The Pineapple. Destined to Be a Leading Crop of Florida.
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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 rattoons 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.