

## Pineapple Sage

*Salvia elegans*



<b>Height:</b>	Up to 1m
<b>Suitable for:</b>	Large pots and containers. Needs winter protection from frost.
<b>Summary:</b>	Pineapple sage is a half hardy perennial with bright scarlet flowers in late summer/autumn and long pineapple scented leaves. It grows vigorously throughout the summer months and is best in a container as it needs to be treated as a conservatory or house plant in the winter months and protected from cold and frost.

### More information:

Pineapple sage is a tender, bushy sub-shrub which will grow up to 1m high in a season. The long green leaves have the strong scent and flavour of pineapple and in autumn/winter it produces long spikes of bright red blooms each up to 3cm long.

It is a native of Mexico and a short day plant, which means it will not bloom until later in the year. This makes it ideal as a container or large houseplant, spending the summer outside with its fragrant foliage and then transferring to the house in autumn so that you can appreciate the flowers.

Pineapple sage prefers a sunny spot with well drained but moist compost, and added plant fertiliser to support its rapid growth. Plant outside when the danger of frost has passed and for the best display bring the container into a frost free place before the first cold weather in your locality.

The pineapple scent and flavour of this herb is useful in all sorts of cooking, baking and drinks. The bright red flowers are also edible and have a tangy taste of citrus with mint.

- Enhance fruit salads with the fruity flavour of the chopped leaves, and decorate with the scarlet flowers for visual sparkle.
- Use the foliage in all sorts of summer drinks such as cordials and muddle into cocktails, or make a fruity and fragrant herb tea. A tall leafy stem makes an surprising garnish!
- Add finely chopped leaves and flowers to cream cheese for a tasty spread.
- Add a handful of chopped leaves to bread dough and lay the leaves in the bottom of your cake tin before adding the batter for a lightly pineapple scented cake.
- The leaves lose their flavour if dried, try preserving them chopped into a sugar syrup for winter use

Pineapple sage is extensively used in the traditional medicine of its home country, Mexico, where it is used for treating anxiety and to lower blood pressure.