ask questions, either at this time, through the question box, or by mail.

R. L. Goodwin,
Fort Pierce, Fla.

Taken from Florida Grower.

Work Is Life's Tonic

humblest labor may benefit, and there is scarcely one of our duties which we may

not look to with enthusiasm. You will get to love your work, and if you do it

with delight you will do it with ease. Even if at first you find this impossible, if for a time it seems mere drudgery, this may be just what you require; it may be good like mountain air to brace up your character.—Lord Averbury.

Mr. Merchant: Your competitor turns his stock over six times every year. Do you?