

INFORMATION SHEET

PINEAPPLES

The pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is a flowering plant that belongs to the bromeliad family. The pineapple fruit contains an enzyme called **bromelain**. This enzyme destroys certain proteins and prevents gelatine from setting. Bromelain is also sold as meat tenderiser when it is extracted and purified.

During the canning process, the fresh fruit is boiled at very high temperatures in order to sterilise the mixture so that bacteria cannot grow in the medium. Harmful bacteria and fungi are destroyed by this process known as pasteurisation. This exposure to very high temperatures also destroys the bromelain enzyme. All enzymes are denatured or destroyed at high temperatures.

The South African pineapple industry has been one of the most successful agricultural industries in the Eastern Cape.

A large canning company has a consistent supply of 115 000 tons of fruit supplied by its own 38 growers.

Summerpride Foods Ltd was formed in 1994 when its growers took over the factory from the previous owners and set about improving it. The upgrade of the canning factory came at the cost of R40 million, which ensured the factory is one of the most modern and hygienic in the world.

Pineapples are sold fresh or canned and are also made into juice.

The key ingredient found in jelly powder, which is sold in supermarkets to make dessert (pudding) jellies, is gelatine.

Gelatine is a processed version of a structural protein called collagen (found in hair, hooves and skin of animals). Gelatine is insoluble in cold water. Boiling water is required to get the gelatine powder to dissolve properly. After cooling and refrigeration, the gelatine will set and it is then ready to eat. This is called **gelatinisation**. Gelatine is flavoured and coloured to make interesting desserts (puddings). People often put fresh fruit into jellies to make them more interesting.