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Is pineapple a fine apple?

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ABSTRACT

From the times immemorial, the whole pineapple plant including its leaves, barks, roots, ripe and unripe fruits and their juice is used as a traditional medicine. Pineapples have exceptional juiciness and a vibrant tropical flavor that balances the sweetness and tart. Due to its attractive sweet flavor, it is widely consumed as a fresh cut fruit, processed juice, canned fruit and as an ingredient in exotic foods. The fruit has a cylindrical shape, a scaly green/ brown/ yellow skin. It has a regal crown of spiny, blue-green leaves and fibrous yellow flesh, which has been shown to possess multifarious clinical activities. The prominent medicinal profile of pineapple includes anthelmintic, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-thyroid, anti-tumor, anti-viral, anti-oxidant, desmutagenic, diuretic and hypolipidimic properties. Phytochemically, the whole plant contains carbohydrates, alkaloids, terpenoids, essential oils, minerals, elements, vitamins and glycosides. The present review article is a humble attempt to enlighten the potential of this tasty and juicy gift of nature. It has a rich history of use as both, edible fruit as well as a traditional medicine in divergent ethno botanical practices throughout the tropical and subtropical world. The juicy and tasty fruit of pineapple is popular among children and youth for the delicious dishes derived from it.

Key words : *Ananas cosmosus*, Pineapple, Ananas, Bromelains

INTRODUCTION

Pineapple, a juicy and tasty fruit, belonging to family Bromeliaceae is scientifically known as *Ananas cosmosus*. It is a native of South America, Europe and is now grown in various parts of the world, including India. *Ananas cosmosus* includes two words: Ananas and cosmosus, where *Ananas* is modified from the original South American name for the plant, *nana*, meaning fragrance and *comosus* means long hairy. Pineapple is certainly a strange name for this common fruit that has no direct connections to pine or apple trees. The Spanish saw the fruit's resemblance to a pine cone, and first called it "Pine of the Indies". The English called it an apple because of its tasty nature. The name pineapple comes from the combination of the Spanish "pina" with the English "apple". Caribbean Indians placed pineapple crowns outside their entrance gates to their dwellings as symbols of friendship and hospitality. The word *Pineapple* in English was originally used to describe the reproductive organs of conifer trees (now termed pine cones).

History:

Pineapple was named after the resemblance to a pine cone, and the taste of the flesh being similar to an

apple. History states that it was discovered by Christopher Columbus on the island of Guadalupe in 1493, during his exploration of the Caribbean, who called it *piña de Indes*, or "pine of the Indies". He brought some of them back to Spain as a gift for Queen Isabella, who apparently was very fond of them. Guarani and Tope Indians (in South America) had already cultivated Pineapples for centuries, and they called them "nana" literally meaning "excellent fruit". In the Victorian Era, it became an icon of hospitality when sea sailing captains placed fresh pineapples on their gateposts to signify that the hosts were friendly and warm. George Washington declared pineapple as his favorite tropical fruit. Today, when we think of pineapples we think of Hawaii: In 1898, Hawaii became part of the United States, but due to high transportation costs pineapples did not provide lucrative business. In 1900, James Drummond Dole went to Hawaii with a thousand dollars, degrees in business and agriculture, and a dream of growing and canning pineapples. In 1901, he founded the Hawaiian Pineapple Co. and began canning the pineapple in 1903, making it easily accessible worldwide. Production costs were still high though, and remained so until an ingenious engineer, Henry Ginaca, invented a machine in 1911 that could remove the outer shell, inner core and both ends of